

Good Morning Kashmir

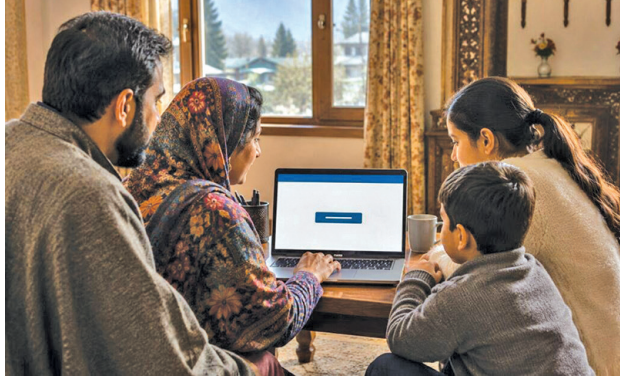
17th Year Of Publication



Census 2027 assumes historic significance as it is India's first fully digital and paperless Census integrating advanced digital technologies, mobile-based data collection systems and self-enumeration mechanisms.

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Self-Enumeration Begins In Gujarat, J&K, Ladakh



GMK NEWS NETWORK

NEW DELHI: The field operations for the House listing and Housing Census (HLO) under Phase I of Census 2027 have commenced in five States and Union Territories namely Rajasthan, Meghalaya, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) area in Delhi NCT as part of the ongoing nationwide Census exercise.

Meanwhile, House-to-House Houselisting Operations by Enumerators are presently in progress in Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chandigarh, Chhattisgarh, Dadra & Nagar Haveli and Daman & Diu, Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Telangana and Uttarakhand.

The Self-Enumeration (SE) facility has commenced today in Gujarat, Jammu

& Kashmir, Ladakh and Puducherry and will remain available till May 31, 2026. The corresponding Houselisting and Housing Census field operations in these States/UTs will be conducted from June 1 to June 30, 2026.

The Self-Enumeration facility is also currently underway in Uttar Pradesh and will continue till May 21, 2026, following which the HLO field operations will be conducted from May 22 to June 20, 2026.

Earlier, the Houselisting and Housing Census operations conducted from April 16 to May 15, 2026 were completed in the States/UTs of Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Lakshadweep, Mizoram, Odisha and Sikkim, along with the NDMC area and Delhi Cantonment Board area in the National Capital Territory of Delhi. ●P-06

Urges Public Participation

LG Manoj Sinha Completes Self-Enumeration For Census 2027

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha completed his self-enumeration Sunday, marking the beginning of the House listing and Housing Census (HLO) operations in the UT of Jammu Kashmir. Lieutenant Governor said that census 2027 assumes historic significance as it is India's first fully digital and paperless Census integrating advanced digital technologies, mobile-based data collection systems and self-enumeration mechanisms. He said the exercise is aimed at ensuring greater efficiency, transparency, accuracy and real-time monitoring of operations.

Lieutenant Governor further observed that Census 2027 carries special significance for the UT in view of urban expansion, migration trends, expansion of municipal jurisdictions and evolving developmental priorities. The Census will generate reliable and granular datasets essential for evidence-based governance, targeted welfare delivery and long-term planning.



The second phase which is the Population Enumeration will be conducted in February 2027 in normal areas while in snow-bound and non-synchronous areas of Jammu & Kashmir will be conducted earlier in September 2027 as per notified timelines with separate operational arrangements and logistics planning. This phase will collect demographic and socio-economic information relating to Population, Age, Gender, Literacy, Occupation, Migration, Marital status, Disability, Fertility and other demographic indicators.

Extensive preparatory activities have already been initiated across the Union Ter-

ritory in coordination with the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner, India. More than 27,000 field functionaries, including Enumerators and Supervisors, are being deployed across Jammu & Kashmir and their registration and digital integration are being undertaken through the Census Management and Monitoring System (CMMS). QR-coded appointment letters and identity cards are also being generated through the digital platform.

A comprehensive multi-tier training framework ●P-06

SPECIAL OPERATIONAL PLANNING IS ALSO BEING UNDERTAKEN FOR REMOTE, hilly and snow-bound areas of Jammu & Kashmir to ensure timely completion of Census activities under challenging geographical and climatic conditions.

Anti-Narcotics Raids Conducted In South Kashmir



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Police in south Kashmir on Sunday carried out large-scale, simultaneous Cordon and Search Operations (CASOs) at 20 identified locations as part of their ongoing crackdown against the narcotics network.

Officials said the coordinated operations were conducted by specially constituted police teams under the supervision of senior officers, based on specific inputs developed during investigations under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act as well as actionable intelligence regarding drug peddlers, their associates, and alleged kingpins.

K9 squads were also deployed to assist in the searches, which primarily targeted suspected hide-outs, transit routes, and locations linked to individuals believed to be involved in drug trafficking or supporting the illegal trade. Srinagar city guide

Police said the district-wide operation is part of a sustained strategy aimed at dismantling the entire narcotics ecosystem, including peddlers, facilitators, ●P-06

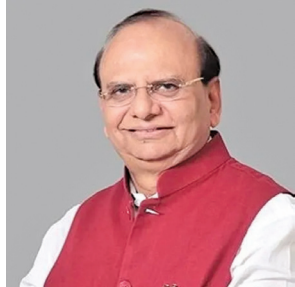
Ladakh LG Approves Major Wage Rationalisation Reforms For Daily Wagers

AGENCIES

LEH: In a major welfare measure, Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh Vinai Kumar Saxena has approved a hike in wages of daily, part-time, seasonal and need-based workers engaged by the Union Territory Administration to Rs 575 per day from Rs 450 per day, officials said.

The decision is expected to benefit thousands of workers who had been receiving wages ranging from Rs 300 to Rs 500 per month for several years, despite rendering services across different departments of the administration, they said.

Officials said the Lieutenant Governor has directed implementation of wages under the minimum wages act for eligible workers engaged after March 17, 2015, following proper verification of records.



Under the new wage rationalisation framework, workers will be categorised as "skilled" and "unskilled". "Skilled workers will receive wages at the rate of Rs 575 per day, while unskilled workers will be paid Rs 450 per day", they said.

The officials said that the revised wages will be calculated on a pro-rata basis depending on duty hours and the nature of work.

The move is expected to bring substantial relief to workers engaged ●P-06

LeT Terrorist Infiltrates Kashmir For Attacks, Ends Up Getting Hair Transplant In Srinagar

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: A Pakistani terrorist who infiltrated Jammu and Kashmir to carry out attacks for the banned Lashkar-e-Taiba paused his operations to get a hair transplant, investigators were quoted as saying by news agency PTI.

Mohammed Usman Jatt, also known as "Chinese," told interrogators that life in Kashmir was completely different from what he had been taught in terrorist training camps, according to officials. He learned about hairline restoration from a shop owner in Srinagar and underwent the procedure in the city, the officials said Sunday.

The National Investigation Agency is probing the case.

Jatt, a Lahore resident and trained Lashkar-e-Taiba operative, crossed the border with instructions to execute a series



of attacks and was involved in terrorist activities in northern and central Kashmir, officials said. But his objectives shifted after witnessing daily life in Kashmir, which contradicted what he had been told during training across the border, he said during interrogation.

Jatt was arrested early last month by Srinagar police alongside Abdullah, also known as Abu Hureira, the longest-surviving Lashkar-e-Taiba ter-

rorist. The two had been tasked with setting up sleeper terror bases outside Jammu and Kashmir. The case was transferred to the NIA because of its national and international implications.

The terrorist as per news agency PTI said he had dealt with severe hair loss for years, which deeply affected his self-esteem. While he had heard about hair restoration procedures, he believed they were only available in the West.

During his stay in the upper hills of Srinagar, he was introduced to Pakistani terrorists Zargam and Abdullah. He also spoke about the people with whom he had stayed, leading Srinagar police to dismantle a network of overground workers for the terror group operating in North Kashmir and Srinagar city, officials said.

Jatt said Zargam took him to a shop and told him ●P-06

Women Of J&K Emerging As Drivers Of India's Future: Jitendra Singh Says Women Of J&K Excelling In Education, Leadership, Public Service

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh on Sunday said the women of Jammu and Kashmir are emerging as a powerful force in India's development journey, asserting that the region's daughters are excelling in education, civil services and leadership roles.

Addressing the National Commission for Women's "Power Dialogue on Women" programme in Jammu and Kashmir, Singh congratulated NCW Chairperson Vijaya Rahatkar for organising the initiative in the Union Territory as part of a nationwide series.

Singh said the programme reflects the Centre's focus on empowering women and addressing issues concerning

them at the grassroots level. Singh said Jammu and Kashmir, known for its spiritual and cultural heritage, has witnessed decades of suffering and conflict, during which many women lost family members and faced hardships.

"Now, as Jammu and Kashmir is coming out of that difficult phase, special attention towards women empowerment shows the priority being given to the region," he said.

The Union Minister said various welfare schemes introduced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the last decade have increased the confidence and aspirations of women in Jammu and Kashmir.

He said girls from the region are performing ●P-06



India Flags Concerns Over Targeting Of Vessels In Strait Of Hormuz

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI: India's Permanent Representative at the United Nations, Parvathaneni Harish, highlighted India's strategy to address the ongoing energy and fertiliser crisis triggered by the conflict in West Asia, emphasising the importance of both short-term and long-term measures supported by international cooperation.

Harish said he took part in the special meeting of the United Nations Economic and Social Council on protecting energy and supply chains. He stressed that a balanced approach involving immediate relief measures, structural reforms, and global



coordination would be crucial to dealing with the crisis. He also reiterated India's concerns over maritime security and freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz.

"Shared India's approach to the recent energy and fer-

tiliser crisis in light of the West Asia conflict at the Special Meeting of the UNESO-SOC on Safeguarding energy and supply flows. A combination of short-term and structural measures alongside international cooperation is

essential to respond to the crisis. Reiterated that targeting of commercial shipping, endangering civilian crew and impeding freedom of navigation in the Strait of Hormuz are unacceptable. International law in this regard must be fully respected," Harish wrote on X.

Meanwhile, Iran had recently announced a 'professional mechanism' to regulate the traffic in the Strait of Hormuz, which will be unveiled soon. "Iran, within the framework of its national sovereignty and the guarantee of international trade security, has prepared a professional mechanism to manage traffic in the Strait of Hormuz along a ●P-06

Dhul Hijjah Moon Sighted, Eid-Ul-Adha On May 27: Grand Mufti



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The crescent for the holy month of Dhul Hijjah was sighted anywhere in Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday, Grand Mufti Jammu Kashmir said.

Mufti Nasir-ul-Islam Farooqi said that the testimony regarding the sighting of the moon was received from Kargil and parts of Jammu Kashmir.

He said that as a result, the month of Dhul Hijjah (1447 A.H) will commence from Monday, May 18, 2026.

The Grand Mufti further stated that Eid-ul-Adha will be observed on May 27, 2026 (Wednesday). (JKNS)

Keeping Tradition Alive Hundreds Attend Centuries-Old Panzath Festival In South Kashmir



GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: Hundreds of people from multiple villages in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Sunday participated in the centuries-old Panzath festival, a traditional community event centered around cleaning freshwater springs that supply drinking water and irrigate agricultural land across the region.

The annual festival, locally known for collective fish-catching activities, was observed at the historic Panzath spring area near Qazigund, where residents entered streams and spring

channels carrying traditional baskets and nets.

Locals said the real purpose of the event is not merely catching fish but cleaning and restoring the natural spring waters that continue to serve nearby villages through tap water systems and irrigation networks.

Villagers participating in the festival said weeds, mud deposits, waste material, and blockages are manually removed during the event to improve water flow and maintain the health of the springs.

"This tradition has continued for nearly 500 years," local participants ●P-06

.....Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan

Srinagar Police Intensifies Crackdown on the Illegal Sale of Drugs

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: In continuation of the sustained drive against the menace of drug abuse and illegal sale of medicines under the ongoing Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, a joint inspection and enforcement drive was conducted Sunday by the Drug Inspector Srinagar and Drug Inspector Budgam in collaboration with Police Station Nowgam.

During the drive, strict action was taken against medical shops found violating the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act and related regulations. A total of 07 medical shops/pharmacies were sealed or suspended on the spot for various violations including operating without licence, unauthorized sale of medicines, non-maintenance of records, and sale of medicines without the presence of an authorized pharmacist.



The following establishments were proceeded against during the drive including Shalimar Medicate, Aribagh Nowgam: Sealed for non-maintenance of computer-based records. Unknown Medical Store

All Problem Solution Medical Shop: Found selling medicines unauthorisedly despite already suspended licence.

Furqaan Medical Hall, Nowgam: Suspended for 02 days for non-maintenance of records.

A to Z Generic Pharmacy, Naik Bagh Nowgam: Suspended for 03 days for selling medicines without an authorized pharmacist.

Srinagar Police reiterates its commitment to continue strict action against individuals and establishments involved in illegal drug-related activities and unauthorized sale of medicines. Such drives shall continue across the district to ensure compliance with the law and to safeguard public health and safety.

The general public is urged to cooperate with the authorities and share any information related to illegal drug activities with the nearest police establishment. (KNS)

DC Anantnag stresses quality, time bound digitisation of backlog mutations

GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat on Saturday inspected the Digitisation Section at Dak Bungalow Khanabal and took first hand stock of the status of digitisation of the revenue record.

He was accompanied by ADC, ACR, Tehsildar Anantnag and other concerned officials.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner took a detailed assessment of progress on digitisation and enquired from Patwaris and other deputed staff about the pace and quality of the work being carried out. He physically checked the Jamabandi records and working of the Mutation Module on PM Gati Shakti Portal, including flow of online information through various login IDs viz maker, verifier/checker and approver.

Dr. Bilal directed that the remaining backlog



mutations be uploaded and approved within next 4-5 days, asking the concerned officials to continue the process with same energy and dedication. He emphasised the need of transparency and accuracy in the digitisation process to ensure reliability of digitised land records while maintaining their quality and consistency for public convenience and

efficient service delivery.

Appreciating the committed and tireless efforts of the digitisation staff, the DC instructed that high speed internet, logistics and necessary facilities be provided to them in a seamless and uninterrupted manner so that the tasks are accomplished soon.

On technical progress, the DC was informed that

of the total backlog mutations, 91% have been initiated while 90% verified and 89% approved in the district till May 16.

Concluding the inspection, the DC reiterated that the digitisation of revenue records is a crucial reform and impressed upon the deputed staff to coordinate with each other for achieving the desired targets.

Dhaba, Nanwai shops sealed over unhygienic conditions in Pahalgam



GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: In continuation to intensified food safety inspections across tourist destinations, a team of Food Safety officials Anantnag Sunday sealed M/S Lucky Palace Dhaba and two Nanwai shops at Pahalgam after it found the premises operating under severe unhygienic and unsanitary conditions.

During the inspection, the establishments were found violating basic food safety and hygiene requirements prescribed under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006 and the rules and regulations thereunder including improper stor-

age of food articles, lack of cleanliness in food preparation areas, poor personal hygiene of food handlers, and overall insanitary conditions posing a serious risk to public health.

Taking serious cognizance of the violations, the department initiated immediate enforcement action and sealed the premises in the interest of consumer safety and public health.

Meanwhile, the Food Safety Department has reiterated its commitment towards ensuring safe and hygienic food for the public, particularly in tourist areas.

The department has also warned all Food Business Operators to strictly comply with food safety and hygiene standards failing which stringent legal action shall be initiated. Further, the general public has been urged to report unhygienic/food fraud practices to the department for prompt action.

Self Enumeration drive commenced in Kupwara



GMK NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA: Self Enumeration drive under the ongoing Census 2027 commenced in Kupwara district Sunday, with district authorities including the Deputy Commissioner who is also the Principal Census Officer, Shrikant Suse, completing the self-enumeration to launch the process.

The Deputy Commissioner has urged all residents to complete their self-enumeration. He stressed that the initiative is simple, secure and convenient, allowing citizens to submit census details at their own.

Public participation was highlighted as essential to the success of the census, with accurate and complete household responses expected to support effective planning and future development in the district.

Residents may complete self-enumeration through the official Census portal at se.census.gov.in.

The district administration has appealed to all citizens to access the portal, follow the simple steps, and cooperate with the ongoing census operations. Duration of Self Enumeration drive shall be from 17th May till 31st May 2026.

Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party Holds Workers' Convention in Handwara

GMK NEWS NETWORK

HANDWARA: The Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP) Sunday organized a grand workers' convention at Khanpora, Handwara, which witnessed enthusiastic participation from a large number of party workers, senior leaders, and local residents.

Addressing the gathering, SBSP Jammu and Kashmir State President, Vivek Bali, criticized the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference government, alleging that it has failed to fulfill the promises made to the people during the election campaign.

During the convention, people from different areas put forth several public grievances and highlighted various issues being faced by the common masses, including lack of basic facilities, unemployment, road connectivity, and developmental concerns. The participants expressed hope that the party leadership would strongly raise these issues at appropriate forums and work towards their early resolution.

Vivek Bali stated that despite tall claims and assurances given before elections, the ground real-



ity in many areas remains unchanged, and people continue to suffer due to the absence of basic amenities and developmental activities. He alleged that the promises made by the government have not translated into practical action at the grassroots level.

On the occasion, Vivek Bali also announced important organizational appointments to further strengthen the party structure in North Kashmir and District Kupwara.

Dr. Firdous Ahmad Wani was nominated as District President Kupwara, Mohd. Younis Dar as District Secretary Kupwara, Imtiyaz Ahmad Sheikh as Chief Media Incharge Kupwara, and Bashir Ahmad Najar was nominated as Co-Incharge North Kashmir.

The newly nominated office bearers thanked

the party leadership for reposing trust in them and assured that they would work tirelessly for strengthening the party and raising public issues at every platform.

Among other prominent leaders present during the convention were Shiyak Ahmad Raina, District President Kulgam, and Fayaz Ahmad, Vice President Kulgam, Bashir Ahmad Shah district president Kulgam, gulam Nabi Najar, Mohd Ashraf Mir, bashir ahmad mir along with several senior party leaders, workers, and local residents.

The party leadership reiterated its commitment towards strengthening the organization across Jammu and Kashmir and continuing to raise the genuine concerns of the people.

Prof. Ajaz Bashir takes over as IUST's Dean of Academic Affairs

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Professor Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, Director of Colleges, Jammu & Kashmir, has assumed charge as the Dean of Academic Affairs at the Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST), officials said.



Prof. Bashir, who was recently deputed to IUST as a Professor in Electronics and Communication Engineering, brings over three and a half decades of experience in academic administration, policy formulation, and institutional development.

He has been heading the Department of Higher Education as Director of Colleges since 2023 and has played a key role in advancing digital governance in higher education through initiatives like the data-driven policy planning system SIGMA, SCALE, and automated credit-based

contractual faculty engagement systems.

A Ph.D. in Electronics, Prof. Bashir has served as faculty and head of the Department of Electronics at S.P. College, Government Degree College Bemina, and Government Degree College Baramulla. He was appointed Principal in 2016 and headed Islamia College of Science & Commerce from 2019 to 2023, where he introduced several UG, PG, and diploma programmes under Academic Leap 2020, a Learning Management System, and examination reforms. Under his leadership, Islamia College became the first in J&K to implement the National Education Policy.

Later, as Principal of Amar Singh College with additional charge as Nodal Principal for Kashmir Division colleges, he initiated an infrastructural makeover of the institution.

Officials said Prof. Bashir continues to hold the charge of Director of Colleges and is driving a centralised, student-friendly admission process at the directorate level, expected to boost enrolment across degree colleges in J&K. (KNS)

Principal Census Officer briefs Media on launch of Self-Enumeration for Census 2027



GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Principal Census Officer (Urban) Commissioner, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC), Faz Lul Haseeb, Sunday briefed the media regarding the commencement of the Self-Enumeration phase of Census 2027, which begins today and will continue until May 31, 2026.

While addressing the media, He said that the Self-Enumeration initiative enables citizens to voluntarily submit their household and demographic details through a simple and convenient digital plat-

form. He emphasized that the initiative is aimed at facilitating greater public participation and ensuring accuracy in the Census process.

He further highlighted that Self-Enumeration is a significant citizen-centric initiative introduced for the first time in the history of the Indian Census, allowing residents to provide their information from the comfort of their homes. The initiative has been designed to promote ease, transparency, and efficiency in the Census exercise while strengthening public outreach and

supporting welfare-oriented planning.

Appealing to the general public, Haseeb urged all residents to actively participate in the Self-Enumeration process within the stipulated time frame and extend full cooperation to the administration for the successful conduct of Census 2027.

He also called upon citizens to ensure that accurate and complete information is provided so that the Census exercise reflects a true and reliable demographic profile, which will contribute to effective planning and development.

Dy CM reviews PWD works across Jammu region

Emphasizes adherence to timelines, quality parameters

GMK NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary Sunday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the progress of Public Works Department (PWD) projects across the districts of Jammu division.

The Deputy Chief Minister stressed the need for accelerating execution of all ongoing developmental projects and ensuring robust infrastructure development across the Jammu districts. He directed the officers to maintain efficiency in project implementation while ensuring timely completion of works.

During the meeting, the Deputy Chief Minister reviewed the status of works under R&B, PMGSY, SASCI and other sectors. He instructed the concerned officers to expedite the ongoing



tendering processes and ensure prompt allotment of works so that projects are completed within stipulated timelines.

Emphasising quality and accountability, the Deputy Chief Minister cautioned the officers and contractors against the use of substandard material in developmental works. He asserted that strict action would be taken against the

officials and contractors found compromising on quality standards or causing unnecessary delay in project execution.

"We have adopted a zero-tolerance policy against quality violations and delays in completion of projects," maintained the Deputy Chief Minister.

He further reiterated the government's commitment

towards transparent, efficient and people-centric development, aimed at strengthening the infrastructure and improving public service delivery across the region.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Engineer, Executive Engineers of concerned engineering wings and other senior officers of other concerned departments.

Satish Sharma promises action on jobs, drugs, civic issues

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Minister for Transport, Food, Civil Supplies and Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma, on Sunday said coordination between the Centre and the Union Territory government was important to streamline governance and address public issues, while asserting that the administration was committed to tackling drug addiction and unemployment.

Sharma said bureaucratic hurdles were delaying several processes, but maintained that the government would resolve them gradually.

"There are bureaucratic hurdles, but we will fix everything. Coordination between the state and the Centre is very important," Sharma said.

The minister said the government was working to restore the "beautiful state" Jammu and Kashmir once was and was implementing



austerity measures in line with directions from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

Highlighting welfare initiatives, Sharma said the government had approved six free LPG cylinders for beneficiaries and introduced free ridership schemes for women, who make up "half of the population".

He said 200 new vehicles had been added to the transport sector and amendments were being considered to ensure welfare measures reached deserving sections, including poor women, unemployed youth, elderly persons and people

with disabilities.

"The biggest priority is the fight against addiction. We all have to fight together to eliminate drugs completely," Sharma said, while congratulating the Lieutenant Governor and the Chief Minister for launching anti-drug initiatives.

The minister also stressed the need to preserve traditional and eco-friendly modes of transport, saying the use of horses in certain areas could generate employment and reduce environmental damage.

"If we want to preserve ourselves, we have to love nature. Traditional transport systems can provide

livelihoods and are affordable," he said.

Sharma said efforts were also underway to fill vacancies and address long-pending issues in departments such as sports and food supplies.

Referring to Anantnag, Sharma said he shared a close emotional bond with the district because of his family's roots in the area. He assured residents that issues related to the Assistant Regional Transport Office (ARTO) would be addressed soon.

"I will review the matter and ensure a good officer is posted there as soon as possible," he said.

Calling for communal harmony, Sharma said temples, mosques and gurdwaras should serve the purpose of keeping people united.

"We are one. Humanity should remain alive and the message of saints and messengers should be spread so people can live together peacefully," he added.(KNS).

Govt withholds salaries of ACDs over poor MGNREGA performance

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The government of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday withheld the salaries of four Additional District Programme Coordinators (ADPCs)/Assistant Commissioners Development (ACDs) over poor performance in implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act during the first quarter of the financial year 2026-27.

According to the order issued by the Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, a review of district-wise performance under MGNREGA revealed "extremely poor and negligible achievement" in generating person-days against the approved labour budget targets in certain districts.

The order stated that despite repeated directions and monitoring by the department for timely execution of works, demand registration and enhancement of employment generation under MGNREGA, some districts failed to show satisfactory progress, indicating a lack of effective supervision, monitoring and field-level implementation.

The officials whose salaries have been withheld included Muzaffar Ahmad Sheikh of Shopian, Abdul Rashid Ganaie of Kupwara, Manoj Kumar of Kishtwar and Rafiq Ahmad of Samba.

The government said the salaries of the concerned officers would remain withheld with immediate effect till further orders and subject to improvement in performance under the

scheme. The Secretary said the department is committed towards ensuring effective implementation of MGNREGA and accountability at every level.

"MGNREGA is a flagship rural livelihood programme aimed at providing guaranteed wage employment to rural households. Any laxity in implementation, delay in execution of works or failure to achieve approved labour budget targets defeats the objective of the scheme and directly impacts the rural communities," maintained the Secretary.

He said district and field-level officers have been repeatedly directed to improve the planning, execution and monitoring of works to ensure timely employment generation.

"We expect all implementing agencies and officers to work with seriousness and dedication. Strict action will be taken wherever negligence or poor performance is found. The focus of the department remains on strengthening the rural livelihoods and ensuring that benefits of the scheme reach deserving people on time," he added.

The order further directed all the District Programme Coordinators, who are Deputy Commissioners, to closely monitor the implementation of MGNREGA and furnish fortnightly progress reports to the Administrative Department. It warned that any non-compliance would invite disciplinary proceedings under the relevant provisions of the J&K Civil Services Rules and other applicable laws.

Rana listens to grievances of Poonch residents; asks for quality healthcare

GMK NEWS NETWORK

POONCH: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, Sunday interacted with scores of delegations from different areas of Mendhar to hear their grievances, demands and developmental concerns.

The locals raised a wide range of issues including settlement of Forest Rights Act claims, deployment of mobile teachers in local schools, macadamisation of roads and installation of street lights in the area. The residents urged the Minister to expedite resolution of long-pending Forest Rights Act cases and ensure that tribal and forest-dwelling communities receive their entitled rights without further delay. They also demanded deployment of mobile teachers to address the shortage of teaching staff and called for improvement in road infrastructure and street lighting across the area.

The Minister assured the residents that their demands would be taken up with the concerned departments on priority. He directed the officers to ensure immediate redressal of grievances, with a time-bound follow-up mechanism in place so that no concern raised goes unaddressed.

The Minister also



reviewed the progress on ongoing development works in Mendhar and adjoining areas, taking stock of the pace and quality of execution across various departments. He directed the concerned officers to ensure that all ongoing works are completed within stipulated timelines and that there is absolutely no compromise on quality at any stage of execution. He stressed that public money must translate into durable, tangible outcomes for the people.

Rana also reviewed the functioning of Mobile Medical Units (MMUs), which have been designed to deliver comprehensive diagnostic and primary healthcare services directly to the doorsteps of tribal communities and residents

of remote areas with limited access to conventional healthcare infrastructure. He stressed that tribal communities and nomadic populations living in far-flung areas should be provided all essential medical facilities and quality healthcare services at their doorsteps without any inconvenience.

He added that the MMU initiative reflects the government's commitment to inclusive healthcare and its focused approach towards strengthening the healthcare services in geographically challenging and socio-economically disadvantaged regions.

Interacting with the locals, the Minister reaffirmed that the government is focused on strengthening the public service delivery

and ensuring that the benefits of welfare and developmental schemes reach every deserving household across Jammu and Kashmir.

"The resolve of present administration is to ensure that development reaches every household, no matter how remote. Our focus is on improving the everyday lives of people by ensuring reliable drinking water, better irrigation facilities, enhanced connectivity and all other essential services required for holistic development of far-flung areas," the Minister said.

Senior officers of the concerned departments, local public representatives and a large number of residents from Mendhar and adjoining areas attended the programme.

Amarnath Ji Yatra Army conducts training capsule for VDGs in Ramban

GMK NEWS NETWORK

RAMBAN: In preparation for the forthcoming Amarnath Yatra 2026, Indian Army organised a comprehensive training capsule for Village Defence Groups (VDGs) from Kabbri, Gandhri, Khatter, Mughala and Bhatni villages in Ramban district along the strategically important NH-44 axis.

The training aimed at enhancing local preparedness, strengthening coordination with security forces and fostering a secure environment for the smooth conduct of the annual pilgrimage, which symbolizes faith, unity and national integration. The capsule included practical training on firing positions, weapon handling and fire & move drills, enabling participants to effectively respond during contingencies and assist in maintaining vigilance in their respective areas.

The initiative reflects the unwavering commitment of the Indian Army towards ensuring a safe, peaceful and successful Yatra for thousands of pilgrims visiting the Union Territory. It also reinforced the strong bond of trust and cooperation between the Army and local populace, embodying the spirit of "Awam aur Fauj - Saath Saath".

Local participants expressed their appreciation for the training and reaffirmed their resolve to contribute towards maintaining peace, harmony and security during the Yatra period.

Indian Army remains steadfast in its commitment towards peace, security and nation-building efforts in Jammu & Kashmir

Rana launches ₹57.98 cr development projects in remote, border villages of Medhar

GMK NEWS NETWORK

POONCH: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment, Javed Ahmed Rana, Sunday laid the foundation for a series of major development projects worth ₹57.98 crore in Mendhar, aimed at strengthening the drinking water supply, irrigation infrastructure and rural connectivity across several remote and border villages.

The projects included 20 Water Supply Schemes under the UT CAPEX programme with a cumulative cost of ₹51.84 crore. These schemes are designed to provide Functional Household Tap Connections (FHTCs) to uncovered and underserved villages of Sub Division Mendhar ensuring access to safe and potable drinking water for thousands of residents.

In addition, irrigation and flood control works worth ₹3.62 crore were

launched to modernise and strengthen the water management infrastructure in the area. Foundation for construction of motorable bridge over Chattral Nallah at an estimated cost of ₹2.52 crore was also laid which will improve the road connectivity and facilitate easier access to healthcare, education and other essential services.

Addressing a large gathering of local residents, public representatives and senior officers, Rana reaffirmed Omar Abdullah led government's commitment to equitable and inclusive development, particularly in remote and border areas that have long remained underserved. He emphasised that access to safe drinking water, efficient irrigation and better connectivity are essential for improving the quality of life and ensuring sustainable socio-economic development in far-flung areas.

"These projects are not merely infrastructure works but they reflect the resolve of the administration to ensure that development reaches every household, every field and every corner, no matter how remote," the Minister said.

Highlighting the importance of responsible water management, Rana said that creation of infrastructure must go hand in hand with conservation and efficient use of water resources.

"Providing water is only half the task; managing and conserving it is equally important. Water saved is water earned and every community must treat this infrastructure as a shared public asset," he added.

The Minister directed the executing agencies to ensure timely completion of all the projects while strictly maintaining the quality standards. He stressed the need for continuous monitoring and accountability so that the

benefits of these schemes reach the people without unnecessary delay.

Speaking about the irrigation component, Rana noted that the modernisation of canals and khuls would help the farmers enhance their agricultural productivity, minimise water losses and improve irrigation efficiency. He added that flood protection measures would also safeguard the agricultural land and residential areas during heavy rains and flash floods.

As part of the connectivity initiative, the Minister laid the foundation stone for the construction of a 60-metre (2x30 metre span) single-lane plate girder motorable bridge over Chattral Nallah on the SK Road.

The bridge, being constructed under the Bridge Sector Permanent Restoration 2025-26 programme by the Public Works (R&B) Department, is expected

to significantly improve accessibility in the area.

Underlining the significance of the bridge project, Rana said that residents of Chattral had faced hardships due to the absence of a proper motorable crossing. "This bridge will not only ease daily travel for residents but will also open new avenues for economic activity, ensure timely access to healthcare and education and strengthen the connectivity of this remote region with the rest of Mendhar," he said.

Among the major projects launched the Minister also laid the foundation stone for construction of the PHE Division Mendhar office complex including Irrigation Subdivision Mendhar.

Senior officers from the Jal Shakti Department, Irrigation and Flood Control Department, district administration, local representatives and the local residents attended the programme.

'Land of Ilm cannot survive on broken institutions'

Naeem Akhtar slams neglect of ANMT School Bandipora

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Senior PDP leader and former minister Naeem Akhtar has expressed serious concern over the deteriorating condition of the ANMT School Bandipora, saying the institution is facing severe academic and infrastructural neglect despite being responsible for shaping the future of healthcare education in the district.

In a statement, Naeem Akhtar said it is unfortunate that the institution is being run mostly by staff deputed from the ISM Department and District Hospital Bandipora instead of permanent faculty members. He said while these deputed employees are managing few classes at the ANMT School, their own departments and health centres are suffering badly due to staff shortages.

"It is deeply unfortunate that a professional insti-

tution meant for training future healthcare workers is surviving on temporary arrangements. One faculty member is deputed from District Hospital Bandipora while several others are from the ISM Department. This not only affects the quality of education at ANMT but also hampers functioning of the departments from where these employees have been taken," he said.

He also questioned why the school bus remains unused without a driver while another vehicle belonging to the institution has allegedly been hijacked for official use at the CMO Office.

Naeem Akhtar further said it is shocking that in today's era, classrooms at the institution still function without smart boards and modern teaching facilities. He added that the institution lacks proper fencing, posing security concerns

for students and staff.

"A college without fencing, classrooms without smart boards and students without basic facilities reflects sheer administrative failure. Even the principal, according to reports, visits only on alternate days. This is not how educational institutions should function," he said.

Appealing higher authorities to intervene immediately, the former minister said Bandipora has always been known as the "land of Ilm, Adab and Aab," but such conditions are pushing its educational institutions towards decline.

"Bandipora has produced scholars, intellectuals and professionals for decades. But by seeing the present condition of institutions like ANMT School, one fears whether this district will continue to uphold its legacy as the land of knowledge in future," he added.

Good Morning **Kashmir**

EDITORIAL

Self-Made Rate List Of Sacrificial Animals

Even though Eid-ul-Azha is more than a week away, you can already feel the festive energy humming through the streets of Jammu and Kashmir. The markets are humming with life, families are out prepping, and there's that familiar, unmistakable buzz in the air as people talk about buying their sacrificial animals. But this year, beneath the excitement, there is a heavy layer of anxiety. The issue on everyone's mind is the staggering cost of sacrificial animals. Traders are asking for nearly 450 per kilogram on live weight, which translates to a crushing 900 per kilogram for meat. For an average middle-class or lower-income family, those numbers aren't just high, they are a wall. People who save up all year, looking forward to fulfilling this deeply personal and important religious obligation, are finding themselves standing in the markets feeling completely helpless.

Eid-ul-Azha is supposed to be a beautiful reminder of sacrifice, compassion, and community. It's a time when everyone, regardless of their financial standing, should feel equal. Yet, the current market reality tells a much harsher story. Instead of empathy and fairness during a sacred season, it feels like basic supply and demand is being weaponized for maximum profit.

Because of this, the mood in many households has shifted from anticipation to stress: Budget Cuts: Families are being forced to slash spending on other Eid essentials just to afford an animal. Compromised Choices: Many are opting for much smaller animals than they traditionally would. Heartbreaking Decisions: Some families are facing the painful reality of having to opt out of the sacrifice entirely this year.

What makes this situation truly frustrating for locals is the glaring lack of market regulation. This isn't a new problem; the chaotic surge in prices happens like clockwork every single year. Yet, when you walk through the markets, there is no visible enforcement, no capped rates, and no protection for the average consumer. The Bottom Line: At a time when everyday inflation is already stretching household budgets to the breaking point, these unregulated festive prices are a breaking blow. Eid is meant to bring families together in relief and celebration, not burden them with financial dread. If local authorities don't step in soon to monitor these rates and curb the exploitation, the warmth of the festive spirit risks being entirely eclipsed by public frustration and heartbreak

Drink In The Shadows

Stigma, Secrecy, And Social Harm

DR RATAN BHATTACHARJEE

Drinking alcohol has long been regarded as a private habit, a personal choice exercised behind closed doors or within the intimate boundaries of social gatherings. For centuries, it has been woven into the fabric of human culture, appearing in religious rituals, celebratory feasts, and everyday social interactions. Yet the seemingly personal act of consuming alcohol has increasingly become a matter of public concern, raising questions about health, safety, economics, and social responsibility. The transformation of drinking from a private indulgence to a public issue reflects the complex interplay between individual autonomy and collective welfare. Understanding this shift requires examining not only the cultural roots of alcohol consumption but also the far-reaching consequences that extend beyond the individual drinker.

Alcohol's cultural significance is one of the primary reasons it has historically been viewed as a private matter. In many societies, drinking is deeply embedded in tradition. Wine has been central to Mediterranean life for thousands of years, symbolising hospitality, celebration, and even spirituality. In Japan, sake is used in Shinto rituals and ceremonies, while in parts of Africa, locally brewed beverages play a role in communal bonding and rites of passage. These traditions reinforce the idea that drinking is not merely a personal choice but a cultural expression, something inherited and normalised across generations. Because of this cultural embedding, many people see drinking as an extension of personal identity and social belonging, not as a behaviour that warrants public scrutiny. Modern values of personal autonomy further strengthen the perception of drinking as a private habit. Contemporary societies place high importance on individual freedom, especially regarding lifestyle choices.

Adults often view their drinking habits as part of their private lives, akin to their dietary preferences or recreational activities. The belief that "what I do in my own home is my business" is deeply ingrained, and many resist the idea of government or society interfering with personal consumption. This emphasis on autonomy makes it difficult for some to accept that drinking might have broader implications that justify public intervention.

Social bonding also plays a significant role in framing alcohol consumption as a personal or interpersonal matter rather than a public one. Sharing a drink is often seen as a gesture of friendship, trust, or celebration. Whether it is a toast at a wedding, a beer after work, or a glass of wine during dinner, alcohol frequently serves as a social lubricant that facilitates conversation and connection. Because these interactions occur in private or semi-private settings, the act of drinking feels intimate and harmless. Yet this perception can obscure the reality that alcohol's effects often extend far beyond the moment of consumption.

Despite its cultural and personal dimensions, alcohol consumption has consequences that reach into the public sphere, transforming what appears to be a private habit into a public question. One of the most significant public concerns is the impact of alcohol on health. Alcohol is linked to more than 200 diseases and injury conditions, including liver cirrhosis, cardiovascular disease, various cancers, and mental health disorders. Heavy drinking can lead to addiction, cognitive decline, and long-term physical damage. These health consequences do not remain confined to the individual; they place substantial burdens on healthcare systems. Emergency services, rehabilitation programmes, and long-term medical care often rely on public funding, meaning that society collectively bears the cost of alcohol-related health issues. When private behaviour generates public expense, the line between personal freedom and public responsibility becomes blurred.

Public safety is another area where alcohol's private consumption becomes a societal concern. Alcohol impairs judgement, coordination, and reaction time, making it a major factor in accidents and injuries. Drunk driving remains one of the leading causes of traffic fatalities worldwide, claiming thousands of lives each year. Beyond the roads, alcohol contributes to workplace accidents, falls, drownings, and other preventable injuries. When impaired individuals endanger not only themselves but also others, drinking becomes a matter of public safety rather than private choice. Society must then grapple with how to protect its members without excessively infringing on personal freedoms. Alcohol is also closely linked to violence and crime, further illustrating



its public impact. Police departments around the world report that a significant proportion of assaults, domestic violence incidents, and public disturbances involve alcohol. Weekends, holidays, and major events often see spikes in alcohol-related incidents, straining law enforcement resources and affecting community well-being.

Domestic violence, in particular, highlights the way alcohol can transform private behaviour into public harm. While the act of drinking may occur behind closed doors, its consequences can spill outward, affecting families, neighbours, and entire communities. The economic costs associated with alcohol misuse add another layer to the public debate. Nations spend billions annually on alcohol-related healthcare, law enforcement, lost productivity, and social services. Employers face challenges such as absenteeism, reduced performance, and workplace injuries linked to drinking. These economic burdens are not borne solely by individuals who drink; they affect taxpayers, businesses, and public institutions. When a private habit generates widespread economic consequences, it becomes difficult to argue that it is purely a personal matter.

Beyond health, safety, and economics, alcohol consumption has profound social implications that extend into families and communities. Within households, alcohol misuse can strain relationships, contribute to neglect, and create unstable environments. Children growing up in homes affected by alcohol dependency face higher risks of emotional trauma, academic difficulties, and future substance abuse. These intergenerational effects demonstrate that alcohol's impact is not limited to the individual drinker but can shape the lives of those around them. Communities with high rates of alcohol misuse often experience increased crime, noise, and public disorder.

The clustering of bars and liquor stores in certain neighbourhoods can contribute to cycles of poverty and violence, further illustrating how alcohol consumption intersects with broader social issues. Given these wide-ranging consequences, it is unsurprising that governments have long intervened to regulate alcohol. From ancient laws governing taverns to the dramatic experiment of Prohibition in the United States, societies have repeatedly attempted to manage alcohol's impact. While Prohibition ultimately failed, it demonstrated the extent to which governments were willing to intervene in private behaviour for the perceived public good. Today, governments use a variety of regulatory strategies, including age restrictions, taxes, licensing laws, advertising regulations, and drunk driving legislation. These measures reflect an ongoing effort to balance personal freedom with public safety. Public health campaigns also play a role in shaping attitudes toward drinking, encouraging moderation and raising awareness of alcohol's risks. Yet these interventions often spark debate about the appropriate limits of government authority. Critics argue that excessive regulation infringes on personal autonomy, while supporters contend that the societal costs of alcohol justify intervention. This tension lies at the heart of the question: when does a private habit become a public issue? The modern world introduces new challenges that further complicate this debate. Alcohol companies now use sophisticated marketing strategies, often targeting young adults through social media, sponsorships, and lifestyle branding. These campaigns normalise drinking and can encourage excessive consumption, particularly among impressionable audiences. At the same time, social

norms around drinking are changing. In some societies, alcohol consumption is becoming more acceptable among women and younger people, expanding the demographic of drinkers.

Conversely, movements promoting sobriety, "mindful drinking", and alcohol-free lifestyles are gaining traction, reflecting a growing awareness of alcohol's risks. The rise of home drinking, especially during global crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, has shifted consumption patterns in ways that reduce public visibility but may increase private harm. Globalisation has also made alcohol more widely available than ever, raising questions about regulation and cultural influence. These developments highlight the ethical complexities surrounding alcohol consumption. Ultimately, the question is not whether alcohol should be treated entirely as a private matter or entirely as a public issue. Rather, the challenge is to find a balance that respects personal autonomy while addressing public harm.

In Kashmir, however, the scenario surrounding alcohol consumption is markedly different from many other parts of the world, shaped by a distinct blend of

Even moderate consumption can invite judgement, gossip, or social distancing. This dynamic pushes alcohol use into the shadows, where it becomes less visible but not necessarily less prevalent. The secrecy surrounding drinking can sometimes intensify its risks, as individuals may avoid seeking help for addiction or health issues due to fear of social stigma. In this way, the private nature of drinking in Kashmir paradoxically amplifies its potential to become a public concern. The political landscape of Kashmir adds another layer of complexity. The region has experienced decades of conflict, instability, and militarisation, all of which shape public attitudes toward alcohol. The government's decisions regarding liquor shops, taxation, and regulation often spark public debate.

Proposals to open new liquor outlets, for example, frequently face strong opposition from religious leaders, civil society groups, and ordinary citizens who fear that increased availability will erode cultural values or contribute to social problems. Thus, alcohol becomes not only a personal or health issue but also a political and cultural flashpoint.

Economic factors also shape the Kashmiri context. Tourism is a major industry in the region, and visitors, especially from outside Kashmir, often expect access to alcohol. Hotels, restaurants, and tourist hubs may therefore stock alcohol to cater to non-local guests. This creates a dual reality: alcohol is restricted or frowned upon in everyday Kashmiri life, yet it is present and accessible in spaces designed for outsiders. This contrast can generate tension, as some locals view the availability of alcohol for tourists as a necessary economic compromise, while others see it as a threat to cultural integrity.

The social consequences of alcohol misuse in Kashmir also differ from those in societies where drinking is more openly acknowledged. Because alcohol consumption is often hidden, its harmful effects—such as addiction, domestic conflict, or health deterioration—may remain unaddressed until they reach a crisis point. Families may conceal a relative's drinking problem to avoid social embarrassment, delaying intervention and support. This secrecy can intensify the emotional and psychological burden on households, particularly women and children, who may suffer silently from the consequences of a family member's addiction. In this sense, the private nature of drinking in Kashmir does not shield the community from harm; instead, it can make the harm more difficult to detect and address. At the same time, it is important to recognise that attitudes toward alcohol in Kashmir are not static.

Urbanisation, exposure to global media, and generational shifts are gradually reshaping perceptions. Younger people, especially in urban centres, may view alcohol less as a moral issue and more as a lifestyle choice influenced by global culture. Yet even among youth, the tension between personal freedom and cultural expectations remains strong. Many navigate a delicate balance between modern influences and traditional values, reflecting the broader identity struggles of a region caught between history and change. In this context, the question of whether alcohol is a private habit or a public issue takes on a distinct character in Kashmir. Thus, in Kashmir, alcohol is not merely a matter of personal choice; it is a mirror reflecting the region's complex interplay of identity, morality, politics, and modernity.

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Alcohol's cultural significance is one of the primary reasons it has historically been viewed as a private matter. In many societies, drinking is deeply embedded in tradition. Wine has been central to Mediterranean life for thousands of years, symbolising hospitality, celebration, and even spirituality.

cultural values, religious beliefs, political sensitivities, and social expectations. While alcohol is consumed in the region, it carries a different social meaning, often surrounded by stigma and moral scrutiny. The predominantly Muslim population of Kashmir views alcohol through the lens of religious teachings that discourage or prohibit its use, which means that drinking is not merely a private habit but a behaviour that intersects with deeply held cultural and spiritual norms. As a result, alcohol consumption in Kashmir tends to be more hidden, more private, and more socially sensitive than in societies where drinking is normalised or openly accepted. This cultural and religious backdrop creates a unique tension. On one hand, individuals who consume alcohol often do so discreetly, framing it as a strictly personal matter. On the other hand, the act of drinking is not perceived as morally neutral within the community.

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■ Mind The Gap

Structural Loopholes And Future Challenges In Education

MOHD ISHAQ SHAH

“IF YOU WANT TO DESTROY A NATION, DESTROY ITS EDUCATION SYSTEM.”
- Michael M. Boone

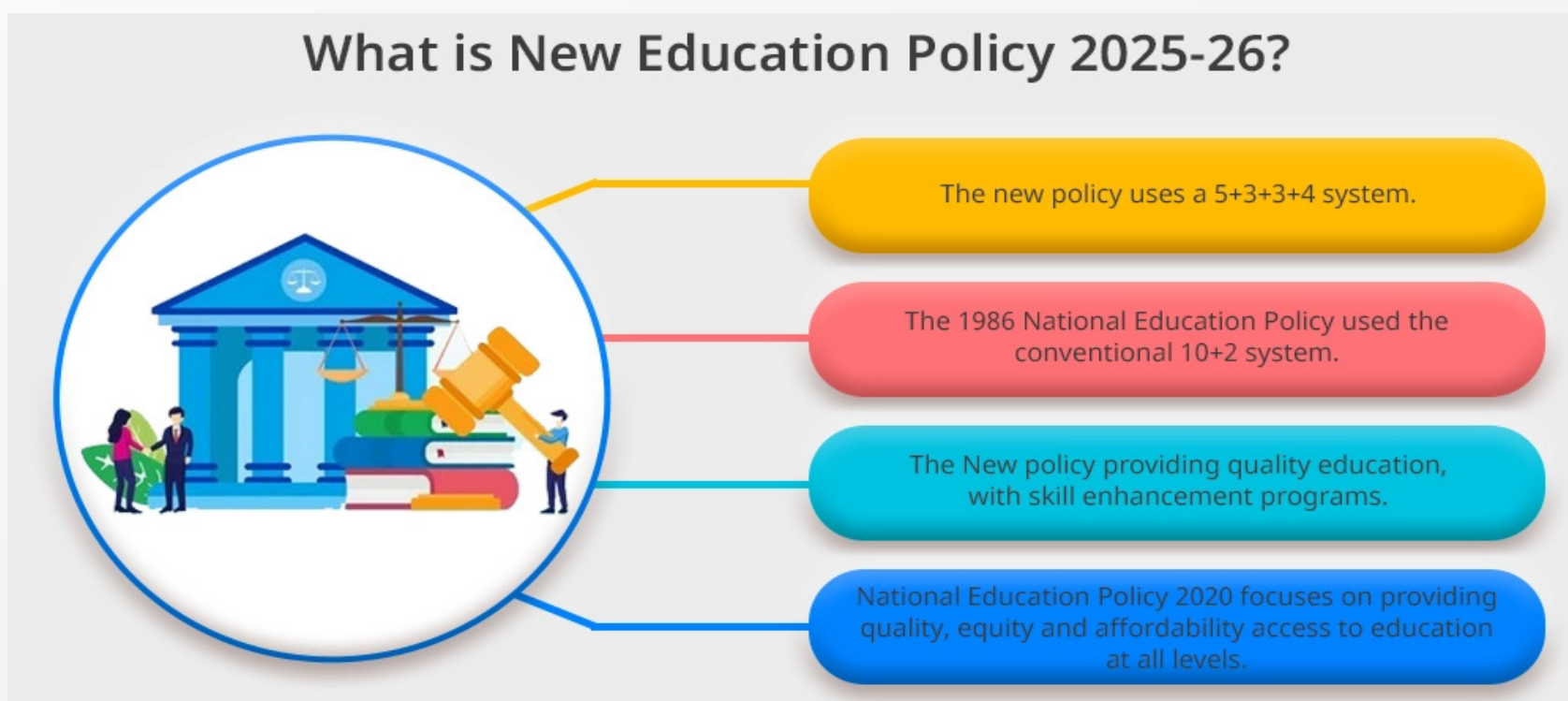
Very recently we could read the stinging news that the NEET Examination 2026 has been cancelled after the allegations of a paper leak from Rajasthan state. This is a death rattle of the education system in India and a bolt from the blue for a layman and especially for a learner who shapes his mind in a way that he roams in an idealistic world till such dumbfounding news comes to the market and all the dreams are shattered like a castle made of sand. And all the foundations of his dream world are stirred by a ghostly wind of a withered structural system. The quote that I have mentioned here implies that a nation doesn't need to be bombed or have nuclear weapons required to destroy it. You only have to pull off the mat of knowledge from its people, and they will automatically be destroyed.

Although the quoted statement is frequently attributed to Nelson Mandela or historical figures like Chanakya and Napoleon Bonaparte, the precise origin is actually a passage from the 1998 book *The Chaos* (writ-

How come it is possible that the country's top-most exams, like NEET, NET and NDA etc undergo a paper leakage that destroys the careers of lakhs of youth who take unlimited toil and burn midnight oil to get such exams cracked?

ten under the pseudonym Michael M. Boone), which states, 'Destroying any nation does not require the use of atomic bombs or the use of long-range missiles. It only requires lowering the quality of education and allowing cheating in the examinations by the students. This quote highlights a harsh reality: a society's foundation is only as strong as its professionals and leaders. When the integrity of an education system fails, allowing institutions to falter or permitting cheating, it produces unqualified doctors, incompetent engineers, dishonest judges, and inefficient leaders. The resulting collapse of these pillars slowly destroys the nation from the inside out.'

Despite launching various schemes and flagship programmes, why our country can't control the downgrading of educational standards simply indicates the failure of structure. Why corruption has been ingrained in the blood of people. Why moral consciousness has gone from our land. These are the questions that strike the mind of every Tom, Dick and Harry except those who are involved in structural corruption. How come it is possible that the country's topmost exams, like NEET, NET and NDA etc undergo a paper leakage that destroys the



careers of lakhs of youth who take unlimited toil and burn midnight oil to get such exams cracked? Consequently, the undeserving candidates get selected and get paid by the govt, and the service impact factor is zero, which in turn results in national resource wastage. As a matter of reference, I would like to mention some written evidence from international journalism.

Aemro Worku, in his article "Education under Siege in Ethiopia - 30 August, 2025", reacts with the same intensity about the declining education system in Ethiopia. The author underscores the loopholes in the Ethiopian education system. And tries to maintain a balance between the public and private sector educations. Addis Abeba, in his article published on 20 OCTOBER 2025 mentions "The quote by American educational reformer John Dewey, 'If education does not teach you to resist injustice, it has failed,' serves not merely as a philosophical reflection but as a moral indictment of the current state of Ethiopia's education sector. As the author personally witnessed as a university student and later as faculty at Addis Ababa University and a researcher at the Institute of Education Research, since 1990, Ethiopia has witnessed a remarkable expansion in educational access, guided by the 1994 Education and Training Policy, which enshrined education as both a consti-

tuitional right and a national development priority."

universities are managed by the country's top-level politicians and bureaucrats who have no one to ask what they are doing. Coming to the foundational stage of the education system in our countries, it still goes like it used to go 50 years back. Still, we are not able to come out of the traditional exams system and custom of lenience during the board exams plus loose evaluation system. The result is that we are taking our nation to the Dark Continent, from where they will return back and will be lost forever, for the target of our leaders is only to grab national resources and enjoy the luxurious life that the political structure provides them with.

The way forward: Denying education to weak learners is no solution to the problem, but definitely the categorisation and allotment of courses according to learners' interest and capability will help us a lot to reform the system. The 7 C's of 21st-Century Learning that are very crucial to the foundational development of learners are given hereunder.

Critical Thinking & Problem Solving: Analysing, evaluating, and reasoning effectively to solve complex problems.

- Creativity & Innovation: Thinking creatively, working with others to innovate, and implementing new ideas.
- Collaboration: Working effectively with teams, compromising, and

was introduced. After India became independent, the constitution committed six fundamental rights, of which one was the Right to Education. It allowed free education for every child up between the ages of 6 and 14 years.

The education system is mainly divided into pre-primary, primary, elementary and secondary education, which is followed by higher studies. However, there are many drawbacks and loopholes in this system which if curbed can work for the overall development of the country.

Regulating the higher education system is the paramount need of the hour. Research quality needs to be improved. Private universities offer research opportunities in bulk, and entry to the research field has fewer formalities. Online exams and interviews undermine the quality of research and potential of scholars. How come it's possible that a university lets the scholar in without interacting with him in an offline mode? Second problem lies in the govt-run universities that are totally corrupted, and a proper lobby system works there that results in substandard quality of research for the deserving who are denied admission. There must be a selection committee comprising outside members who have no intimacy with the PG level students. Reservation policy must be avoided in case of admission to the research programme. The biggest problem with

- Quality of education – There is a major difference in the quality of education being provided in the rural and urban areas of the country. Steps must be taken to standardize the quality of education across India so that everyone can get equal and unbiased knowledge and opportunities to grow.
- Making education affordable – There are Government schools and educational Institutions which are affordable but lack in terms of infrastructure and quality. On the other hand, there are various private education institutions which demand high fees and have better infrastructure and equipment to study. This disparity must be worked upon and the Government must make education affordable and accessible for all.

A transparent exam system needs to be initiated, or on-the-spot interviews should be given first priority. No written exams can do any betterment to the future discourse. Language qualifying criteria in centre-sponsored departments must be eliminated, as it keeps back thousands of intelligent candidates from entering the system that can give us better output than the traditionally selected candidates. One cannot understand why an aspirant for an English language teacher post should qualify in Hindi. Why should a scholar of mathematics qualify in the Hindi section of the exam paper when his field of study is different? Indeed, the language required for communication purposes can be improved later on through training courses. In time, the recruitment process should be given the topmost priority. As it has been seen, the state govts take a long gap of 5 to 6 years to initiate the process of recruitment, while the centre govt has a regular calendar that gets least varied sometimes but not by years. Meanwhile, we stop recruitment processes; thousands get retired from services, and lakhs pass out of colleges and universities, hence creating a large vacuum in the departments that affects the work culture and the outcomes of the services. Why should the budget always be a hurdle to our govt for reform? Why is there not a financial plan to meet the required finance for ensuring regularity in recruitment processes?

Why should we follow the contract/ad hoc/need-based tactics? Why shouldn't we follow a systematic pattern so that we can eliminate unemployment as well as improve the work culture? But all this needs a sincere heart and a sharp mind that perhaps our leaders don't have. Why we can't regularize the service of contract/ Ad hoc/need-based employees, after following a proper procedure and after fixing a specific service period in such cases, will help us maintain our budget and tackle the unemployment process as well. Concluding, let me say that if sincere efforts are not initiated and the system is not regulated, surely the time is not far when foreigners will rule us again. And we shall never be able to come out of that captivity until doomsday sets in.

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building community.

- Communication: Effectively communicating, analysing, and creating media, as well as listening.
- Computing & ICT Literacy: Proficiency in information, communication, and technology literacies.
- Cross-Cultural Understanding: Understanding diverse perspectives and navigating a globalised world.
- Career & Learning Self-Reliance: Developing independence, adaptability, and self-directed learning skills.

A major shift in the education system can be observed from the pre and post-British rule till today in India. Initially, children were educated in Gurukuls which was later modified and the modern education system

the education system lies with the recruitment exam agencies that have totally been manipulated by politicians and bureaucrats.

There are a few simple solutions which can help in overcoming the problems with the India Education System:

- Innovations required – India is moving towards digital education. This will help in budding the innovative minds of students and the youth of the country. This will bring a transformation in the Indian education system and the authorities and Government must encourage and boost the young minds to focus on overall development rather than just the book-learning.

Indian-Australian Athlete Finishes Historic 5,000-km 'One India Run' in Srinagar

Youth Must Stay Away From Drugs, Choose Fitness and Purpose in Life: Om Satija

AGENCIES

SRINAGAR: Indian-Australian endurance athlete Om Satija on Sunday completed his ambitious 5,000-kilometre "One India Run" campaign after reaching Srinagar, marking the culmination of a 110-day cross-country journey from Kanyakumari to Kashmir.

According to details available, 23-year-old Om Satija, originally from Melbourne, Australia, completed nearly 4,950 kilometres before concluding the run at Zabarwan Park in Srinagar.

Speaking after completing the historic run, Om said the main message of his journey was to inspire youth towards fitness, discipline and a meaningful life.

"Youth must stay away from drugs and negative activities. Fitness is very important not only for physical health but also for mental strength and confi-



dence," he said.

He said young people should dream big and work hard to bring positive change in society.

"This run was not just about endurance, it was about showing that with discipline, consistency and purpose, anything is possible," Om added.

The initiative, titled "One India Run," was launched to promote fitness, resilience, mental strength and social respon-

sibility among youth while mobilising support for vulnerable communities.

Om averaged close to 50 kilometres per day during the journey and aims to become the first person to run along the east coast of India and the youngest athlete to run the length of the country.

The campaign is also raising funds for the Udayan Foundation, which works for children from marginalised and leprosy-

affected communities. Organisers said the initiative aims to raise Rs 60 lakh to help educate nearly 1,000 children over the next five years.

As per the organisers, nearly Rs 20 lakh has already been raised through public participation, community events and run club activations held in several cities including Bengaluru, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Delhi and Ludhiana. (JKNS)

Census-2027

DC Pulwama completes self-enumeration on spot; Urges active public participation

GMK NEWS NETWORK

PULWAMA: District Administration Pulwama Sunday formally kickstarted the Self-Enumeration (SE) phase of Census 2027 during a mega launch event organised at the Administrative Complex, DC Office Pulwama.

The event marked the commencement of the Self-Enumeration process in the district, aimed at encouraging citizens to voluntarily participate in the Census exercise through the digital platform. The SE portal will remain open for 15 days (upto 31st May) prior to the start of House to House Houselisting Operations (HLO) by the Enumerator.

Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, who is also the Principal Census Officer of the district, led the programme by completing his self-enumeration on the spot and urged people to actively participate in the national exercise for ensuring accurate and comprehensive data collection.

The event was attended by

Member of Legislative Assembly, Tral, Rafiq Ahmad Naik; former District Development Council Chairperson, Syed Abdul Bari Andrabi; former DDC members, representatives of various political parties, social activists and the general public. Besides, Additional Deputy Commissioners of Pulwama and Tral, Chief Planning Officer Pulwama, General Manager DIC Pulwama, District Census Coordinator; Charge Officers, officers from the administration, Supervisors, enumerators and officials from various departments were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC said that Census is an important national exercise which forms the bedrock for policy formulation, welfare initiatives, resource allocation and developmental planning. "As the Self-Enumeration exercise starts today, I urge all citizens to participate in the process enthusiastically and ensure that accurate information is furnished," he added.

Dr. Qayoom further said

that Census 2027 will broadly be conducted in three phases including Self-Enumeration, House Listing and Housing Census (HLO) and Population Enumeration. He said that the self-enumeration phase, which commences prior to the house listing phase, enables citizens to independently furnish their details in a secure and convenient manner.

He further stressed upon Charge Officers and field functionaries to create mass awareness regarding the initiative so that maximum public participation is ensured. The DC also informed that Help Desks have been established at Panchayat and Patwar Halqa levels across the district to facilitate and assist the public in the Self-Enumeration process under Census 2027.

While addressing the gathering, MLA Tral urged people to actively participate in the self-enumeration exercise so that the objectives of Census are achieved effectively. He also directed field functionaries including supervisors and enumerators to maintain profes-

sionalism, transparency and a people-friendly approach while interacting with the public during the Census exercise.

The MLA further stressed the need for maintaining accuracy and authenticity in the data being submitted on the digital platforms, stating that reliable data is essential for ensuring effective implementation of welfare and developmental schemes.

Later, Master Trainer Census, Dr. Javid Ahmad, delivered a detailed presentation regarding the modalities of self-enumeration and the measures being undertaken for smooth conduct of Census 2027 in the district.

Furthermore, Officers and participants present on the occasion also completed their self-enumeration process during the event.

Similar launch programmes were also organised at all Charge levels across the district, where officers, officials and field functionaries participated in the Self-Enumeration exercise and sensitized the public about the importance and modalities of Census 2027.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

Self-Enumeration

The Self-Enumeration (SE) facility, introduced for the first time in Census operations, continues to receive an encouraging response from the public. More than 1.44 crore households have already completed Self-Enumeration through the official portal (se.census.gov.in) across 25 States/UTs. The initiative marks a significant step towards digitisation of Census operations and offers residents a convenient and secure platform to participate in the Census process.

Residents who have completed Self-Enumeration are requested to keep their generated Self-Enumeration ID (SE ID) ready and share the same with the Enumerator during the field visit to complete the HLO process. Households that have not opted for Self-Enumeration will be covered during the physical house-to-house visit by Enumerators.

Census 2027 is being conducted using digital tools for the first time while retaining the traditional door-to-door enumeration process to ensure comprehensive and accurate coverage. During field visits, Enumerators are collecting data digitally through a dedicated mobile application. During this phase, information relating to housing conditions, household details, amenities available and assets possessed by households is being collected through a structured questionnaire comprising 33 notified questions. The data collected forms an important basis for evidence-based planning and implementation of welfare and development programmes.

All data collected under the Census Act, 1948, remains strictly confidential and is used solely for statistical purposes and development planning. Residents in the notified States/UTs are requested to extend full cooperation to Enumerators during the Houselisting Operations and actively participate in this important national exercise.

LG Manoj Sinha

has been put in place for effective capacity building of Census functionaries. National Trainers have trained Master Trainers, who subsequently conducted training of Field Trainers across districts. Training programmes for Enumerators and Supervisors through trained Field Trainers are being organised in phased batches with focus on Census concepts and definitions, field protocols, use of mobile-based applications, digital data capture systems, household engagement techniques, facilitation of self-enumeration and adherence to data confidentiality provisions.

Special operational planning is also being undertaken for remote, hilly and snow-bound areas of Jammu & Kashmir to ensure timely completion of Census activities under challenging geographical and climatic conditions. Separate operational arrangements, logistics planning and deployment strategies are being put in place for such areas.

A robust multi-layered digital security architecture has been established to safeguard integrity and confidentiality of data at every stage of collection, transmission,

storage and processing. Key safeguards include end-to-end encryption, secure digital transmission protocols, protected data storage systems, role-based access controls and certified data centres designated as Critical Information Infrastructure.

Self-Enumeration represents one of the most important and citizen-centric innovations in Census 2027 and is expected to transform public participation in the Census process. Through this facility, households will be able to directly submit their Census information digitally through a secure online portal during the notified period.

Anti-Narcotics

financiers, and other associated elements.

Anantnag Police reiterated their commitment to eradicating the drug menace and appealed to the public to continue sharing credible information to assist ongoing enforcement efforts.

Ladakh LG Approves

as sweepers, gardeners, cleaners and other support staff across the Union Territory, they said. A large number of migrant workers as well as locals are likely to benefit from the decision.

Officials said the reform follows multiple representations submitted by daily wagers from various departments seeking implementation of minimum wages and removal of disparities in remuneration.

Taking cognisance of the issue, the Lieutenant Governor directed departments concerned to undertake a comprehensive verification exercise of workers engaged after March 17, 2015, and ensure uniform and transparent wage rationalisation.

"UT Administration is fully committed to ensuring fair and dignified wages for all workers. Daily wagers, seasonal and part-time workers play a crucial role in strengthening public services and developmental activities across Ladakh, particularly in remote and challenging regions," Saxena said.

He said every worker deserves fair compensation for labour and assured that the administration would ensure welfare measures in a transparent and accountable manner.

The Lieutenant Governor has also directed departments to verify engagement details, nature of work, working hours and Aadhaar-linked bank account details of all workers and submit verified data within 20 days.

Officials said wages would be disbursed strictly through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) into workers' bank accounts to ensure transparency and accountability.

The administration, however, clarified that the exercise pertains only to wage rationalisation and should not be construed as a commitment towards regularisation of services.

LeT Terrorist Infiltrates

the owner was reliable. During a conversation with the owner, Jatt learned the

owner had undergone a hair transplant. Jatt continued visiting the shop owner and persuaded him to help arrange the procedure. He was taken for the procedure within the city and at times stayed overnight at the clinic, officials said.

After the procedure, Jatt, who had already teamed up with Abdullah, took a passenger vehicle to Jammu and then a sleeper bus to Punjab on his way to Malerkotla. There, he watched Turkish shows and tried to learn English, according to officials.

Jatt told interrogators he wanted to obtain a genuine Aadhar card, PAN card and eventually a passport to flee India like Umar, also known as "Khargosh" (rabbit), who secured a passport and fled to Indonesia. From there, Umar is believed to have used another forged document and settled in a Gulf country, officials said. Umar, a Karachi resident, had infiltrated into India after 2012 and fled in 2024 using a forged passport obtained in Jaipur, Rajasthan.

The uncovering of this interstate Lashkar-e-Taiba module comes about six months after the "Al Falah module" was busted in November 2025 by Srinagar police, which revealed a network of highly educated professionals, mostly doctors, who had been radicalized to carry out terrorist activities.

One of the accused, Al Falah University's Dr. Umer-un Nabi, was driving the explosives-laden car that detonated outside the Red Fort on Nov. 10, killing more than a dozen people.

Women Of J&K Emerging

exceptionally in civil services examinations as well as IIT and NIT entrance tests, adding that they are now actively participating in the country's mainstream development process.

Singh further said the women of Jammu and Kashmir would play a major role in shaping the vision of a developed India by 2047, when the country will celebrate 100 years of Independence.

"The daughters, mothers and sisters of this place will illuminate the future of Jammu and Kashmir and contribute significantly to India's growth story," he said. (KNS)

India Flags Concerns

designated route, which will be unveiled soon," Iranian Parliament's NSC chief Ebrahim Azizi wrote in a social media post.

"In this process, only commercial vessels and parties cooperating with Iran will benefit from it. The necessary fees will be collected for the specialized services provided under this mechanism. This route will remain closed to the operators of the so-called 'freedom project,'" he added.

Earlier in the day, Donald Trump warned that the region could face a "very bad time" if a peace agreement to resolve the West Asia crisis is not achieved, according to reports citing French broadcaster BFMTV.

Meanwhile, Abbas Araghchi said the United States continues to be the biggest obstacle to peace in West Asia. He claimed that after more than a month of unsuccess-

ful military efforts, Washington attempted to shift towards negotiations — a move that has been met with strong scepticism in Tehran.

Hundreds Attend

told the news agency Kashmir News Trust, describing it as a community-driven environmental conservation practice passed from one generation to another.

Panzath, known for its cluster of freshwater springs, derives its name from "Panzath," commonly interpreted as "500 springs." The water bodies are considered an important natural resource for surrounding villages in the Qazigund belt.

People from different age groups, including elders and youth, participated in the festival, which also carries social and cultural significance in the area.

Locals said the annual exercise helps maintain water quality before the peak agricultural season, especially when irrigation demand increases in paddy fields and orchards.

The festival has historically drawn participation from people across several villages and is widely regarded as one of Kashmir's oldest community-based environmental traditions. (KNT)

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Sharma attends Adhikmas Kumbh 2026 at Mattan, visits religious shrines

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, Sunday attended the inauguration ceremony of the sacred Adhikmas/Banumas/Purushotam Maas-Kumbh 2026 at the historic Mattan Temple and highlighted the importance of preserving the centuries-old traditions of communal harmony, brotherhood and coexistence in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister inaugurated the religious congregation amid the presence of devotees, religious scholars, community representatives and local residents.

Addressing the gathering, Satish Sharma said that Jammu and Kashmir has always been known for its rich spiritual and cultural legacy where people from different faiths have lived together in harmony and mutual respect for generations. He said that such religious and cultural events serve as a strong



reminder of the region's composite culture and play a vital role in strengthening the social unity and fostering mutual understanding among communities.

The Minister emphasized that the government remains committed towards safeguarding and promoting the unique cultural and spiritual heritage of Jammu and Kashmir.

Extending his greetings to the devotees and participants attending the sacred event, the Minister wished for peaceful and successful celebrations and prayed for lasting peace, prosperity and wellbeing of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister was accompanied by Legislators Abdul Majeed Larmi and Riyaz Ahmad Khan,

who also interacted with the devotees. They appreciated the role of such gatherings in strengthening the communal harmony and preserving the pluralistic ethos of the region.

Later, Satish Sharma visited Gurudwara Mattan, where he paid obeisance and interacted with members of the Sikh community. He reiterated the government's resolve towards ensuring equal respect and support for all religious institutions and communities across Jammu and Kashmir.

Subsequently, the Minister paid obeisance at the revered Aishmuqam Shrine and prayed for peace, prosperity and communal harmony in the region.

During the visit, he interacted with the devotees and local residents and described the shrine as a symbol of Kashmir's spiritual heritage and centuries-old traditions of brotherhood and inclusiveness.

On the sidelines of the visit, the Minister also inspected the playground at Mattan and reviewed the available sports infrastructure and ongoing developmental works.

Interacting with the local youth and sports enthusiasts, he assured them that the government is focused on strengthening the sports infrastructure and creating better opportunities for young talent across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister directed the concerned officials to ensure that development works at sports facilities are completed within the stipulated timelines so that adequate infrastructure is made available to aspiring players at the grassroots level.

Later, Satish Sharma visited the playground at Anantnag and took stock of the existing sports infrastructure and maintenance works. He stressed upon the officials to maintain quality standards and ensure proper upkeep of sports facilities for the benefit of local youth and budding athletes.

Reiterating the government's commitment towards youth empowerment, the Minister said that providing modern sports infrastructure and encouraging youth participation in sports remains one of the key priorities of the government. He added that sustained efforts are being made to create a vibrant sporting ecosystem across Jammu and Kashmir to nurture talent and positively engage the youth.

Census-2027: Self-Enumeration Exercise kicks off in Anantnag



GMK NEWS NETWORK

ANANTNAG: As part of Census-2027, the Self-Enumeration (Digital Mode) Exercise, scheduled from May 17 to 31, 2026 and preceding the House Listing Operations (June 01 to 30, 2026), kicked off Sunday in Anantnag.

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) who is also the Principal Census Officer, Dr. Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat, formally inaugurated the self-enumeration facilitation counter/camp at the DC office.

Setting an example, the DC completed his self-enumeration activity in the presence of other concerned district officials. A detailed presentation and live demonstration of the

self-enumeration process were also delivered on the occasion.

Addressing the camp, the Deputy Commissioner said that self-enumeration is India's maiden attempt to capture household data, allowing individuals to use digital platforms to submit their census information online before enumerators visit their households. He described the process as a secure, web-based facility that enables respondents to enter their census data directly.

Dr. Bilal appealed to the general public to actively participate in the self-enumeration process through the digital mode on se.census.gov.in as well as in the overall Census 2027 operations, noting

that planning, development models, and the allocation of resources are guided by census data. He informed that provisions for self-enumeration, consisting of 33 questions, have been incorporated into the portal to facilitate citizens and make the process more transparent and convenient. He further stressed the importance of public participation in ensuring the successful conduct of the census operations.

The function was attended by ADC (DCO) Vikas Ahlawat, ACR (NOC) Tariq Ahmad Malik, district and sectoral officers, census coordinators, master trainers, field trainers, supervisors, enumerators, and other staff.

PM Modi lauds Indian cultural display of traditions on global stage

SIANS

GOTHENBURG (SWEDEN): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday lauded the Bengali cultural display and Bharatanatyam performance organised to welcome him as he began his visit to Sweden.

"Bengali culture is popular world over and Sweden is no exception. During the community welcome, in which PM Kristersson was also present, a glimpse of the glorious Bengali culture was on display", PM Modi wrote on X, sharing some facets of the cultural performance. The PM also witnessed a Bharatanatyam performance by Lilla Akademien during the community welcome. "A mesmerising Bharatanatyam performance by the talented students of Lilla Akademien... glad that Indian culture is kept alive and is being popularised by our diaspora in Sweden," PM Modi wrote on X, sharing a glimpse of the performance.

PM Modi, along with his Swedish counterpart Ulf Kristersson, also witnessed an Indo-Swedish Musical Orchestra.

"PM Kristersson and I witnessed an Indo-Swedish Musical Orchestra Presentation by Ron Davis Alvarez and his students. Music



is a great way to bring our people together!"

PMs Modi and Kristersson, earlier on Sunday, witnessed cultural performances and an orchestra performance as the Indian leader landed in Sweden. Swedish opera singer Charlotta Hultdt sang 'Vaishnava Jana To' while welcoming the Indian PM.

"It is heartening to see the timeless thoughts of Babu continue to reverberate in Sweden. Swedish opera singer Charlotta Hultdt sang 'Vaishnava Jana To' during the welcome in Gothenburg. May Mahatma Gandhi's thoughts inspire us all to make a better planet!", he said on X.

PM Modi also said that the warmth and the affection of the Indian community in Gothenburg were "truly heartening."

"The warmth and affec-

tion of the Indian community in Gothenburg were truly heartening. Their deep connection with India and their contribution to strengthening India-Sweden ties make us all very proud," he posted on X.

PM Modi arrived in Sweden after concluding his visit to the Netherlands. PM Kristersson welcomed him at the airport.

During his visit, PMs Modi and Kristersson are slated to review the entire gamut of bilateral relations and explore new avenues of cooperation to enhance bilateral trade, according to the statement released by MEA.

The two PMs will address the European Round Table for Industry, a leading pan-European business leaders forum, along with European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

HM Amit Shah criticises decades of governance in Bengal, alleges commission system in daily life

SIANS

GANDHINAGAR: Union Home and Cooperation Minister Amit Shah on Sunday criticised decades of governance in West Bengal, alleging that ordinary people had faced corruption and political interference in daily economic activities for years.

Speaking at a public event in Gujarat's Gandhinagar after inaugurating and laying foundation stones for development works worth Rs 620 crore, Union Minister Shah compared Bengal's present condition with Gujarat's earlier development trajectory and said the eastern state had suffered from a prolonged lack of development.

"If someone made a film on Gujarat in 1964 and then made a film on today's Bengal, that time Gujarat would score higher," the union Home Minister said during his speech.

He alleged that for nearly 50 years there had been little developmental activity in Bengal and claimed that political commissions had become embedded in ordinary transactions.

"For buying a tubelight, fan, bricks or cement, commission of the ruling party had to be paid," he said.

Union Minister Shah also alleged that people bringing goods from neighbouring states at lower prices were also subjected



to unofficial collections.

"If someone brought a cheaper fan by train from another state, people would be standing at railway stations to collect tax," he claimed. The Union Minister said such conditions had contributed to public dissatisfaction and had created support for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in West Bengal.

He added that people had backed Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the BJP in search of better governance and development.

Union Minister Shah also linked the BJP's rise in different parts of the country to what he described as "the party's grassroots organisational structure and public outreach".

"Booth-level workers remained central to the BJP's political success. They maintained a direct contact with people across villages and cities. Party workers consistently worked to address local problems and maintain

public trust," he said.

During the address, Union Minister Shah also spoke about the BJP's performance in Gujarat's recent local body elections.

"The party had won all municipal corporations where elections were held and secured victories in a large majority of municipalities, district panchayats and taluka panchayats," he said.

He emphasised that the BJP's electoral success was connected to its governance record and the work done by party workers during difficult periods such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Alongside political remarks, Union Minister Shah outlined various civic projects being undertaken in Gandhinagar.

The projects include sewage treatment plants, water supply systems, internal roads, lake beautification works, community halls, urban health centres, yoga studios and sports infrastructure.

BOPEE conducts Common Entrance Test for GNM, ANM Courses

GMK NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of Professional Entrance Examinations (J&K BOPEE) Sunday conducted the Common Entrance Test (CET) for GNM/ANM Courses-2026 for the academic session 2026-27 at the designated Centres within the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

In Kashmir division, the test was conducted at Amar Singh College, KGP Gogjibagh and S. P. College, M.A. Road and Government College of Education, M.A. Road, Centres. In Jammu division, it was conducted at the Government SPMR Commerce College and Government MAM College Centres. A total of 2548 candidates appeared in the examination out of 2995 applicants.

To ensure smooth conduct of the Entrance Test,

adequate arrangements were made in collaboration with the respective institution/college administration and law enforcement agencies, under the guidance of Professor Minu Mahajan, Chairperson, J&K BOPEE.

The examination was conducted smoothly under the supervision of staff from the respective institutions and colleges, with no reports of any untoward or unfair incidents.

The Chairperson, along with the members, the Secretary, the Controller of Examinations and officials of the J&K BOPEE, actively monitored the entrance test in Srinagar and Jammu. They thanked the staff of the respective institutions and colleges, as well as those deployed under the supervision of Deputy Commissioners at the district headquarters, for ensuring the smooth conduct of the test.

Trump may use Taiwan arms as China leverage: US envoy

SIANS

WASHINGTON: Concerns are growing in Taiwan after President Donald Trump indicated that future US arms sales to Taipei could become part of broader negotiations with China following his summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing.

Taiwan's representative to the US, Alexander Yui, warned on Sunday on CBS News that Taiwan needed continued American weapons support to deter what he described as growing Chinese aggression across the Taiwan Strait.

"If we want to prevent a war from happening, I think it's best that Taiwan is strong, able to defend itself," Yui said.

The comments came after Trump suggested in interviews and remarks following the Beijing summit that Taiwan-related arms sales could be used as a "negotiating chip" with China.

"It's a very good negotiating chip for us, frankly," Trump said, according to ABC News.

President Trump also noted that he wanted both Taiwan and China to "cool down", while stopping short of committing to approve a new weapons package sought by Taipei.

The issue has emerged as one of the most sensitive outcomes of the Trump-Xi summit, which otherwise produced limited publicly announced agreements.

Yui sought to reassure Taiwanese audiences that the US had not formally changed its longstanding Taiwan policy, noting that both Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio had publicly maintained support for stability in the Taiwan Strait.

But he also made clear that Taiwan wanted Washington to hear "our side of the story" after Trump spent two days in Beijing hearing Chinese concerns about the self-governed island.

"He heard only their side of the story," Yui said. China claims Taiwan as part of its territory and has repeatedly warned against foreign military support for Taipei. Beijing has increased military pressure on Taiwan in recent years through air incursions, naval patrols and military exercises around the island.

Yui rejected Beijing's claims that Taiwan was provoking tensions. "We're not the ones creating all this trouble," he said. "It is China... creating all these problems."

Adani Group to invest in big infra, energy projects in Bihar: Gautam Adani

SIANS

NEW DELHI/PATNA: Billionaire industrialist Gautam Adani said on Sunday that the Adani Group is fully committed to giving a new direction to Bihar's development through active collaboration in the infrastructure and energy sectors, along with employment generation and social service," he added.

Earlier in the day, Gautam Adani announced the launch in Bihar of 'ACE - Adani Centre for Eye Diseases' in collaboration with Akhand Jyoti Hospital and the Adani Foundation, saying the initiative aims to provide accessible and affordable eye treatment to people in need.

He also said that "ATOM - Adani Training Centre for Ophthalmic Medicine" will help prepare a new generation of eye special-

ists and women healthcare workers.

"We are joining hands with Adani Foundation and Akhand Jyoti Hospital to launch 'ACE - Adani Centre for Eye Diseases, which will be a major effort to provide accessible and affordable eye care to those in need,"



ists and women healthcare workers.

"We are joining hands with Adani Foundation and Akhand Jyoti Hospital to launch 'ACE - Adani Centre for Eye Diseases, which will be a major effort to provide accessible and affordable eye care to those in need,"

Gautam Adani said.

"At the same time, through ATOM - Adani Training Centre for Ophthalmic Medicine, we will prepare a new generation of eye specialists and women healthcare workers," he added.

According to Gautam Adani, the initiative is aimed at expanding quality eye care services across the country in the coming years.

"Restoring a person's eyesight is not merely medical treatment, but a way of bringing back hope, confidence and dignity in their life," the Adani Group Chairman said during his visit to Mastichak in Bihar, where he visited the Gayatri Shaktipeeth and praised the social service efforts being carried out

by Gayatri Parivar and Akhand Jyoti.

"Service is not just a slogan for us, it is the inspiration to turn compassion into action," he said.

He added that the 'Adani Akhand Jyoti Trust' will continue to work with dedication and sensitivity towards humanitarian causes.

He also announced a commitment of more than Rs 700 crore over the coming years to support these service-oriented healthcare initiatives.

Calling Bihar a land that has historically given new direction and consciousness to the nation, Gautam Adani said the campaign is an effort to spread "new light" across the country through service, values and commitment.

IPL 2026: The wicket was gripping, thought I can use more of slower balls, says DC's Madhav Tiwari

IAN S

NEW DELHI: Young seam-bowling all-rounder Madhav Tiwari credited the gripping nature of the wicket for his success with slower balls, as Delhi Capitals pulled off a stirring fightback with the ball to keep Rajasthan Royals to 193/8 in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 at the Arun Jaitley Stadium in New Delhi on Sunday.



Vaibhav Sooryavanshi and Shubham Dubey.

"Coming into this IPL season, I just thought that I'm gonna take in four or five variations with me and I'm gonna back them throughout the season. So, I have been working on them, and hopefully, the results are helping in my favor.

"I guess there was a bit of help from the wicket. It was gripping, and so I thought that I could use more of them. I was just looking to put myself (in) a high-pressure situation in the nets themselves. So bowling to Miller and bowling to Ashutosh and

KL helped me. I was just trying to figure out how I'm gonna bowl against these batsmen, which is gonna help me in this tournament," said Tiwari in a mid-innings chat with the broadcasters.

Lungi Ngidi closed out the innings with clever variations, as RR eventually made 193/8, after losing six wickets for 33 runs in the last six overs. "I don't know. I have to ask them," said Tiwari, when asked about his family's reaction, before adding that DC can chase down the target and aim to end their home leg on a high. "I think we'll get it."

At 160/2 after 14 overs, the Royals appeared set for a massive total. But the momentum shifted after a brief stoppage for medical attention to Riyan Parag, who hit a 23-ball fifty. Axar Patel recalled Starc, who had gone for 28 in his first two overs, and the Australian responded with a decisive 15th over, removing Parag, Donovan Ferreira, and Ravi Singh, before taking out Impact Player Dasun Shanaka to pick 4-40.

Tiwari, who impressed with both bat and ball on debut against Punjab Kings in Dharamshala, once again stood out by dismissing a marauding

ISL 2025-26: SC Delhi, Inter Kashi play out a goalless draw

IAN S

NEW DELHI: SC Delhi and Inter Kashi shared the spoils in a tightly-contested 0-0 draw in their Indian Super League (ISL) 2025-26 clash at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in New Delhi on Sunday.

Despite Inter Kashi enjoying greater attacking momentum and creating the better chances, both sides were unable to find the finishing touch in a match defined by disciplined defending and resolute goalkeeping. SC Delhi keeper Nora Fernandes was named the Player of the Match for his brilliant work in between the sticks, including six saves.

With this result, Inter Kashi moved up to ninth place with 13 points from 12 matches, while Sporting Club Delhi climbed to 11th with 11 points from the same number of games.

Inter Kashi started on the front foot, showing early attacking intent and testing the Sporting Club Delhi defence within the opening minutes. Rohit Danu forced a save from Nora Fernandes with a



long-range effort, while winger Mohammed Asif and striker Seiminlen Doungel both came close to breaking the deadlock.

Sporting Club Delhi, however, remained organised at the back, with Clarence Fernandes and captain Ashutosh Mehta leading a compact defensive display. While the hosts saw more of the ball in phases, they struggled to create clear openings in the final third.

Inter Kashi continued to dominate possession

through the first half, with Alfred Planas particularly influential in attack. The Spaniard saw multiple efforts either blocked or saved, and even had the ball in the net in the 37th minute, only for the goal to be ruled out for offside.

The visitors came closest to scoring just before the interval when a well-delivered corner from the right saw Narender Gahlot open on the far side, but the centre back failed to connect cleanly from close range. Planas then forced

another sharp save from Fernandes in stoppage time, ensuring the teams went into the break level at 0-0.

Sporting Club Delhi emerged with greater urgency in the second half, making three changes at the restart and pushing higher up the pitch. The hosts enjoyed a bright spell early on, with Augustine Lalrochana coming close with a left-footed effort that drifted narrowly wide.

Inter Kashi gradually regained control and

continued to threaten from set-pieces and long-range efforts. Sergio Llamas orchestrated a play from midfield, setting up Planas for another attempt that was parried away by Fernandes.

As the game progressed, both teams exchanged attacking spells, but neither could carve out a decisive opportunity. Substitute Prasanth K delivered a teasing ball into the box in the 79th minute, but Nauris Petkevicius failed to guide his effort on target. At the other end, Abdul-Halik Hudu and Augustine combined well, though the final touch continued to elude the hosts.

The closing stages saw Inter Kashi push for a late winner, with Narender Gahlot's header punched away by Fernandes before a flurry of blocked attempts inside the box by SC Delhi's defence. Sergio Llamas had the final chance deep into stoppage time, but his effort sailed high and wide.

In the end, neither side could find the breakthrough, settling for a point each in a contest.

Hockey: India U18 men and women go down to Australia in the second match of series

IAN S

BHOPAL: It was a challenging day for the hosts as both the Indian U18 men's and women's hockey teams suffered defeats against Australia U18 in their respective second matches at the Udhav Das Mehta (Bhai Ji) Central SAI Centre in Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh, on Sunday.



staged a powerful comeback, with Anneliese Cullen (26'), Giselle Thompson (31'), Aurora Kovacevich (36'), and Stella Bartholomeusz (48') all scoring to secure Australia's second consecutive win of the tour.

The Indian U18 women's team will look to bounce back when they take the field for their third match of the series on Monday at the International Sports Complex, Nathu Barkheda in Bhopal.

Meanwhile, the Indian U18 men's team will also be in action for their third match of the series against Australia tomorrow, May 18, at the Udhav Das Mehta (Bhai Ji) Central SAI Centre in Bhopal.

Earlier on Friday, the Indian men's team was held to a 2-2 draw in its opening clash, with Akash

Deep (11') and Deepak Prakash Toppo (45') scoring for the hosts. For Australia, Jett Johnstone (2') gave the visitors an early lead, while Franky Baker (60') found a late equaliser in the final minute of the game to ensure the spoils were shared.

In the women's opener, the Australia U18 women's team clinched a 4-3 win. Aurora Kovacevich (21') gave the visitors the lead before Diya (22') quickly restored parity for India. The hosts then surged to a two-goal advantage, with Kiran Ekka (42') and captain Sweetie Kujur (48') finding the back of the net. However, late goals from Mia Klimpsch (54') and Stella Bartholomeusz (54', 55') helped the visitors edge past India in a closely contested encounter.

In the men's encounter, Australia secured a 3-1 victory to take a 1-0 lead in the four-match series, following the 2-2 draw in the opening game. Arjun Brian (16') opened the scoring for Australia early in the second quarter, but India responded quickly through Ashish Tani Purti (24'), who found the back of the net to bring the hosts level.

However, Australia regained control in the third quarter, with Sam Peoples (39') and Angus McMullen (45') contributing a goal each to seal the win for the visitors.

In the women's match, the India U18 team suffered a 1-4 loss against the visitors. Diya (11') gave India an early lead in the first quarter, allowing the hosts to stay in control during the initial exchanges.

However, Australia

Indian men win silver, women finish fourth at inaugural CASA Rugby 7s 2026

IAN S

TASHKENT (UZBEKISTAN): India's senior men's team secured the silver medal while the senior women's team finished fourth in the inaugural CASA Rugby 7s 2026 held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, marking a positive start to the international rugby season for Rugby India.

The men's team impressed throughout the tournament, winning four consecutive matches to book their place in the final. India opened their campaign with victories against hosts Uzbekistan (24-12), Kyrgyzstan (31-0), Mongolia (26-14), and Pakistan (20-14), remaining unbeaten until their final round-robin fixture against Sri Lanka (12-33).

The side once again faced Sri Lanka in the tournament final, eventually securing the silver



medal after a 10-31 result in the title clash to conclude an encouraging campaign under newly appointed Head Coach Paul Albaladejo.

The senior women's team, featuring several young and emerging players identified through the domestic circuit and Senior Nationals, showed significant character across the competition despite a difficult start against Uzbekistan (7-22) and Kazakhstan (7-19) on Day 1.

The squad responded strongly with a dominant 72-0 victory over Kyrgyz-

stan before continuing their momentum on Day 2 with a 33-0 win against Mongolia.

One of the standout performances of the tournament came against eventual champions Sri Lanka, with the Indian Women's Team handing them their only defeat through a dramatic 22-19 victory secured by a last-minute try from Mahak.

India eventually concluded the tournament in fourth place following a closely fought 14-20 result against hosts Uzbekistan in the third-place playoff.

Reflecting on the tournament, Rugby India President Rahul Bose said, "CASA 7s has been an important start to the international season for both our Men's and Women's programs. The tournament provided valuable competition exposure, and there were several encouraging performances across both squads as we continue building towards the rest of the 2026 season."

Mahak was crowned the CASA 7s Women's Player of the Tournament after finishing as India's leading scorer with nine tries across the campaign. For the men's team, David Munda and Sumit Kumar Roy led the scoring charts with four tries each, while Devendra Padir and Hitesh Dagar added three tries apiece during the tournament. Captain Parbati Hansdah also contributed 12 conversions for the women's team.

Officially sanctioned by Asia Rugby and World Rugby, CASA (Central Asia and South Asia) 7s marked the inaugural edition of a new international Rugby Sevens competition for nations from Central and South Asia, featuring a round-robin plus classification format across the Men's and Women's categories.

CASA 7s Results Summary -

- Men:
 - Day 1: India 24-12 Uzbekistan; India 31-0 Kyrgyzstan; India 26-14 Mongolia
 - Day 2: India 20-14 Pakistan; India 12-33 Sri Lanka;
 - Final: India 10-31 Sri Lanka
- Women:
 - Day 1: India 7-22 Uzbekistan; India 7-19 Kazakhstan; India 72-0 Kyrgyzstan
 - Day 2: India 33-0 Mongolia; India 22-19 Sri Lanka
 - 3rd Place Playoff: India 14-24 Uzbekistan

IPL 2026: RCB seal playoff berth with 23-run victory against Punjab Kings

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DHARAMSHALA: Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) became the first team to qualify for the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 playoffs after defeating Punjab Kings by 23 runs in a high-scoring contest at the Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association Stadium on Sunday.

Defending a massive total of 222/4, RCB produced a disciplined bowling effort led by Rasikh Salam Dar, who claimed three wickets, to restrict Punjab Kings to 199/8 despite a fighting half-century from Shashank Singh. The victory helped RCB move to 18 points from 13 matches and secure a place in the playoffs.

Punjab Kings endured a disastrous start to the chase as Bhuvneshwar Kumar removed Priyansh Arya for a duck in the opening over. The experi-

enced pacer struck again in his next over when Prabhsimran Singh edged a good-length delivery to first slip after scoring just two runs.

RCB tightened their grip further when impact substitute Rasikh Salam Dar dismissed Punjab Kings skipper Shreyas Iyer for one.

With wickets falling around him, Cooper Connolly launched a counter-attack alongside Suryansh Shedge. Shedge took on Josh Hazlewood with a boundary and a six, while Connolly attacked Rasikh to help Punjab Kings recover to 49/3 at the end of the Power-play.

Connolly continued to play aggressively before Romario Shepherd provided the breakthrough in the eighth over. Attempting another big shot, Connolly was caught at deep square leg after scoring 37 off 22 balls, including three fours

and three sixes.

Shedge then stitched together a useful partnership with Marcus Stoinis as the pair rebuilt the innings with regular boundaries and sensible strike rotation. However, RCB struck again when Virat Kohli completed a sharp catch at long-off to dismiss Shedge for 35 off 22 deliveries.

Punjab Kings still had hope with Stoinis at one end and Shashank Singh launching an aggressive assault at the other. Shashank changed the momentum of the chase by smashing three sixes in an over off Suyash Sharma before adding more boundaries to keep the required run rate under control.

Stoinis also shifted gears and struck consecutive boundaries against Rasikh as Punjab Kings reached 146/5 after 15 overs, needing 77 runs from the final five overs.

Show Timings

Monday, 18th May

	BHOOTH BANGLA (U/A16+) Hindi 10:45 AM, 02:30 PM	
	Michael (U/A 13+) English with English Subtitles 11:45 AM, 06:25 PM	
	Dhurandhar: The Revenge (A) Hindi 02:00 PM	
	WAR OF SHERA (U/A 16+) PUNJABI WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES 06:00 PM	
	PATI PATNI AUR WOH DO (UA16+) Hindi Atmos 11:15 AM, 01:45 PM, 04:15 PM, 06:45 PM	

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