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Govt committed to fully eliminate substance abuse: LG Sinha

will have their existence erased from this land. The law is now being applied firmly. Narco-terrorists are being punished, youth being protected, families being supported, and renewed hope is returning to the society," he said.

"Very soon, the administration will come out with a comprehensive rehabilitation policy which will ensure that every young person trapped by addiction gets a chance to rejoin the mainstream," he said.

"Our aim is that not a single young person is left behind. We will provide jobs, opportunities, and the means for them to live with dignity. I strongly believe the success of a 'drug-free Jammu & Kashmir' will not be measured only by the number of drug smugglers arrested but by the number of lives we can rebuild. It will be measured by the homes that can be restored and the young people who can fulfill their dreams. I promise you that we will not rest until their dreams are realised," he added.

"The government cannot win this fight alone and in this battle against drugs, administration needs support of families, teachers, religious leaders, and every responsible citizen. I envision a Jammu & Kashmir where every child grows up free from the shadow of addiction. A Jammu & Kashmir where families are not torn apart by drugs. A Jammu & Kashmir where society moves forward with security, dignity, and trust. This is not merely a dream. It is our mission and together we will fulfill it. We need vigilance, awareness, and commitment of every J&K resident. I believe that when people stand united, no narco-terror network or drug cartel can infiltrate them. When public stands together, no terror can defeat them. I urge we must unite to bury narco-terror once and for all," Sinha said.

On the occasion, he also inaugurated Waqar Knowledge Centre - Engaging Youth Against Drug Abuse.

Under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, Bandipora district has established Waqar Knowledge Centre (WKC), completing the anti-drug intervention cycle by providing recovering addiction cases with a constructive platform for rehabilitation, engagement, and reintegration. The initiative reinforces the message that individuals seeking to leave the path of substance abuse behind have access to a range of government-supported opportunities and support systems.

The centre offers a sports corner, badminton court, reading library, and an information desk providing guidance on government schemes, education, employment, and skill development opportunities. The administration envisions establishing one Waqar Knowledge Centre in each block of the district. The centre provides a constructive space that empowers youth and strengthens community resilience against addiction.

India-Japan strategic partnership holds larger importance: EAM

"We had recently met in France in March and you were here at the beginning of the year in Delhi. So, it's very good to see you back and very good to see you for this very important meeting we will have tomorrow," he said.

The meeting is expected to further strengthen India-Japan cooperation ahead of the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting discussions on advancing a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Jaishankar is scheduled to chair the Quad Foreign Ministers' Meeting on Tuesday with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, Australian Foreign Minister Penny Wong and Japanese Foreign Minister Motegi Toshimitsu.

Govt promotes incharge IOs, AIOs as IOs

Ahmad Ganai, Gulshan Ara, Ashok Kumar Sharma, Sayed Gulam Jeelani Qadiri, Shabir Ahmed Bhat, Gurepreet Singh, Liyaqat Ali Mir, Mohammad Owais Gurkoo, Natyapal Singh, Parvaiz Ahmad Lone, Sajad Ahmad Shah and Hardeep Singh Choudhary.

Showket Ahmad Khan, Riyaz Ahmad Fazili and Parshotam Dass have been regularised with effect from September 5, 2018, while the promotions of the remaining officers would take effect prospectively, according to the order.

The officers shall continue to work at their present places of posting until further orders.

Junior assistant held in graft case

the QR code through WhatsApp for receiving the alleged bribe amount, officials said.

The CBI laid a trap and caught the accused for receiving the bribe amount from the complainant through QR code. Subsequently, the accused was arrested.

Further investigation was underway, officials said.

52 receive appointment letters under SRO-43, RAS

orders under SRO-43 and RAS during simultaneous events held in Jammu & Srinagar.

Addressing the newly-appointed beneficiaries, the chief minister said that the government was only fulfilling its responsibility and not extending any favour.

"The first thing I would like to say is that the government that has given you these orders here and in Jammu is not

doing you any favour; it is our duty. While fulfilling this duty, we also realise that you have had to make a huge sacrifice to get these appointment orders," he said.

Drawing a distinction between the ordinary recruitment process and the circumstances under which the beneficiaries had become eligible for compassionate appointment, he said unlike regular aspirants who secure jobs through examinations and interviews, the appointees under these schemes had endured profound personal tragedies.

"To get a government job, we usually ask our children to pass examinations and interviews. But the test you have faced has been far more difficult because you had to lose someone dear to you to reach this stage. That is why I say we are not distributing these orders as a favour, but rather repaying a moral obligation," he added.

"The government functions as one collective family," he said and emphasised the importance of standing together in times of grief and hardship.

"We want this government and all of us working within it, whether in the secretariat or outside, to function as one larger family. We must not only share each other's pain but also support each other during difficult circumstances. This initiative is a small step in that direction so that your families can move forward and not suffer any further hardship," he said.

Urging the appointees to discharge their duties with sincerity and dedication, he said public service should always remain centred on helping people and contributing positively to society.

"Our only expectation from you is that wherever you are posted, you serve the people of Jammu and Kashmir with honesty, commitment and dedication. Whatever role we hold in government, our purpose remains the same—that when we return home in the evening, we should feel satisfied that our day's work has benefited someone. If you perform your duties honestly, that itself will be the greatest tribute to those whose memories brought you here today," he said.

Omar reiterated the government's resolve to ensure that eligible beneficiaries were not made to run from office to office for compassionate appointments.

"We are committed to ensuring that you do not have to move from pillar to post to obtain your appointment orders. That would be a grave injustice to all of you. We will ensure that the process is expedited and all remaining cases are cleared at the earliest," he said.

The beneficiaries expressed gratitude to the chief minister and the administration for facilitating timely appointments and extending support to families during difficult times.

Deputy CM Surinder Kumar Choudhary, Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs minister Satish Sharma, chief secretary Atal Dulloo, additional chief secretary to CM Dheeraj Gupta, divisional commissioner, Jammu, Ramesh Kumar and other senior officers were among those who attended the function.

Prof Shafi receives Padma Shri

honours, were presented in recognition of exceptional contribution in different fields, including literature, education, social work, science, public affairs and arts.

Among the awardees from Jammu and Kashmir, Prof Shafi Shauq was conferred the Padma Shri for his distinguished contribution to Literature and Education. Prof Shauq is a writer, scholar, translator and academician who has authored, edited and translated more than 106 books in Kashmiri, English, Hindi and Urdu languages. Born in Shopian district of the valley, he completed his higher education from the University of Kashmir and later served the institution for more than 33 years. He retired as Head of the Department besides serving as Dean Faculty of Arts and Dean Faculty of Oriental Learning.

Brij Lal Bhat, also from J&K, has also been selected for the Padma Shri in the field of social work. He will receive the award during the second Civil Investiture Ceremony to be held later at Rashtapati Bhavan.

For 2026, the President has approved 131 Padma Awards, including 5 Padma Vibhushan, 13 Padma Bhushan and 113 Padma Shri awards.

MHA appoints Rakesh Balwal as DIG in CRPF

of Home Affairs on May 25, 2026, Balwal, a 2012-batch IPS officer of the Manipur cadre, has been appointed as DIG in CRPF under the usual terms and conditions of central deputation.

The MHA has requested the Government of Manipur to relieve the officer immediately so that he can assume his new assignment at the Centre.

Rakesh Balwal has previously served in key positions in Jammu and Kashmir, including as DIG.

CPWs get regularisation orders

Ganderbal and Bandipora districts and extended his best wishes to them for their future service.

Omar expressed hope that the employees would continue to work with sincerity, commitment and dedication towards strengthening the school education department and improving public service delivery.

The beneficiaries expressed gratitude to the CM and the government for addressing their long-pending issue and providing them regularisation orders.

Education minister Sakina Itoo was also present on

the occasion.

Sinha approves selection of 39 civil judges

The selectees are: Anshul Lal Sharma, Amjed Iqbal, Ufaq Mushtaq, Anchal Gupta, Vasudha Sharma, Muskan Puri, Abdul Nafeh Rehmani, Deekhsha Sharma, Tarush Kumar Oberoi, Shikha Jamwal, Kritika Jain, Gaurang Resutra, Mohamad Aleem Syed, Sonam, Sharida Rashid, Manvika Koshal, Shazia Manzoor, Saiqa Sharief Khan, Stanzin Itzes Chosket, Rasleen Kour, Syed Sibtain Mehdi, Priyanka Bhardwaj, Vatsalya Chadha, Amar Kumar, Anamika Angral, Shuhab Shabir, Mudasir Fazal Dader, Shweta Shavan, Nusrat Kabir, Sahiba Banotra, Saeed Faheem, Abaid Ullah, Sanyogita Saini, Mohd Sala Ud Din, Zahir Irshad Butt, Rijju Gupta, Dawood Ahmad Bhat, Tania Mahajan and Divyam.

Accused visited Lucknow, planned attacks on key landmarks

names of these relevant shops in her own handwriting - a list later recovered by the NIA from her phone, the sources said.

The duo stayed at the residence of one of the relatives of Shaheen at Lucknow. Shaheen's ancestral house, where her father lives separately, is located at Khandari Bazar, Lal Bagh, they said.

Muzammil then asked a "witness", who hails from Lucknow and was familiar with the city, to physically enquire at these shops about availability of the chemicals in large quantities, the sources said.

This witness was roped in by Muzammil as he was a local and could make enquiries without raising suspicion, unlike Muzammil who could be immediately identified as an outsider, they said.

According to sources, the accused also searched for a place at a remote location of the city where their explosive-making operations could be carried out in a clandestine manner, in the same way as they were operating in the rented house in Khori Jamalpur in Faridabad.

The NIA, through a detailed investigation involving deposition of multiple eye witness accounts and technical analysis, following the financial trail has established the entire sequence of events that transpired during this Lucknow visit.

These findings are part of a voluminous 7,500-page chargesheet filed by the NIA on May 14 in connection with the high-intensity vehicle-borne IED blast that rocked the national capital on November 10 last year.

The anti-terror agency's investigation establishes that the Ansar Ghazwat-ulHind (AGuH) interim terror module - linked to Al-Qaida in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) - aimed to set up a covert base in Lucknow, with the objective of launching a series of blasts using the same explosive making technique that they used for carrying out the deadly Red Fort blast, the sources said.

However, their plans were foiled after busting of the module - also known as "doctor" or "white-collar" module due to involvement of medical professionals. A wider "jihadi conspiracy" was later exposed through a detailed scientific and forensic investigation as the accused, some of whom were radicalised medical professionals, were found to be inspired by AQIS/AGuH ideology to carry out the deadly attack, according to the NIA chargesheet.

NTA has not learnt lessons, says Apex Court

gether.

It directed the Centre-appointed committee led by former Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) chief K Radhakrishnan for the overhaul of the functioning of the NTA to detail the steps taken in compliance with its directions.

All the parties were directed to file their responses within three days by the court, which listed the matter for further hearing on Friday.

The medical body has urged the top court for direct restructuring or replacement of NTA with a robust and autonomous system to conduct NEET-UG, citing a "direct assault" on the fundamental rights of over 22 lakh students through recurring paper leaks.

It has also sought a direction to appoint a high-powered monitoring committee until a fresh body is formally constituted to oversee the re-examination.

It said the committee should comprise a retired Supreme Court judge as the chair, along with a cybersecurity expert and a forensic scientist, to ensure that no further leaks occur.

The undergraduate-level National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) held on May 3 by the NTA for admissions to medical education programmes was cancelled on May 12 amid allegations of paper leak, which are now being probed by the CBI.

In 2024, after the question paper leak of the NEET-UG examination, the top court had refused to cancel the exam but passed various directions aimed at tackling paper leaks and also a criterion for cancelling public exams.

The top court had expanded the mandate of the Radhakrishnan committee and directed it to recommend reforms on examination security, transportation of papers, CCTV surveillance, candidate verification, encryption protocols, technological safeguards, real-time monitoring, grievance redressal and adoption of international best practices.

After the cancellation of the NEET-UG 2026 examination on May 12, several petitions have been filed in the apex court.

The FAIMA petition said that the Rajasthan Police Special Operations Group (SOG) uncovered that "guess papers" circulated on WhatsApp and Telegram contained 120 questions identical to those in the actual Biology and Chemistry sections of the NEET-UG 2026 paper.

Despite the NTA's claims of using high-tech security, including 5G jammers, GPS tracking and AI-monitored cameras, these measures existed "only on paper", the plea alleged.

It sought a direction to the CBI to file a status report before the apex court within four weeks regarding the investigation into the paper leak, including the network identified, arrests made, persons charged and progress of prosecution.

For "transparent detection of anomalies", the NTA be asked to "forthwith publish centre-wise results (as and when available) of NEET-UG 2026", the plea said.

"NEET-UG is a national-level examination for undergraduate medical admissions in India, directly affecting the academic and professional futures of over 22.7 lakh students. The recurring instance of systemic failure is a direct assault on the fundamental guarantees of equality and right to life/livelihood under Articles 14 and 21," it said.

The current system used by the NTA to conduct exams is without proper safeguards, it contended, adding that despite repeated paper leaks over the years, the authorities have "failed" to implement requisite changes to protect the exam's integrity.

"They continue to rely on risky, old-fashioned methods like physically printing question papers and using private couriers for transport, making them prone to leaks," it said.

The petitioner highlighted that this was not an isolated incident.

Drawing parallels to the 2024 paper leak, it said that the NTA has failed to learn from the past mistakes.

The petition referred to previous judicial observations regarding unauthorised access to strongrooms and the "highly sensitive" transportation of papers via e-rickshaws and private couriers.

The cancellation of the exam has left over 22 lakh medical aspirants and their families anxious about the next steps, including the fresh examination date, admit cards, examination centres and the counselling timeline, it noted.

Jammu sizzles at 40.3°C

degrees Celsius, Batote 28.1 degrees Celsius, and Bhandarwah 27.2 degrees Celsius, according to the data provided by the MeT department.

A MeT official said May 26-27 would experience generally hot and dry weather.

However, May 28 and 29 will experience generally cloudy weather with one or two spells of rain, thunder-showers and hailstorms with gusty winds at scattered to fairly widespread places. On May 30 to June 3, the weather will be generally dry with brief spells of rain and thundershower at isolated places towards late afternoon hours can't be ruled out.

300 tourists rescued after Gulmarg Gondola malfunctions

nearly 500 ft above ground. Heavy rains in the area also hampered efforts.

"The rescue operation has concluded and all the stranded persons have been evacuated safely," an official said this evening.

Operations of both phases of the Gulmarg cable car service, known as gondola, were suspended following a malfunction, officials said.

Personnel of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) and the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) along with police and Army were involved in the rescue effort.

Restoration work on the cable car system was currently underway, officials said.

Earlier, chief minister Omar Abdullah said the government was "closely monitoring" the situation.

"All cabins are intact and rescue operations to safely evacuate stranded tourists are underway with trained teams on the ground. The situation is completely under control and there is no cause for panic," he said in a post on X.

LG Manoj Sinha said he had directed DGP Nalin Prabhat to proceed to Gulmarg to oversee the rescue operation.

"I'm monitoring the rescue operation for tourists stranded in cable car cabins following a technical fault in Gulmarg. I have directed the DGP to proceed to the site. Joint rescue teams of Police, Army & SDRF along with DC and SSP are conducting the operation to ensure the safety of all tourists," Sinha posted on X.

Army said in a post on X that swift and coordinated rescue efforts were launched with the assistance of Chinar Corps.

On June 25, 2017, the Gulmarg Gondola had witnessed an accident when seven people were killed after a tree uprooted by strong winds had struck a cabin, causing it to crash to the ground.

The cable car had also been temporarily suspended in January last year because of technical issues.

DC Srinagar visits B&J Hospital Barzulla; Inspects progress of work on alternate entry gate, additional parking space

HIMALAYAN MAIL NEWS SRINAGAR, MAY 25

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo today conducted a comprehensive visit to Bone and Joint (B&J) Hospital and the Sunner Kul Bund Road behind Super Specialty Hospital Shreen Bagh to inspect ongoing traffic decongestion measures and infrastructure upgradation works around key healthcare facilities in Srinagar district.

The visit aimed at assessing the progress of ongoing interventions undertaken to streamline vehicular movement and improve accessibility for patients, attendants and staff visiting the hospitals.

At Bone & Joint Hospital, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the development of an alternate entry

gate to the Bone & Joint Hospital, construction of ramps and small Link Road connecting the main road with the Parking facilities through the Bund side along Bone and Joint Hospital Barzulla aimed at reducing congestion at the main gate and ensuring smooth passage for ambulances and other emergency vehicles.

While taking an on-site assessment of the new parking facility developed to address space constraints around the hospital, the DC was informed that the parking space for attendants and hospital staff is almost completed and will be made functional by June 15, 2026.

The DC also reviewed the progress on improvement works of alternate hospital entry gate to minimize bottlenecks to reduce roadside congestion, particularly during peak hours.

He was informed that this part of the project is also nearing completion.

On the occasion, the DC directed all concerned departments to work in close coordination and ensure early completion of the works to facilitate smooth movement of ambulances and vehicles carrying patients, while reducing traffic interruptions in the larger public interest.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner inspected the progress of the Sunner Kul Bund Road development behind the Super Specialty Hospital as part of traffic decongestion and management measures in the critical medical zone surrounding the SMHS Hospital, Super Specialty Hospital and Dental College.

The road development forms part of the broader mobility improvement and traffic regulation plan

along the Nawab Bazar-Kak-saraie-Darish Kadal corridor aimed at streamlining vehicular movement through the Sunner Kul route.

During the inspection, the DC carried out an on-site assessment of the ongoing works being executed to improve mobility and decongest the critical medical area around the hospitals. He was informed that the alternate route project is nearing completion and that protection works, utility relocation and allied development works within the corridor have already been completed.

The DC said that the dedicated parking facilities around the high-priority hospital zone encompassing SMHS Hospital, Dental Hospital and the Super Specialty Hospital would prevent roadside congestion and facilitate smoother access for patients, attendants and emergency

vehicles along the Nawa Bazar-Kak-saraie-Darish Kadal corridor via the Sunner Kul bund link.

He directed the executing agencies to expedite the remaining works under the project by June 10, 2026, emphasizing the need to prioritize interventions ensuring swift patient movement and timely ambulance access while minimizing inconvenience to local residents, traders and commuters.

The DC said the ongoing initiatives, including alternate access routes, expanded parking facilities and improved traffic management are expected to improve vehicular movement and make hospital access more convenient for patients and attendants.

He added that the District Administration is actively implementing traffic decongestion measures across

Srinagar, especially around major healthcare institutions to ease congestion and facilitate smoother movement in surrounding areas.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mir Imtiyaz Ul Aziz, Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer R&B Tatheer Manzoor, Superintending Engineer R&B, Shabir Ahmad, Executive Engineer R&B, Khalid Mehmood, Executive Engineer R&B, Abdul Qayoom, Executive Engineer KPDCL, MS Bone & Joint Hospital Dr. Adil, MS Superspeciality Hospital, Dr Rubeena, DySP Traffic Suhail Ahmad MS SMHS Hospital, Tehsildar South Sajad Rasool, Tehsildar Chanapora, Kifayat Ali, Dr Andleeb and other concerned Officers and Officials accompanied the Deputy Commissioner during the visit.