

North in News

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No reservation to Muslims; quota on basis of religion unconstitutional: Shah

NEW DELHI, APR 16: Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Thursday that Muslims will not be given reservation on the basis of religion as such a quota would be unconstitutional. During a fiery 40-minute debate, following which three bills were introduced in the Lok Sabha for amendment of the women's quota law and to set up a delimitation commission, Shah said a caste census will be carried out along with population enumeration during the ongoing census exercise. "The question of providing reservation to Muslim women on the basis of religion does not even arise. Our Constitution does not allow at all to give reservation on the basis of religion. I want to make it clear our government's resolve that



Amit Shah said on Thursday that Muslims will not be given reservation on the basis of religion as such a quota would be unconstitutional. During a fiery 40-minute debate, following which three bills were introduced in the Lok Sabha for amendment of the women's quota law and to set up a delimitation commission, Shah said a caste census will be carried out along with population enumeration during the ongoing census exercise.

Muslims will not be given reservation on the basis of religion. Such reservation is unconstitutional," a combative Shah said after the Samajwadi Party's Akhilesh Yadav and Dhamendra Yadav spoke in favour of giving a quota to Muslims. The home minister said the Samajwadi Party members were saying that they would place the demand for a caste census but he would like to inform them that the government had already taken a decision to carry out the caste census

and it would be carried out along with the population enumeration. "Right now, the counting of households is underway and the households do not have any caste. If the Samajwadi Party had its way, they would determine the caste of households as well," he said. Shah also said "if the Samajwadi Party gives all its tickets to Muslim women, where do we have any objection, we have no objections at all." He said that during the population enumeration, the census excludes them from pro-

(Contd on Pg 2)

LG highlighted the contributions of women farmers in agriculture and allied sectors

SRINAGAR, APRIL 16: "Without women farmers, every plate would be empty, leaving humanity starved. They sustain the world, work harder than their male counterparts and their strength anchors food security, planting seeds of prosperity for families and society in every field. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, women's empowerment is the top priority across all sectors," the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Thursday. The Lieutenant Governor said that the global food system rests on women's labor, yet it excludes them from pro-



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Thursday that the global food system rests on women's labor, yet it excludes them from prosperity. He urged every cooperative, government stakeholder to ask, what challenge or barrier in women farmers' lives can be eliminated immediately? By removing them one by one, we can honor their leadership and enrich society and the nation through direct market access, he said. The Lieutenant Governor was speaking at the Women Farmers Conference, organised by Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) at Srinagar. In his address, the Lieutenant Governor highlighted the contributions of women

(Contd on Pg 2)

No State, Be It North Or South Will Be Discriminated Against In Delimitation Exercise: PM In LS

NEW DELHI, APR 16: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday asserted that no state — big or small, north or south, or east or west — will be discriminated against in the delimitation of constituencies linked with the implementation of women quota law and warned that those who oppose this reform will not be forgiven by the women of the country. Intervening the debate in Lok Sabha on the three bills introduced for amendment of the women's quota law and to set up a delimitation commission, Modi also made it clear that the



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday asserted that no state — big or small, north or south, or east or west — will be discriminated against in the delimitation of constituencies linked with the implementation of women quota law and warned that those who oppose this reform will not be forgiven by the women of the country.

same proportion," he said. The prime minister said no one should remain under the illusion that they are giving something to the women of this country as reservation in legislatures is their right. He said if any political party opposes the women quota law, it is quite natural that he (Modi) would be politically benefited. "If you oppose it, it is natural that I will gain political benefit, but if you walk along, no one will gain any political advantage," he said. Modi said the ruling dispensation does not want

(Contd on Pg 2)

Kashmir SIA files chargesheet against 10 in 'white collar' terror module case

SRINAGAR, APR 16: The Kashmir State Investigation Agency (SIA) on Thursday filed a chargesheet against 10 accused persons in the 'white collar' terror module case involving several doctors from Jammu and Kashmir. The SIA Kashmir filed the chargesheet in a significant terrorist conspiracy case involving a covert module commonly referred to as the 'Doctors Terror Module', an agency spokesperson said.

Dr Umar Un Nabi, one of the ten accused, was killed in the Red Fort blast last November. The other nine are Arif Nisar Dar alias Sahil, Yasir Ul Ashraf Bhat, Maqsood Ahmad Dar alias Shahid, Irfan Ahmad Wagay alias Owais, Zameer Ahmad Ahanger alias Mutlashi, Dr Muzamil Shakeel Ganate alias Musab, Dr Adeel Ahmad Rather alias Javaid, Dr Shaheen Saeed, and Tufail Ahmad Bhat.

(Contd on Pg 2)

LG Saxena Hands Over 313 Job Letters To District-Cadre Employees At Leh Rozgar Mela



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha handed over 313 job letters to district-cadre employees at a Rozgar Mela here, an official said. It was the second such fair organised within three days. On April 14, the lieutenant governor (L-G) had handed over job letters to around 200 fresh recruits in Kargil. The Leh

Autonomous Hill Development Subordinate Services Recruitment Board (LAHD-SSRB) had conducted exams to fill district cadre posts for matriculation and 10+2 level last November. A total of 387 candidates were selected, of which 313 were given appointment letters on Thursday. A majority of the new recruits have been appointed to the health, revenue, forest and animal husbandry departments, an official spokesman said.

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BRIEF NEWS

ISI-Backed Terror Module Busted, One Held With 4 Grenades

CHANDIGARH, APR 16: The Punjab Police on Thursday claimed to have busted a terror module backed by Pakistan's ISI with the arrest of one person and recovery of four hand grenades. In a joint operation of the State Special Action Cells of Amritsar and Mohali, the Counter Intelligence Wing of the Punjab Police also recovered two foreign-made pistols along with ammunition, Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav said. Preliminary investigation revealed that the accused was acting on the instructions of foreign-based handlers and has links with the terror module (Contd on Pg 2)

Pak-Based LeT's Co-Founder Injured In Attack In Lahore

LAHORE, APR 16: Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba terror group's co-founder Amir Hamza suffered bullet injuries in an attack by motorcycle-borne unidentified gunmen in Lahore on Thursday, police said. Hamza is regarded as LeT's second most important leader after its chief Hafiz Saeed, who has been in Lahore's Kot Lakhpat Jail since 2019 after getting convicted for several years in terror financing cases. According to police, unidentified gunmen opened fire on the vehicle of the private TV channel 24NewsHD TV, owned by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi. The channel's religious programme host Justice (retd.) Nazir Ahmed Ghazi and

(Contd on Pg 2)

India Expanding Energy Roadmap With Focus On Innovation, Industry Collaboration: Dr Jitendra

NEW DELHI, APR 16: India is steadily positioning itself as a global player in the clean energy landscape through a calibrated mix of policy support, technological innovation, and industry participation, Union Minister of State Dr Jitendra Singh said on Thursday. The minister said the country is simultaneously advancing green hydrogen, expanding nuclear energy capacity, and strengthening renewable sources, while building indigenous capabilities in critical technologies

such as electrolyzers. He was addressing the World Hydrogen Energy Summit alongside the World Petrochemical Congress here. The minister said India's approach is focused on creating a robust and self-reliant ecosystem supported by enhanced research funding and innovation-led growth. The country is pursuing a multi-dimensional strategy that combines energy security with sustainability, Dr Singh said. India is targeting nearly \$100 billion in oil and gas

(Contd on Pg 2)

Railway to run daily Delhi Budgam goods train from April 17

JAMMU, APR 16: The Northern Railway will begin a regular parcel train service between Delhi and Kashmir's Budgam from April 17, offering a faster and cheaper alternative for fruit growers and handicraft exporters who have long complained of erratic road transport. A senior railway officer said the service officially called the Joint Parcel Product-Rapid Cargo Service (JPP-RCS) will run on a trial basis till May 31 between Adarsh Nagar in New Delhi and Budgam in central Kashmir. If occupancy holds, officials said, it will be made permanent.

He said train 00462 will leave Budgam at 6.15 am and arrive at Adarsh Nagar at 5 am the next day, covering the distance in 23-24 hours. Return train 00461 will depart Adarsh Nagar at 5 am and reach Budgam at 10.45 am the following day. The train will stop at Bari Brahmana and Ambala Cantonment for loading and unloading. The halt timing at Bari Brahmana has been revised after trader feedback, the official said. Eight parcel vans and one seating-cum-luggage rake will make up the rake. "This is meant to strengthen J&K's economy and speed up movement of saffron, walnuts, pashmina shawls and handicrafts to national markets," the official further said. Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Uchit Singhal said the decision followed persistent demand. "Our primary objective is to give fruit growers and handicraft traders a fast, safe and economical mode of transport," he said.

CS reviews preparations for Shri Amarnathji Yatra (SANJY)-2026

JAMMU, APRIL 16: Chief Secretary, Atul Dulloo today chaired a high-level meeting of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), attended by senior officers from the Civil Administration and Police department to review the comprehensive arrangements being made for the smooth, safe, and successful conduct of the Shri Amarnathji Yatra (SANJY)-2026, scheduled to commence on July 3, 2026. During the meeting, the Chief Secretary undertook a detailed review of the preparedness across all sectors, with a particular focus on ensuring the safe and seamless movement of pilgrims along the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, as well as the two primary routes to the holy cave via Baltal and

57-Day Yatra to be held from July 3 to August 28, 2026



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place on June 29, 2026. The Chief Secretary directed the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to ensure timely snow clearance on all Yatra tracks by May 15, 2026. He also emphasized the need for proper road maintenance, installation of signages and crash barriers, slope stabilization, bridge maintenance, and restoration of shelter sheds along the Yatra routes. The Public Works Department (PWD) was instructed to complete macadamization of roads around base camps and undertake necessary repairs of helipads at Neelgrah, Baltal, and Pahalgam. The Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation & Reconstruction

included registration processes, service provider arrangements, establishment of Yatra camps, langar services, and provisioning of essential facilities. It was informed that registration for the Yatra commenced on April 15, 2026, through both offline (bank branches) and online modes, with 19,402 pilgrims registering on the very first day. The Pratham Puja is scheduled to take

(Contd on Pg 2)

Bhaderwah, land of purple revolution to host 2-day lavender festival from May 31

JAMMU, APR 16: Jammu and Kashmir's Bhaderwah, popularly known as 'Chota Kashmir' and the 'land of purple revolution', will host the two-day Lavender Festival 2026 from May 31 at an unprecedented scale, with leading figures from the national aroma industry expected to participate, officials said on Thursday. Lavender cultivation has been the small town in Doda district a distinct national identity and a role in India's growth story, officials said. "The Lavender Festival 2026

(Contd on Pg 2)

Three held for spreading 'misinformation' on social media in Baramulla

SRINAGAR, APR 15: Three persons were arrested in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district for allegedly spreading rumours through various social media with the intent of disturbing peace, police said on Thursday. Police in Sopore area of the north Kashmir district arrested three persons for spreading misinformation and sharing old videos by portraying them as recent incidents, with the intent to disturb public peace and order, a police spokesman said. He said a case was registered at Sopore police station against the accused. Acting swiftly, police identified and apprehended the accused, he said, without

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No reservation...

authorities would keep a provision for caste enumeration, "which I personally want too." "I want to make it clear that this census will be conducted along with caste enumeration," the home minister said. The house listing under the census 2027 started on April 1. The Cabinet Committee on Political Affairs, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on April 30 last year decided to include caste enumeration in the upcoming census. Caste was excluded from all census operations conducted since Independence. The Lok Sabha on Thursday took up the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, and the Delimitation Bill, 2026, for debate and passage. As per the proposal, the strength of the Lok Sabha will be increased to 815, of which 272 seats will be reserved for women, a total of 33 per cent.

LG highlighted...

farmers in agriculture and allied sectors, the efforts of women Agri-entrepreneurs, and emphasized developing Agriculture sector under their leadership. The Lieutenant Governor said that the UN General Assembly has fittingly declared 2026 the International Year of Women Farmers, which was a long-awaited dream.

"I view International Women Farmers Year 2026 as a historic opportunity, proclaiming women as creators, not mere laborers, in agriculture's growth. Prioritize women farmers in every scheme. I trust 2026 will sincerely recognize women's roles in agriculture and allied sectors, fulfilling their aspirations," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor called upon technology innovators to prioritize technical tools for women farmers. He stressed that the agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, and dairy departments must allocate resources to women farmers, while financial institutions design loan products enabling landless women farmers to access credit in their names.

"We must reinvestigate society with the resolve for women-led development in Jammu Kashmir, enabling women's power to transform it. Significant strides in women empowerment since 2020 has set a national example and our women farmers empowerment project exemplifies the success," the Lieutenant Governor.

The Lieutenant Governor exhorted the stakeholders to grant women farmers and entrepreneurs recognition, resources, and agency to work on their terms. "Empowered women farmers are bearers of climate resilience, building robust agri-ecosystems with quality seeds, digital tools, and market linkages from cooperatives," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that through Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP), Jammu Kashmir advances holistic, tech-driven, farmer-centric transformation for higher production, incomes, and sustainable agriculture. It has registered 14,782 women farmers. Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi launched JKCP on June 20, 2024, targeting climate-smart, market-oriented production, empowering ecosystems, sectoral development, and aid for vulnerable groups, farmers, and youth-registering 5,248 women farmers. PM Kisan Samman Nidhi has over 90,000 women beneficiaries. Over 8,000 women farmers are registered in natural farming and central schemes; 4,472 in horticulture; 128 in sericulture; over 14,000 in SKUAST schemes; 27,500 in dairy; and more than 16,000 in sheep farming and fisheries. Across agriculture and allied sectors, nearly 3,11,000 women are registered, he further said.

"I recognize millions more unregistered women farmers; I urge them to join central schemes. I take pride in Jammu Kashmir's self-help groups, women-led FPOs, and skill programs in mushrooms, horticulture, beekeeping, food processing, and dairy, empowering rural women as farmers, agri-entrepreneurs, and decision-makers. When women control production resources, inputs, and services in agriculture and allied sectors, they ensure food security," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor urged the IFFCO to establish farmers' training centre, multi-facility farmers' service centre, sheep production unit in JK&T and provision of mobile soil testing machine to support local farmers.

The Lieutenant Governor also announced that the Mass Movement for Drug Free Jammu Kashmir for the Kashmir Division will be launched from Srinagar on May 3, 2026. He called upon the women, youth and all sections of society to actively participate in this movement to eradicate the drug menace from the Union Territory.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor felicitated the women agri-entrepreneurs. He also visited the stalls put up by IFFCO and various agri-entrepreneurs.

Shri Javid Ahmad Dar, Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj and Cooperative; Shri Dileep Singhani, Chairman IFFCO; Shri K.J. Patel, Managing Director IFFCO; Shri Yogender Kumar, Marketing Director IFFCO; Shri Sartaj Ahmad Shah, Director Agriculture, Kashmir; women farmers and Agri-entrepreneurs, members of women self-help groups and women delegates participated in the conference.

Shri Balwant Singh Mankotia, Member of Legislative Assembly from Chenani; Shri Akshay Labroo, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar; Dr GV Sundep Chakravarty, SSP Srinagar, senior officials and Agriculture experts were also present.

No State...

credit for implementation of the women reservation law in 2029 and offered to give credit to the opposition. "We don't want credit. If you want me to use the word 'guarantee', I use the word 'guarantee'. If you want me to make a promise, I use the word 'promise'. Because if the intention is clear, there is no need to play games with words," he said.

Allaying fear of some states over the delimitation exercise, particularly those from the southern and eastern regions, the prime minister said no state will be discriminated against under the move.

"I want to say from this House today with a great sense of responsibility that whether it is the south, the north, the east, the west, small states or big states, this decision-making process will not discriminate against any state or do injustice to anyone," he said.

Modi said those who had opposed in giving this right to women in the past have not been forgiven by the women of this country, they have faced the consequences.

"Today, I have come to appeal to you that do not weigh this on political scales. This is a decision in the national interest. The women across the country and the world are waiting us, will see our decisions. But more than the decision itself, they will judge our intent. If there is any flaw in our intent, the women of this country will never forgive," he said.

The prime minister said when the Parliament was discussing the women reservation legislation in 2023, people were saying, "hurry up". "But it couldn't happen in 2024, because it can't be done in such a short time. Now in 2029, we have time. If we don't do it even in 2029, we can imagine what the situation will be like. The demand of the time is that we should not delay any further now," he said. Lok Sabha on Thursday took up the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, 2026, the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026, and the Delimitation Bill, 2026, for debate and passage.

According to the proposal, the strength of Lok Sabha will be increased to 815, of which 272 seats will be reserved for women — a total of 33 per cent.

Kashmir...

All 10 accused were booked at Srinagar's Nowgam Police Station.

The present case originates from an incident in October last year when provocative and threatening posters were pasted in the Nowgam area bearing the name of the proscribed terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad (JEM).

The posters were aimed at spreading fear among the public, disturbing public order, and directly challenging the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India, authorities said.

"A meticulous and sustained investigation has revealed that the poster campaign was not an isolated act, but part of a larger, well-orchestrated terrorist conspiracy aimed at reviving the banned terrorist outfit Ansar Ghazwat-ul-Hind (AGuH)," the spokesperson said.

The accused had formed a highly clandestine module, actively engaged in radicalisation, recruitment, and operational preparations to carry out terror attacks in the country," he said.

The investigation established that the accused deliberately used the name of JEM to exploit its notoriety and create psychological impact, while covertly advancing the re-establishment and operational build-up of AGuH, he said. The spokesperson said the module had as its members highly educated individuals, including medical professionals, who misused their knowledge, access, and institutional spaces for unlawful activities.

"The accused were actively disseminating extremist propaganda through digital platforms and had undertaken procurement of materials and experimental activities related to explosive fabrication, including within residential premises and facilities linked to Al-Falch Medical University," he said.

The investigation has revealed that the group identified Triacetone Triperoxide (TATP) — a highly sensitive and volatile explosive used in several global terror incidents — as a preferred material due to the relative ease of sourcing its precursor components.

The scale of accumulation of explosive substances and precursor materials by the module sent shockwaves across security and investigative agencies, underscoring the seriousness of intent, level of preparedness, and the potentially catastrophic consequences had the conspiracy not been timely detected and neutralised.

"Through a comprehensive, evidence-driven investigation, SIA has successfully dismantled the entire terrorist network and its support structure," the spokesperson said. He said the SIA unearthed clinching and irrefutable evidence, comprising recoveries, digital forensics, scientific analysis, and corroborative witness accounts, which firmly establishes the complicity of each accused in the conspiracy.

LG Saxena...

Congratulating the newly joiners, Saxena said the recruitment process reflected transparency and merit-based selection, ensuring equal opportunities without any bias or malpractice.

Emphasising that government service is not merely a source of livelihood but a responsibility towards society and the nation, Saxena urged the recruits to work with dedication, integrity and a strong sense of public service. The L-G reiterated the administration's commitment to filling all vacant posts in a time-bound manner and moving away from ad-hoc arrangements to regular and transparent recruitment.

Saxena also expressed confidence that the new recruits will play a vital role in strengthening governance and enhancing public service delivery in Ladakh.

India...

investments, expansion of exploration areas to 1 million square kilometres, and increasing the share of natural gas in the energy mix to 15 per cent. Notably, India's refining capacity continues to expand, placing it among leading nations globally. On clean energy transition, Dr Singh said the National Green Hydrogen Mission, with an outlay of Rs 19,744 crore, has placed India among the frontrunners in developing alternative fuel ecosystems.

He said green hydrogen will play a key role in decarbonising hard-to-abate sectors such as steel and cement, while efforts are underway to reduce production costs through domestic manufacturing and innovation.

The minister also shared progress in India's nuclear energy programme, stating that the recently announced Nuclear Energy Mission aims to achieve 100 GW of nuclear power capacity by 2047.

He said India has entered the next phase of its nuclear programme with indigenous technological advancements, placing it among a select group of nations. India plans to develop five Small Modular/Small Reactors by 2033, with work already underway on three of them, he mentioned.

These include a Bharat Small Modular Reactor (SMR), a Bharat Small Reactor (BSR) based on established heavy water technology, and a small-scale hydrogen-linked reactor of a few megawatts capacity. He said such reactors

will enable flexible, scalable, and decentralised clean energy solutions, while also supporting emerging hydrogen applications.

Bhaderwah...

now expanded across this region and to states like Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and the northeastern region," he said.

Describing the festival as CSIR-IIM's annual flagship event in the region, Ahmed said it aims to promote aromatic crops and strengthen farmers' enterprises. He also announced that under Phase IV of the Aroma Mission, a Centre of Excellence is being planned at Bhaderwah in Doda district to provide assured markets, value addition facilities and training for local youth. "We will press for this centre to be established this season itself," he said.

Officials said that the CSIR-Aroma Mission has played a key role in promoting lavender cultivation in the temperate regions of Jammu and Kashmir, with the objective of enhancing farmers' income and encouraging agri-based startups. Over 30 lakh free lavender plants were distributed last year among farmers across districts, along with end-to-end technological support for cultivation, processing, value addition and marketing, they said. "More than 2,500 farmers are currently cultivating lavender, transforming it into a viable industry for small and marginal farmers, particularly in the Jammu region", officials added.

CAG...

encroachment. "Around 2,528.10 kanals of lake area has been encroached upon for construction, plantations and agricultural activities. Despite issuance of notices, authorities were unable to ensure eviction of encroachers," it said.

The report noted that in the absence of a comprehensive conservation and management programme, significant changes in land use have occurred, resulting in deterioration of the lake's health.

The CAG observed that the failure to identify point and non-point sources of pollution, absence of measures to prevent silt inflow, lack of dredging and construction of a flood spill channel through the lake area contributed to a decline in open water area.

Highlighting land-use changes between 2014 and 2020, the report recorded a seven per cent decrease in open water area, while scrub area (transitional habitat along the shoreline) increased by over 1,100 per cent and aquatic vegetation by 42 per cent, largely attributed to anthropogenic pressures and inflow of untreated sewage.

"Between 2014 and 2020, the open water area decreased by seven per cent, while scrub area increased by 1,157 per cent, siltation by 104 per cent, river area by 103 per cent, built-up area by 102 per cent and aquatic vegetation by 42 per cent", it added, attributing it again to anthropogenic pressure, as well as inadequate conservation efforts.

The CAG observed that no comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan had been prepared for the lake. "Instead, the Wildlife Protection Department relied on annual plans which failed to address core issues such as changes in hydrological regimes, pollution and loss of biodiversity," it said.

Analysis of satellite imagery and Google Earth Pro data from 2005 to 2022 revealed a substantial increase in built-up areas in the lake's catchments, including Haji Bagh, Soibag and HMT (Zainakot), which lack sewage treatment facilities. "The lake continues to receive inflows from these areas, aggravating pollution levels," the report said.

It also highlighted inefficiencies in flood management infrastructure. "The flood spill channel at Padshahi Bagh, designed to carry 17,000 cusecs of water, has seen its capacity reduced to 6,000 cusecs due to siltation and accumulation of debris." While Rs 46.29 crore was spent between 2018 and 2022 on channel construction, dredging and slope protection, key components such as hydraulic gates, silt retention basins and sewage treatment plants were not executed, affecting water regulation and quality.

Responding to the audit, the forest department said a policy to maintain the ecological character of wetlands was under consideration and efforts were underway to remove unwanted vegetation and restore built-up areas.

Research studies cited in the report also indicated disappearance of native aquatic species and invasion of non-native plants, along with declining dissolved oxygen levels due to nutrient loading, it said.

The CAG, meanwhile, has recommended urgent identification and treatment of pollution sources, scientific dredging to restore open water area and comprehensive survey and demarcation to prevent further encroachments and reclaim the affected 2,528.10 kanals of lake area.

The audit pointed out deficiencies in key conservation activities such as dewatering and dredging. "Expenditure on these works lacked scientific basis, with no vegetation mapping, bathymetric surveys or impact assessments conducted," the CAG report said.

It also flagged gaps in flood management works under the Comprehensive Flood Management Programme, noting that critical components such as hydraulic gates, silt retention basins and sewage treatment plants were not executed, affecting regulation of water flow and quality. Recommendations for urgent corrective measures, the audit called for identification and treatment of pollution sources, scientific dredging to restore open water area and comprehensive survey and demarcation to prevent further encroachment.

It also stressed the need for a holistic conservation plan addressing hydrology, biodiversity and pollution to safeguard the wetland's ecological balance and livelihood value.

The Hokersar lake is located in Srinagar and Budgam districts and is fed by the Doodhghana stream in the east and Sukhnag Nallah in the west.

The lake was notified in July 1945 and later declared a Conservation Reserve under the Jammu and Kashmir Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1978.

CS reviews...

(DMRR&R) was tasked with identifying and demarcating flood- and disaster-prone areas to prevent the installation of facilities in vulnerable zones. Additionally, it was directed to ensure early debris clearance of nallahs near

the holy cave and operationalize the Integrated Command and Control Centre (ICCC) in Srinagar by June 10, 2026.

The Department of Rural Sanitation was asked to ensure high standards of sanitation before, during, and after the Yatra, particularly along both routes during the 57-day pilgrimage period. Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and Development Authorities at Pahalgam and Sonamarg were directed to implement scientific waste disposal systems.

The Labour Department and Animal and Sheep Husbandry Department, in coordination with the concerned district administrations were instructed to ensure registration of all service providers and ponies in collaboration with district administrations of Anantnag and Ganderbal. Deputy Commissioners were directed to implement a digital prepaid system and notify standardized service rates for the convenience of pilgrims and service providers.

The Jal Shakti Department and Power Department were tasked with ensuring adequate water supply and uninterrupted power through necessary pipeline and cable networks, along with installation of RO filters and backup generators and illumination of tracks and base camps too.

The Health Department was directed to operationalize 100-bedded hospitals at Chandanwari and Baltal by June 20, 2026, and ensure deployment of sufficient medical and paramedical staff, along with critical care ambulances at all base camps and along both routes.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) will provide Doppler-based weather forecasting services and install LED display screens at base camps for real-time updates. Telecom service providers have been directed to ensure robust mobile and internet connectivity along the Yatra routes by May 15, 2026.

The Food & Civil Supplies Department will enhance the quota of essential commodities such as ration, LPG and kerosene and ensure their uninterrupted availability throughout the Yatra.

The Chief Secretary also directed the Information Department to install an adequate number of public address systems, hoardings, and banners at Yatra camps, lodgement centres, and key locations along the route to facilitate dissemination of information to pilgrims.

The Fire & Emergency Services Department was instructed to deploy sufficient firefighting equipment at all camps, lodgement centres, langar sites, tents, and commercial establishments, and to conduct fire safety audits well in advance. Training and capacity building of service providers and langar operators were also emphasized to enable them to act as first responders during emergencies.

The Chief Secretary reiterated the importance of coordinated efforts among all departments and directed officials to ensure that all arrangements are put in place well ahead of time. He stressed that the overarching objective is to provide pilgrims with a safe, comfortable, and spiritually fulfilling journey, ensuring the successful and smooth conduct of SAMJY-2026.

Three held...

identifying them. Further investigation into the matter is underway, he added. The police advised the public to refrain from creating, sharing or amplifying unverified content on social media, warning such actions may attract strict legal consequences.

ISI-Backed...

involved in the recent grenade attack in Chandigarh, Yadav said in a post on X. An FIR has been registered at Police Station State Special Operation Cell in Amritsar, the DGP said, adding that further investigation is underway to identify, track and apprehend other members of the module.

Pak-Based...

Hamza were in the vehicle.

"Two unidentified armed men riding a motorcycle opened fire on the white car in which Ghazi and Hamza were travelling at Peco Road in Lahore near the TV channel's office. In the attack, Hamza suffered bullet injuries while Ghazi remained unharmed," the police said.

Hamza has been shifted to a hospital, where he is being treated, they said. Police said they have launched a probe into the incident with the help of CCTV footage to trace the attackers.

"TV host Justice Nazir Ghazi unharmed, Maulana Amir Hamza injured in Lahore gun attack. Unidentified person opened fire on vehicle of 24NewsHD TV channel's religious programme host Justice Nazir Ahmed Ghazi in Lahore, leaving Maulana Amir Hamza injured," the TV channel said in a statement on X.

It said Ghazi hosts the programme 'Noor-e-Sehar' on 24NewsHD. "Ghazi had just finished recording his show at the City News office, Lahore and was on his way home at the time of the incident," it said.

It said Ghazi remained unharmed in the attack, while Tehreek-e-Hummat-e-Rasool Pakistan (THRP) Chairman Maulana Hamza, who was travelling with him after appearing on the programme, sustained a bullet injury to his arm.

Pakistan Markazi Muslim League (PMML), a political front of Hafiz Saeed's banned Jamat-ud-Dawah (JUD), has strongly condemned the attack on Hamza and demanded that those involved in the incident be arrested immediately.

The party also called on the government to ensure effective security for "religious scholars".

In a joint statement, the PMML leaders, including Hafiz Talha Saeed, said that the broad daylight firing incident in Lahore is a question mark on the Punjab government's security system and reflects negligence and failure on the part of the authorities.

The leaders urged the government to ensure the immediate arrest of the attackers and to provide adequate protection to religious scholars. Hamza has been designated as a terrorist by the US.

In the past, he served as the head of LeT's "special campaigns" department. In 2018, Hamza formed a fundraising group for the LeT following a ban on the JUD and Falah-e-Insania Foundation by the Pakistani government.



Expert Lecture on ‘Empowering Women through Financial Literacy’ Organized by University of Jammu

JAMMU, APRIL 16: The Centre for Women's Studies, University of Jammu, successfully organized an expert lecture on the topic ‘Empowering Women through Financial Literacy’ today for the faculty, scholars, and students of various departments of the University.

The lecture was delivered by Prof. Felix Ofusu Djan, Chancellor, Webbie University, South Africa (Ghana). The programme aimed to spread awareness about the importance of financial literacy in empowering women to achieve independence, make informed financial decisions, and actively participate in economic activities. Prof. Felix Ofusu Djan, the expert speaker of the programme, emphasized that financial literacy is a powerful tool that enables women to make informed decisions, secure their future, and contribute meaningfully to their families and society. Through storytelling, he highlighted practical strategies for



managing personal finances, understanding banking services, and exploring investment opportunities. He also provided detailed insights into essential financial skills such as budgeting, saving, investing, and effective money management. Adding depth to the discussion, Prof. Djan presented a comparative analysis of financial literacy and women's empowerment in India and Ghana. The analysis shed light on similarities and differences in financial inclusion, access to banking services, and the socio-economic challenges faced by women in both countries. This comparative perspective offered valuable global insights and broadened the participants' understanding of the subject. Earlier, Prof. Savita Nayyar, Director, Centre for Women's Studies, in her welcome address extended heartfelt greetings to the esteemed guest and participants. She expressed gratitude for the enthusiastic presence of attendees and emphasized the significance of

organizing such awareness lectures. Introducing the theme, ‘Empowering Women through Financial Literacy,’ she highlighted the crucial role financial awareness plays in strengthening women's independence and decision-making capabilities. She stressed that, in today's rapidly evolving economic landscape, equipping women with financial knowledge is essential not only for personal growth but also for the overall development of society. A large number of participants actively engaged in the session, gaining valuable insights into financial planning and the importance of economic self-reliance. The interactive discussion addressed common financial challenges faced by women and offered practical solutions to overcome them. Dr. H.R. Rehman, Chairperson, and Dr. Narendar, Director, both from GHRT, also attended the programme.

Stop the 'Waiting Room' Game with Women: Shiv Sena

JAMMU, APRIL 16: The Jammu and Kashmir unit of Shiv Sena (UBT) launched a scathing attack on the Government's intentions regarding the ‘Women's Reservation’ (131st Amendment) Bill introduced in the Lok Sabha today. State President Manish Sahni, debunking the government's claims, stated that this bill is not intended to empower women but is merely a tactic to give them ‘dates after dates’ (Tankh-par-Tarikh). ‘Manish Sahni pointed out that while the government is passing the bill in Parliament today, it has imposed conditions such as ‘Delimitation’ and ‘Census’, ensuring that women cannot receive reservation before 2029. Sahni questioned, ‘If the intentions



are clear, why is this right not being granted starting from the upcoming elections?’ ‘Slamming the Centre, Sahni said that if the government truly desired, it could have reserved 33% of the existing 543 seats for women. Instead, the government has pushed the issue into cold storage by linking it to the complex matter of increasing the number of seats (Delimitation). ‘Sahni emphasized that Jammu and Kashmir has already been waiting for its democratic rights for a long time. Making the daughters of this soil wait for the next census to get their reservation is a cruel joke’ upon them. He demanded that the government immediately remove the ‘Delimitation’ clause from this bill and grant women their constitutional rights starting from the very next elections.

Waqf Board begins the construction work under the guidance of Dr Andrabi at Jamia Masjid



JAMMU, APR 16: Jammu & Kashmir Waqf Board officially began the construction of Jamia Masjid Talab Khatikan in Jammu. Jammu & Kashmir Waqf Board Chairperson Dr. Syed Darakhshan Andrabi today visited the site and gave instructions for the completion of this project within the stipulated time frame. This is the largest grand mosque of Jammu and its construction remained incomplete

due to the mismanagement for years. Waqf Board took the responsibility of completion of the project and today the work began during the visit of the Chairperson of the Board. ‘We have decided not to waste our energy on digging the past misappropriation & mismanagement which wasted years on the construction of this significant prayer centre in Jammu city. Instead Board has taken up the construction work and we as per our tradition of the past few years will be completing it soon within the stipulated time frame. I personally finalized the plan and instructed the engineering wing to ensure the quality work & complete it without delays’, said Dr Darakhshan. Waqf Chairperson met the eminent people of the locality and sought their support. The civil society members thanked Dr Andrabi for her initiative and expressed their hope that now this project will definitely be completed. She was accompanied by the Administrator Aabid Hussain and the Engineering team of the Board.

JU Organizes Court Visit to Bridge Doctrinal Legal Education with Adjudicative Practice

JAMMU, APRIL 16: The Law School, University of Jammu, continuing its commitment to bridging doctrinal legal education with the pragmatics of adjudicative practice, organized an immersive court visit for its sixth-semester students. The visit was thoughtfully designed to integrate procedural jurisprudence, substantive law, and legal skills training, thereby offering participants a comprehensive understanding of both criminal and civil justice administration through the lens of law in action.

The highlight of the visit was an engaging session with Shri R.N. Watal, Principal District and Sessions Judge, Jammu, emphasizing the deontological foundations of the



legal profession, he underscored honesty, integrity, and hard work as non-negotiable normative cornerstones of legal excellence. He further urged future lawyers not merely to follow black-letter law, but to appreciate the sociology of law and the realist critique of legal formalism,

encouraging them to examine law as a lived social phenomenon. Commenting on the visit, Prof. (Dr.) Seema Rohmra, Director, The Law School, said, ‘At The Law School, we firmly believe that the future of legal education lies in experiential learning.

Classroom instruction provides the normative foundation, but it is in the courtrooms, through direct observation and hermeneutic engagement with the judicial process, that legal theory truly transforms into applied wisdom. This visit is a testament to our pedagogy, which aims to mould

not just law graduates, but practice-ready advocates equipped with both epistemic knowledge and the practical reason to apply it effectively.’

Students also had the opportunity to interact with distinguished alumni of The Law School, including Shafiq Mushtaq Lone, Additional Mobile Magistrate (Traffic), Jammu, and Advocates Anuj Malhotra, Snigdha Shekhar, Sushant Samnotra, Jhanvi, and Rahul Aggarwal.

The visit was coordinated by Dr. Rajneesh Khajuria, Assistant Professor, and supported by faculty members Dr. Ramesh Kumar, Dr. Rubia Jala, and Dr. Nitan Sharma.

Dogri Music-cum-Kavi Sammelan held at Marh

JAMMU, APRIL 16: Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages in collaboration with Dogri Sahitya Sabha on Thursday organized day-long Music-cum-Kavi Sammelan at Shakti Shikshan Niketan Higher Secondary School, Marh with a vision to promote and preserve the rich heritage of Dogri language, literature and the cultural legacy of the Dogra region. The programme commenced with a welcome address by President Dogri Sahitya Sabha Marh Puran Chander Sharma. The first session featured scintillating Dogri folk music performances. Local folk artists captivated the audience with soul-



ful renditions of ‘Karkam’ and ‘Baraan’, reflecting the deep-rooted cultural ethos of the Duggar region. Melodious Dogri light music presentations by local singers further enriched the programme, adding emotional depth and charm. The programme was presided over by eminent Dogri scholar and senior litterateur Dr. Om Goswami. Renowned personality Padamshree Mohan Singh graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, while as MLA Marh, Surinder Kumar graced the occasion as the Guest of Honour.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from artists, litterateurs and cultural enthusiasts, making it a memorable celebration of Dogra culture and literature. The poets who recited their poetry in Kavi Sammelan included Balwan Singh Jamworia, Dr. Sushma Rani, Randhir Singh Raipuria, Dr. Sarita Kajuria, Sushil Begana, Dr. Padam Dev Singh ‘Nadun’, Deepak Arsi, Anand Khajuria, Rajni Thapa, Rakesh Verma, Heena Mahajan, Neha Sharma and Dr. Sheetal Sharma. The poets enthralled the audience with their thought-provoking and emotionally rich compositions on diverse themes of

society, culture and human values, creating a vibrant literary atmosphere. In his address, MLA Surinder Kumar lauded the organizers for hosting such a meaningful event dedicated to the promotion of Dogri language, literature and culture. He appreciated the participating artists and poets for their dedication and expressed optimism for a bright future of Dogri heritage, emphasizing the need for sustained collective efforts. The Chief Guest shared his views and presented engaging compositions. In his presidential address, Dr. Om Goswami captivated the audience with his remarkable literary creations.

Ignoring border belt of Sunderbani Nowshera from Railway connectivity is wrong - Ravinder

JAMMU, APRIL 16: JKPCSS Chief Spokesperson and former MLC Mr Ravinder Sharma has expressed strong resentment over the neglect of Sunderbani - Nowshera border belt in the fresh Railway survey to Rajouri- Poonch and termed it totally wrong and demanded inclusion of the vast area in the railway connectivity. In a statement JKPCSS Senior leader has said that by passing Sunderbani in the Railway link would be highly regretful and injustice to the vast border area which faced & bore the brunt of three wars. Instead he has suggested a link from Katra- Reasi to already proposed Jammu -

Poonch railway link via Akhnoor, Sunderbani - Rajouri be given to cover entire area & vast population. Reacting to the reports in the media about the realignment of the proposed Railway link to Rajouri- Poonch neglecting the Akhnoor-Sunderbani- Nowshera border belt, Mr Sharma demanded detailed clarification and necessary rectifications in this regard, from centre government. He said that people are awaiting the Railway connectivity in this border belt for decades and the surveys in this regard was conducted in 2012 on the initiative of Shri Rahul Gandhi. However project was slowed down after

2014 and now there are reports of by passing a major border belt. The Railway ministry has sanctioned multiple Railway links in Kashmir valley for better connectivity besides the economic prosperity and overall development, which is appreciable and demanded that on the same analogy, there should be more link to Jammu, Rajouri Poonch railway link, while connecting it with Katra also. He asked the ruling party leaders and representatives from Jammu & Kashmir at the centre to raise the voice of people and ensure that no injustice is done to the people of this border areas who deserve railway connectivity.

Central University of Jammu Organised Thursday Mind Meet



Jammu, 16 April 2026: The Central University of Jammu, Centre for Comparative Religion and Civilizations today organised Thursday Mind Meet on the theme ‘Importance of Folk Literature and Folk Traditions in Indian Culture’ with special emphasis on the culture of Jammu and Kashmir. Director CCRC Prof. Niranjana Bhandari welcomed the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor Prof. (Dr) Sanjeev Jain, the Expert Mohan Singh Slatia, who is a Padmasri holder, Dean of Social Sciences Prof.A.K.Nanda, Dean of Languages and the Convener of Thursday Mind Meet Prof. Vandana Sharma.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Vandana Sharma said that the Thursday Mind Meet happens weekly in the University to explore the hidden talent of students. She further said that the event is completely organised and managed by the students only. Padma Shri Sh. Mohan Singh Slatia, on the occasion explained the importance of folk culture and traditions of Jammu and Kashmir, and how Dogra culture has a variety of elements that enrich the Indian culture in its own way. Four panelists presented their views on the folk traditions and literature, including Ms Deewanshu Rathore's.

Grievances Heard, Assurances Given: Yudhvir Sethi Holds Public Darbar

JAMMU, APR 16: M.L.A. Jammu East Yudhvir Sethi held a public darbar at the BJP headquarters in Kachi Chawni on Thursday, providing a platform for citizens to voice their concerns and seek redressal of their grievances. The public darbar witnessed a significant turnout, with people from different parts of Jammu arriving to present issues related to civic amenities, infrastructure development, water supply, electricity, and employment. Individuals, delegations, and local representatives actively participated, high-



lighting both personal and community-level problems. During the interaction, Yudhvir Sethi patiently listened to each concern and assured prompt action. He emphasized the BJP's commitment to addressing pub-

lic grievances and ensuring transparent governance. Several issues were resolved on the spot through direct communication with concerned officials, while others were noted for immediate follow-up. Sethi reiterated that such public darbars are an important bridge between the administration and the people. He stated that these interactions help in understanding grassroots challenges and enable effective policymaking. He also stressed that the government is working continuously to improve basic services and enhance the quality of life for citizens. Highlighting developed initiatives, Sethi informed attendees about ongoing projects in the region and urged people to actively participate in developmental processes. He encouraged youth to come forward with innovative ideas and assured them of support from the government. Party workers and local BJP leaders were also present during the darbar, assisting in organizing the event and ensuring smooth coordination. They played a key role in documenting grievances and facilitating communication between the public and officials. The event concluded with Sethi assuring the public that their concerns would be addressed in a time-bound manner. He reaffirmed his commitment to continue holding such public outreach programs.



Yajna guiding today's youth towards values and purpose: Swami Ram Swaroop

78-day Vedic Yajna at Yol Camp underscores spiritual discipline, social responsibility, and cultural revival

Kathua, Apr 16: Emphasizing the timeless relevance of Vedic traditions in the modern era, renowned spiritual teacher Swami Ram Swaroop delivered an insightful discourse on the deeper meaning and contemporary relevance of Yajna during the ongoing 78-day-long ritual dedicated to all four Vedas at Ved Mandir, Yol Camp. The spiritual event, which commenced on April 12, features daily offerings accompanied by recitation and interpretation of Vedic mantras. The initiative aims to reconnect people—especially the younger generation—with the essence of ancient Indian knowledge systems and their practical application in modern life. Addressing a gathering of devotees, Swami Ram Swaroop

explained that Yajna should not be misunderstood as merely a ritual of offering materials into a sacred fire. Rather, it represents a holistic philosophy of life based on righteous action, discipline, and service to society. He emphasized that reducing Yajna to a symbolic act without understanding its underlying principles weakens its true purpose. Drawing from Vedic teachings, he elaborated that Yajna is founded on three essential pillars—service to respected elders and divine forces (including parents, teachers, guests, and the Almighty), promotion of social unity and collective welfare, and the spirit of charity and selfless giving. These principles, he said, are highly relevant in today's world, where indi-



Swami Ram Swaroop stressed that the process of Yajna requires discipline, proper pronunciation of mantras, and a sincere mindset. He expressed concern that in the present era, many practices have drifted away from authentic Vedic guidelines, leading to a

superficial understanding of such rituals. Highlighting its significance for the younger generation, he stated that the philosophy of Yajna offers valuable life lessons in an age marked by stress, distraction, and moral challenges. "Yajna teaches us to live with discipline, think beyond self-interest, respect our roots, and contribute positively to society. These values are essential not only for personal success but also for building a strong and responsible nation," he said. He further noted that youth today face numerous challenges, including exposure to negative influences, lack of direction, and increasing social pressures. In this context, engaging with spiritual practices like Yajna can provide clarity,

inner strength, and a sense of purpose. It encourages a balanced lifestyle where material progress is guided by ethical and moral considerations. Swami Ram Swaroop also called for a cultural revival rooted in the teachings of the Vedas, stating that lasting peace, harmony, and mutual respect can only be achieved by reconnecting with these foundational values. He urged educational institutions, families, and community organizations to introduce such knowledge to young minds in a meaningful and practical manner. The ongoing 78-day Vedic Yajna at Ved Mandir continues to attract participation from devotees, scholars, and seekers of knowledge. More than a religious gathering, it is emerging as a platform.

GDC, Ramgarh organizes Student Interaction Session on Substance Use

Ramban, Apr 15: Under the able guidance of Principal Prof. (Dr) Meeru Abrol, the College Well being and Anti Substance Cell under Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBBA) of Government Degree College, Ramgarh organized a Student Interaction Session on Substance Use: Awareness and Prevention on 16th April 2026 within the college premises. The session aimed at sensitizing students about the harmful effects of substance use and encouraging them to adopt a healthy and responsible lifestyle. The programme focused on creating awareness regarding the physical, psychological, and social consequences of substance use, while also promoting preventive measures. The activity was conducted under the coordination of



Dr. Neha Bharti and Dr. Anjana Raina, who highlighted the importance of informed decision-making and self-discipline among students. The interactive session witnessed active participation from students, making it engaging and informative. Faculty members present on the occasion included Dr. Snobar, Nodal Officer of NCORD Cell, Prof. Sandeep Kumar, Mr. Ashok Kumar, Dr. Shivali Panigraha, and Ms. Anjali Devi, who extended their support to make the programme a success. The session concluded with a strong message encouraging students to stay aware, make positive choices, and contribute towards building a substance-free and healthy campus environment.

MLA Bahu Ch. Vikram Randhawa inaugurates construction of Ward Office in Ward No. 52, Trikuta Nagar



Jammu, April 16: Reaffirming his commitment towards strengthening grassroots governance and improving public service delivery, MLA Bahu, Ch. Vikram Randhawa, today kick-started the construction of the much-awaited Ward Office in Ward No. 52, Trikuta Nagar, in the presence of officials of JMC.

The event was attended by Mandal President Nitish Mahajan, former Corporation Ajay Gupta, and prominent local leaders including Kulveer Charak, Pankaj Bral, Magan Grover, Nareesh Chopra, Rama Jamwal, Meena Gupta, Des Raj Thapa, Anil Magotra, Nitin Thapa, Ankush, along with a large number of local residents.

The project is aimed at creating a dedicated space for addressing public grievances and ensuring better coordination between residents and the Jammu Municipal Corporation. Speaking on the occasion, Randhawa said that the ward office will act as a vital link between the public and the administration, enabling faster resolution of civic issues. He reiterated that strengthening civic infrastructure and ensuring efficient governance at the grassroots level remains his top priority, and assured that development works across the constituency will continue at a rapid pace.

Strong Protest by Patwaris Highlights Administrative Failure in Jammu & Kashmir

Jammu | April 16, 2026-Darshan Rana, President BSP Jammu and Kashmir UT, has expressed serious concern over the ongoing three-day token strike by Patwaris across Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the protest held at the Tehsil Complex in Udhampur. He stated that the strike is a clear reflection of administrative negligence and failure of the Government to honor its written commitments made with the Patwar Association. Despite assurances, key issues remain unresolved, forcing the revenue staff to take to the streets. Darshan Rana strongly supported the genuine



demands raised by the Patwaris, including rationalization of Patwar Halgas and GQ circles, enhancement of quota for departmental Naib Tehsildars, finalization of pending seniority lists, and grant of technical grade pay. He emphasized that these demands are not new but were already agreed upon by the Government, yet no concrete action has

been taken. He further highlighted the alarming situation where Patwaris are functioning without proper infrastructure. Many are operating from rented accommodations and, in some cases, are compelled to bear expenses from their own pockets. Such conditions are unacceptable and reflect poorly on governance. Rana also pointed out that Patwaris are being burdened with multiple government assignments simultaneously, making it practically impossible to discharge their duties efficiently within stipulated timelines. This not only affects administrative functioning but also delays public services. He urged the Government to immediately intervene, implement the agreed demands without further delay, and ensure that adequate infrastructure, manpower, and resources are provided to the revenue staff. Darshan Rana warned that continued neglect of these issues could lead to further unrest and disruption in essential public services. He called upon the administration to act responsibly and resolve the matter in the interest of both employees and the general public.

Teli highlighted the Omar led Government is committed to the welfare and development of all sections of society.

Samba, April 16, 2026: As part of his ongoing public outreach programme, Abdul Gani Teli, Chairman of the JKNC OBC Cell, presided over a workers' meeting at Bari Brahmana in Samba district. A large number of local residents and party workers participated in the meeting and raised various grievances and day-to-day issues. The meeting was organized by Puran Chand Ex-chairman Municipality and Rakesh Bamotora Senior Vice President District Samba OBC Cell. Teli gave a patient hearing to the concerns voiced by the people and assured them that all genuine problems would be addressed in a timely



and effective manner. Speaking on the occasion, Teli highlighted that the Omar Abdullah-led government is committed to the welfare and development of all sections of society, particularly marginalized and backward communities. He reiterated that the government is working with dedication to ensure equitable growth and justice for all. Emphasizing the importance of organizational strength, Teli called for unity among the OBC community and party workers. He urged the party workers to gear up for upcoming Panchayat and ULB elec-

tions. During the interaction, members of the public also raised the demand for a one-time OBC Certificate, similar to the provision available for Scheduled Tribes (ST) and Scheduled Castes (SC). Teli acknowledged the demand and assured that it would be taken into consideration. The meeting concluded with renewed enthusiasm among the workers and a collective resolve to work for the betterment of the people and the strengthening of the party. Among others who were present in the meeting included:- Nar Singh President Labour Wing, Mohd Gani, Shokat Choudhary, Jagdeep Singh and others.

SSP SAMBA VISITS POLICE STATION BARI BRAHMANA;REVIEWS ITS FUNCTIONING

Samba, April 15, 2026: The Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Samba, Sh. Anuj Kumar, IPS today visited Police Station Bari Brahmana to review its functioning. SSP was accompanied by Addl. SP Samba and SDPO Bari Brahmana dur-

ing his visit. During the visit, SSP Samba held a productive interaction with the Investigating Officers and other police personnel of PS Bari Brahmana, emphasizing the importance of their role in maintaining law and order.

House Committee begins ground inspection of JJM works in Rajouri-Poonch



RAJOURI, APRIL 16: The thirteen member House Committee, constituted for Jal Jeevan Mission in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, today commenced on-ground inspections of various JJM schemes in Rajouri district. The Committee is being headed by legislator and former High Court Judge Hasnain Masoodi with M. Y. Tarigami, Ali Mohammad Dar, Altaf

inspected works at Sasalkote, Agrai, Kakora, Neeli and Gambhir Mughlan to assess the status and quality of ongoing JJM projects. During the visit, the Committee was accompanied by the senior officers including Anjali Sehrawat, Mission Director JJM; Abhishek Sharma DC Rajouri, Reyaz Bhat, Technical Advisor JJM; Nawaz Ahmed Bhat, Technical Advisor; Rajat Choudhary, Technical Officer; Owais Bashir, Technical Officer besides other concerned officials to facilitate a detailed on-ground assessment. MLA Kalakote, Thakur Randhir Singh, also met the House Committee during the visit.

Jammu, 16 April 2026: A panel discussion on the theme "The True Spirit of Equality in Contemporary Bharat", focusing on Equality in the eyes of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, was jointly organized by the Equal Opportunity Cell and the Department of Education at Central University of Jammu. The event was organized under the patronage of Prof. Sanjeev Jain, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor. Prof. Asit Mantry formally welcomed the panelists, especially Dr. Shweeta Yadav, Associate Professor, Dept. of Environmental Sciences, CUJ, and Prof. Ritu Bakshi, DSW. Dr. Shweta Yadav was then introduced as the main theme of discussion, followed by the



student panelists Siya Sharma, Akashnie Rajput, Manya and Priyanshu Kumari. Each of the panelists has presented their perspectives on equality inspired by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Akashnie Rajput highlighted Ambedkar's political

thoughts, emphasizing the importance of justice, liberty, and equality in a democratic society. Siya Sharma elaborated on equality through the lens of equal rights and the eradication of caste-based discrimination, stressing that true equality can only be achieved when social barriers are removed. Priyanshu Kumari, speaking in Hindi, reflected on the concepts of samanta and samta, and recalled Ambedkar's powerful message: "Shikshit raho, sangathit raho, sangharsh karte raho", encouraging education, unity, and continuous struggle for rights. Manya focused on the need for equal opportunities for all, pointing out that many individuals remain backward due to caste-based inequalities. She stressed the importance of equity and highlighted the need to uplift weaker sections of society, including women, Scheduled Tribes, and Scheduled Castes. In her address, Chief Guest Dr. Shweta Yadav appreciated the panelists for their insightful views. She emphasized that equality is not just about providing equal opportunities but also about valuing each individual. She pointed out that discrimination often begins within society and among individuals, and must be addressed internally. She encouraged students to engage with the ideals of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and reflect on their relevance in contemporary Bharat. Dr. Kiran, Associate Professor in Education, delivered the formal vote of thanks.

NORTHERN RAILWAY						
E-TENDER NOTICE						
The Deputy Chief Engineer / BR / Workshop, Northern Railway, Jalandhar Cantt., for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open Tender under Single Packet System for the under noted work:						
S. No.	Tender No. / Notice No.	Name of work	Approx. Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Date of Opening	Bidding start date on IREPS
1.	OT-06/2026	Provision of side pathway on OHS (Lot No. 42 (A) (1 X 61.61 m), Lot No. 102 DN (1 X 45.7 m), Lot No. 172 DN (1 X 61.61 m) & Lot No. 292 (1 X 52.5 m) on NH 477 (1 lane) along girder No. 180 (CX 19.40 m) on B-1 (GWH) section under jurisdiction of SSC (SRM) S&M.	95,47,845.36	1,79,000.00	08.09.2026	24.04.2026 to 08.09.2026
Date & Time for submission of Tender and opening of tender					Up to 15:00 hrs, on dates shown against each and opening of tender thereafter at 13:00 hrs, on same date.	
Website Particulars where complete details of Tender can be seen & downloaded.					The detailed tender notice is available on Northern Railway web site i.e. www.ir.northernrailway.gov.in and tender document is available on www.ireps.gov.in	
No. 08/03/2026/IR/Gen/Invitation, Dated: 16.04.2026						
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE						

NIT Srinagar hosts high-level NASI lecture series on research careers

Top scientists push for innovation, interdisciplinary approach among students

Srinagar, April 16: The National Academy of Sciences, India (NASI), Chandigarh Extended Region Chapter, in collaboration with the Department of Physics, National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar, and Society for the Promotion of Science and Technology in India, on Thursday, organized an inspiring Special Lecture Series at NIT Srinagar. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, scholars, and faculty members from various institutions of Valley. The event was aimed to ignite scientific curiosity and encourage young minds to explore research-driven careers. The session began with a formal welcome address by Prof. Faisal Ahmad Ganai,



Head, Department of Physics, who highlighted the significance of such academic interactions in bridging the gap between foundational knowledge and advanced research. He emphasized the importance of mentorship and exposure in shaping the scientific temperament of students. The first lecture was delivered by Prof. Ravinder Kumar Kohli on the topic

“Why and How to Pursue Research as a Career?” A distinguished academician and ecologist, Prof. Kohli is a JC Bose National Fellow and serves as Chairman of the NASI Chandigarh Extended Region Chapter. Having been ranked among the top 2% of scientists worldwide for the past six years, he brought immense depth and credibility to the session. He has held key leadership positions as former Vice Chancellor of Amity University Punjab, Central University of Punjab, and DAV University Jalandhar, besides serving as DUI at Panjab University Chandigarh. In his lecture, he emphasized the vast research potential in India and urged students to align their curiosity with national and global scientific needs. He also highlighted that persistence, originality, and interdisciplinary thinking are essential traits for building a successful research career. The second lecture was delivered by Prof. K. K. Bhasin on “Exploring Fascinating Aspects of Chemistry.” Prof. Bhasin, a renowned chemist, enriched the session with his deep understanding of chemical sciences and its real-world applications. He explained how chemistry plays a pivotal role in everyday life and remains central to solving major global challenges such as climate change, healthcare innovation, and sustainable development. Through engaging examples and simplified explanations, he made complex concepts accessible to students, encouraging them to appreciate the subject beyond textbooks and consider research opportunities in chemical sciences. In his message, Director NIT Srinagar Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia, NIT Srinagar, appreciated the initiative and said that interactions with eminent scientists are vital for nurturing innovation and scientific thinking among students.

Indian Army Organises A large-scale Tree Planting Drive at Uri

Baramulla : A large-scale Tree Plantation Drive was organised by Bajrang Bn under the aegis of Kalapahar Bde, Dagger Div at Uri. The initiative aimed at promoting environmental conservation, enhancing green cover and fostering ecological responsibilities among the local populace. The event was graced by the presence of several distinguished dignitaries including SDM Uri, Director Floriculture Kashmir, Officers from JV Forest Division (Baramulla), SDPO Uri, SHO Uri Police Station along with Cdr Kalapahar Bde and officers of Bajrang Bn. Prof Majid Thakoo (Principal, GDC Uri), along with NCC Cadets and enthusiastic students of Army Goodwill School, were also present for the tree plantation drive, reflecting a unified



civil-military commitment towards environmental sustainability. The drive witnessed active participation from Army personnel, civil administration, students and local representatives, who collectively planted a significant number of Chinar saplings within the garrison premises, symbolising a shared pledge towards a greener and healthier future. During the event, critical importance of afforestation, environmental protection and sustainable practices in combating climate change and preserving natural resources for future generations were discussed. The initiative emphasised the role of every individual in nurturing nature, reinforcing the message that each sapling planted today serves as a “Soldier of Earth”, safeguarding the environment and contributing towards ecological balance.

Training of staff for JKSSB Junior Assistant Exam held at Anantnag

ANANTNAG, APRIL 16: To ensure smooth, fair and transparent conduct of the upcoming OMR-based Written Test for the post of Junior Assistant scheduled on April 19, 2026, the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) in collaboration with District Administration Anantnag organized a comprehensive training session for superintendents and deputy superintendents, invigilators and other supervisory staff, today at Dak Bunglawa, Khanabal. Member JKSSB, Anantnag Ahmad Rather, Additional District Magistrate, Tariq Ahmad Malik, superintendents, deputy superintendents, invigilators and other officials attended the session. The primary aim of the session was to sensitise the deployed staff about the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and examination guidelines. Addressing the meeting, Member JKSSB, Showkat



Ahmad Rather said the purpose of the training programme is to familiarise the exam staff with prescribed procedures and SOPs. He stressed the need for maintaining utmost transparency and fairness and to ensure the examination is held in a smooth and hassle-free manner.

Javid Dar reviews functioning of education department in Baramulla

BARAMULLA, APRIL 16: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the functioning and key challenges facing the Education Department in district Baramulla and Rafiabud. The meeting was attended by the Director School Education Kashmir, Chief Education Officer (CEO) Baramulla, District Education Planning Officer (DEPO) Baramulla and Zonal Education Officers (ZEOs). They presented a detailed overview of the current status of educational institutions, infrastructure, staffing and ongoing developmental initiatives in the district. During the meeting, the Minister emphasized the need for strengthening the education system through effective planning, better



coordination among the stakeholder departments and timely resolution of issues. He directed the concerned officers to ensure quality education, optimal utilization of resources and enhanced monitoring mechanisms to achieve the desired outcomes. Javid Dar stressed the importance of providing a conducive learning environment in schools, addressing infrastructure gaps, ensuring availability of teaching staff and pro-

moting student enrolment and retention, particularly in rural and far-flung areas. He also called for adopting innovative teaching methods and leveraging technology to improve the learning outcomes. He asked the officers to work with dedication and accountability to ensure that the government schools deliver quality education comparable to the best standards. The officers apprised the Minister of various challenges facing the sector and sought necessary support for their resolution. The Minister assured that all their genuine issues will be addressed on priority to further strengthen the education system in the district.

DC Budgam reviews progress of 100-Day Nasha Mukht Abhiyan in District

Calls for intensified IEC activities, greater public participation to eliminate Drug Menace

BUDGAM, APRIL 16: Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan today chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress of the ongoing 100-day intensive Nasha Mukht Abhiyan in the district. During the meeting, the DC took a detailed review of activities being carried out by various departments under the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan, emphasizing the need for sustained and coordinated efforts to eliminate drug abuse from society. He stressed that all stakeholders must work in close synergy to ensure the success of the initiative. Threadbare discussions were held on awareness campaigns, community outreach programmes, and the role of educational



institutions in sensitizing youth against the menace of drug abuse. The DC underscored the importance of involving local communities, youth

groups, and institutions in spreading awareness and promoting a drug-free environment. He directed all officers to intensify IEC activities, ensure wider public participation, and regularly monitor progress at the grass root level. Departments were also instructed to share daily updates of their activities to maintain momentum and visibility of the campaign. The DC called for a collective and proactive approach to make Budgam a drug-free district. The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Budgam, Joint Director Planning, all Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs), Assistant Commissioner Police (ACP), Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Principals of all Degree Colleges, District and Information Officer (DIO), District Social Welfare Officer (DSWO), Executive Officers (EOs) of all Municipal Committees and representatives from the School Education Department.

District Admin Bandipora conducts IEC Awareness Programmes under Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan

BANDIPORA, APRIL 16: Continuing its sustained outreach under the Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, the District Administration Bandipora on Thursday organised a series of IEC (Information, Education and Communication) awareness programmes across multiple Panchayat Halqas, Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) and educational institutions in the district. The IEC activities were conducted across ULB areas including Sumbal (Bon Mohalla), Bandipora (Ward No. 12 Kaloosa) and Hajin (Bhangar Mohalla), as well as several educational institutions including HSS Quimugam, HS Malangam, GHSS Dawer, HS Kanzalwan, HSS Gadakhud, HSS

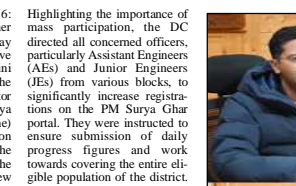


Chuntimulla, HSS Shahgund and HS Odina. A multi-departmental team comprising officials and resource persons from Health, Police, Education, Social Welfare, Excise & Taxation, Youth Services & Sports and JKNRML participated in the programmes, ensuring a coordinated and impactful awareness campaign at the grassroots level. During the sessions, resource persons sensitised participants about the harmful effects of drug abuse and emphasised the importance of preventive measures, healthy lifestyle choices and collective societal responsibility in eradicating substance abuse.

DC Shopian reviews progress under PM Surya Ghar, RDSS

Stresses accelerated implementation and enhanced outreach

SHOPIAN, APRIL 16: Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Shishir Gupta today chaired a comprehensive review meeting at the Mini Secretariat to assess the progress of key power sector initiatives, including PM Surya Ghar (Rooftop Solar Scheme) and the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) in the district. During the meeting, the DC conducted a detailed review of ongoing works and sought inputs from officers of KPDC, executing agencies, and other stakeholders. Emphasis was laid on achieving set targets within stipulated timelines and addressing gaps requiring immediate intervention.



Highlighting the importance of mass participation, the DC directed all concerned officers, particularly Assistant Engineers (AEs) and Junior Engineers (JEs) from various blocks, to significantly increase registrations on the PM Surya Ghar portal. They were instructed to ensure submission of daily progress figures and work towards covering the entire eligible population of the district. The DC stressed the need to accelerate rooftop solar installations and called for intensified field level efforts to enhance adoption. He further directed that all inspections related to solar installations be completed within one week to



avoid delays in execution. While reviewing RDSS components,

the DC underscored the importance of strengthening power distribution infrastructure for improved service deliv-

ery. Issues related to smart metering were discussed in detail, and concerned were directed to resolve technical and operational bottlenecks promptly, ensuring smooth installation and functionality of smart meters. The DC also emphasized addressing consumer-related concerns, including billing issues and service grievances, in a time bound manner. Grievances raised by vendors and executing agencies were also discussed. The DC assured necessary support and directed departments to facilitate smooth coordination and remove procedural hurdles impacting progress. To enhance

awareness and public participation, the DC called for intensified publicity campaigns highlighting the benefits of PM Surya Ghar and RDSS. He stressed the need to document and promote success stories to encourage wider adoption across the district and further instructed that periodic progress reports be submitted for continuous monitoring and review. The meeting was attended by Sub Divisional Magistrate Zainapora, Bilal Ahmad, Executive Engineers of KPDC, R&B, LDM Shopian, senior officers, AEs, JEs, representatives of executing agencies, vendors etc.



North in News

EDITORIAL

Sports not an extracurricular but should be the core curriculum of a drug free J&K

Sports represent the most constructive, scalable, and psychologically effective intervention to keep youth away from drugs. In Jammu and Kashmir the urgency is acute because proximity to trafficking routes, conflict related stress, and high youth unemployment have made narcotics easily accessible, yet the Nasha Mukta Jammu Kashmir Abhiyaan has already shown that wherever sports tournaments are organized the community sees measurable drops in first time drug use, school dropouts, and petty crime, as cricket matches in Anantnag, football leagues in Srinagar, volleyball contests in Kathua, and Kabaddi events in Rajouri draw hundreds of participants who otherwise might congregate at vulnerable spots after dark. Fitness tests creates a daily structure that leaves little room for experimentation with charas, heroin, or prescription opioids, while team environments replace harmful peer groups with mentors and friends who reward performance rather than risk taking. Every rupee spent on a playground yields social returns far higher than later spending on policing or rehabilitation, and this cost effectiveness is especially relevant for J&K where public health budgets are stretched. The potential of sports can only be realized if infrastructure matches intent, and Jammu and Kashmir currently faces gaps that limit access, with many blocks lacking all weather grounds, indoor halls for winter months, standard tracks, floodlights for evening practice, safe changing rooms for girls, trained coaches, physiotherapists, and equipment banks. So youth in remote tehsils of Doda, Kishtwar, Kupwara, and Poonch either travel long distances or drop out entirely, and girls face additional barriers due to lack of toilets, transport, and female coaches. The government must institutionalize maintenance through local youth clubs and Panchayati Raj institutions, with annual grants tied to verified usage data, CCTV coverage, and participation of reformed addicts as groundsman or assistant coaches so that recovery stories are visible on the field. While the Education department should align physical education periods with the sports calendar, give marks for consistent participation. Tournaments should be designed as festivals with anti drug pledges, street plays, and on site counselling booths. When infrastructure ensures that no child is more than 2 kilometers from a safe place to play, the campaign against narcotics shifts from reacting to trafficking to preventing the very first dose, making sports not an extracurricular but the core curriculum of a drug free J&K.

RAJNI SHARMA, EDITOR

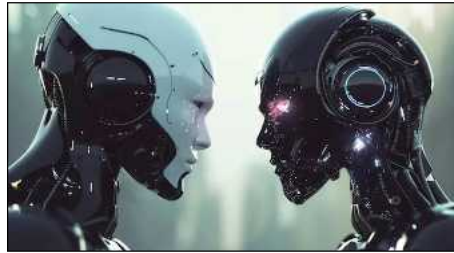
Artificial Intelligence is not Information Technology

PRAVIN KAUSHAL

Artificial Intelligence is often described as the next phase of Information Technology. This idea has gained widespread acceptance across boardrooms, universities, and policy discussions. Yet, it is fundamentally flawed. Artificial Intelligence is not an extension of Information Technology. It is a different paradigm altogether. This confusion matters. It shapes how organisations invest, how systems are deployed, and how outcomes are measured.

When AI is treated as IT, its potential is misunderstood and often lost. Information Technology is built on rules. It operates through explicit instructions written by humans. These systems are deterministic. The same input produces the same output every time. This predictability is the strength of IT. It enables reliability, consistency, and control. Banking systems, enterprise software, and network infrastructure depend on this certainty. Artificial Intelligence operates differently. It is based on learning rather than rules. AI systems are trained on data, not programmed line by line.

They identify patterns and generate outputs that are probabilistic. The same input may produce slightly different outputs. This is not a flaw. It is a defining feature. IT eliminates ambiguity. AI works within it. The difference between IT and AI can be understood through their core mechanisms. IT relies on explicit logic. Every possible scenario must be anticipated and encoded. This makes it effective in structured environments. AI relies on learned patterns. It can handle complexity and ambiguity that cannot be fully captured through rules.



A simple analogy illustrates this difference. IT is like a calculator that follows exact instructions. AI is like a student who learns from examples and improves over time. This distinction shapes everything from system design to real world application. There is a common belief that IT will gradually evolve into AI. This assumption is incorrect. IT systems are designed to remove uncertainty. AI systems are designed to operate within uncertainty. These are opposing principles. IT systems remain static unless updated by humans. AI systems evolve as they are exposed to new data.

IT stores knowledge explicitly in code and databases. AI encodes knowledge in model parameters that are not directly interpretable. This creates what is often described as a black box. IT aims for precision and zero deviation. AI operates within acceptable levels of accuracy. Because of these differences, IT cannot become AI, and AI cannot be reduced to IT. When organisations fail to recognise this difference, they make predictable mistakes. AI initiatives are often handed over to IT departments to be managed like traditional software systems. The focus shifts to stability, control, and risk

minimisation. These are important goals. They are not aligned with how AI creates value.

AI requires experimentation. It improves through iteration. Its outputs must be evaluated, refined, and contextualised. When forced into rigid systems, AI is reduced to a narrow set of use cases. Its ability to transform processes is lost. One of the biggest consequences of this confusion is that AI is treated as a tool for automation. Organisations focus on reducing costs and improving efficiency. While these are valid outcomes, they represent only a small part of AI's potential. The real value of AI lies in transformation. It enables new ways of working, new products, and new markets. When productivity improves, the question should not only be how much cost can be saved. The more important question is what new capabilities can be created. This shift from optimisation to transformation is where AI differs most from IT. Artificial Intelligence depends on Information Technology. It requires infrastructure for data storage, computing, and deployment. However, this dependency does not make them the same. IT provides the foundation. AI provides intelli-

gence. IT ensures stability. AI introduces adaptability. A useful way to understand this relationship is to think of IT as the body of a digital system and AI as a layer of cognition built on top of it. The misunderstanding between IT and AI creates challenges within organisations. Employees often use AI tools informally, outside official systems. This creates a gap between actual usage and formal strategy. Leadership may not fully understand how AI is already transforming workflows. This limits the ability to build coherent strategies. To unlock AI's potential, organisations must rethink how they deploy it. This requires involvement at the highest levels, not just technical implementation. The future is not about replacing IT with AI or merging them into a single discipline. Both will coexist, each serving a distinct role.

IT will continue to provide reliability, scalability, and security. AI will drive insight, adaptability, and innovation. The key is to use them together without confusing their functions. Artificial Intelligence is not Information Technology and will never be. IT is about certainty, control, and structure.

AI is about learning, probability, and exploration. Confusing the two leads to poor strategy and lost opportunity. Understanding this difference is not a technical detail. It is a strategic necessity. As organisations and countries invest heavily in AI, the real question is not whether they adopt it, but whether they understand it. Because without that understanding, even the most advanced technology can end up being used in the most limited way.

A devotee's perspective on death

BY AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Let us first understand what death actually is. Death is when a soul leaves its material body. Lord Krishna describes death in the Bhagavad Gita as a change of body in its eternal journey (2.13). Just as childhood, youth, and old age are changes in the body of a soul, death is a similar change. Devotees of God accept this as a positive change because they attain promotion. Such promotion is of three kinds. The first is taking birth in a family that is pure and prosperous (6.41). The next level is being born in a family of wise yogis (6.42). Such a birth is very rare in this world. The highest level is being liberated from the repeated cycle of birth and death in a material body (18.62).

Devotees do not fear death as non-devotees do, who consider it annihilation. Considering oneself as a material body due to gross ignorance of reality is the reason for such fear. Devotees also realise that they have reached a good, better, or best position, as indicated earlier. The top-most devotees, like Swami



Vivekananda, knew that they had reached the highest position in their life and were enjoying it. As one must leave the material body, this being the law of nature, they know that what is born must also die. If anything, they wish to leave their material body when they are at the peak of their life. They cannot imagine fearing and dying helplessly. If anything, they make the requisite preparations for leaving the body. They sense that when the life force reduces appreciably, God is indicating

that it is time to leave the body, and they depart in full God consciousness.

They have also realised two more facts. The closure of life is essential; the material body cannot continue indefinitely. It deteriorates, making even the maintenance of the body very difficult. Personally speaking, I am forced to do many exercises to keep my different body organs and faculties healthy. The 'jara' (miseries of old age) are hard to bear, especially because they come in the way of doing 'bhakti' (devotion to

God). The other reason I have already mentioned is that they are due for promotion. God is ready to take them from the present body and relocate them in a superior family or in a spiritual body, that is, by granting liberation (18.66). God ensures that such death occurs at the right time for all concerned. God is very merciful. He is aware of our love and concern for our near and dear ones.

Everything is planned perfectly for His devotees — where they are going and what duties they will be required to perform next. Like God Himself (3.22), His devotees are always gainfully engaged, even after attaining liberation. Narada Muni, frequently mentioned in our scriptures, is a classical example of a devotee undertaking service for the Lord. Such service is highly pleasing to God. What, then, is the conclusion? Fear of death can be reduced by these three steps. One, realise that I am a soul, not a material body, which must die; I will not. Two, I will attain a better birth because I am a good person. Third, one should take shelter of God and become a devotee.

ADC Bhaderwah reviews progress of Panchayat Electoral Roll revision

BHADERWAH, APRIL 16: Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Bhaderwah, Sunil Kumar Bhutyal, who is also the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO), convened a virtual meeting with Panchayat Election Booth Officers (PEBOs) to review and strategize the preparation for an error-free electoral roll. The meeting was held in connection with the Special Summary Revision of the Panchayat Electoral Roll. Block Development Officers (BDOs) of Bhaderwah, Bhalla, Chiralla and Bhalesara participated in the meeting through virtual mode. During the session, the ADC highlighted the



importance of maintaining accuracy and transparency in the electoral process. He informed that all individuals who have attained the age of 18 years as of April 1, 2026, are eligible to

Yoga Camp, Marathon held in Kishtwar to promote Nasha Mukta J&K

KISHTWAR, APRIL 16: As part of the ongoing 100 Days Nasha Mukta JK Abhiyan, the Department of AYUSH, today organized a yoga camp at Government Higher Secondary School-Keshwan. A key component of the UT-Drugs and Chemicals addiction campaign, the initiative aimed at promoting a healthy lifestyle and raising awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse among students. Additional District Development Commissioner Vinod Kumar Behnal graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. In his address, he emphasized

towards building a healthy and drug-free society. Participants carried messages and slogans advocating a drug-free lifestyle. A significant highlight of the programme was the pledge ceremony, where students collectively took an oath to support the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan and spread awareness among their peers and society. All ZPEOs ensured smooth conduct of the marathon in their respective zones, mobilizing maximum participation and spreading the message of the campaign effectively at the grassroots level.

Secretary RDD reviews SASCI Projects, UT Capex Plan for FY 2026-27

Key Assets Planned Under Viksit Village in Each Assembly Constituency

JAMMU, APRIL 16: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Ajiz Assad, today chaired a review meeting to assess progress under the Special Assistance to States for Capital Investments (SASCI) scheme and to finalise the Annual Action Plan for FY 2026-27 under UT Capex (Community Development). The meeting was attended by Director Rural Development Kashmir, Shabir Hussain Bhat; Director Rural Development Jammu, Shahzad Akhter; Director Planning, Umar Khan; Joint Director Planning, Kamal Kumar Sharma; besides senior officers of the R&B and RD&PR departments. Reviewing the status of SASCI projects, the Secretary was informed that construction of residential accommodation for PRI members and protected persons at Bijbehara (Anantnag) is underway in Kashmir division. In Jammu division, key projects under execution include two-BHK residential complexes for DDC/PRI members at Udhampur, Reasi, Kathua and Samba; a District Development Council building at Reasi; drainage upgradation works in Mendhar; and construction of BDO office complexes, community halls, guest houses and drainage nullahs in Jammu district. The Secretary directed both Directors to ensure that UT Capex and District Capex plans are uploaded on the designated portal by April 21, as per timelines fixed by the Chief Secretary. He stressed that proposals must prioritise high-impact, durable infrastructure assets

aimed at improving the quality of life in rural areas. He further instructed that construction of Block Development Officer (BDO) offices be proposed in all blocks where such facilities are not available, to enhance access to administrative and developmental services. The meeting also reviewed progress under the Viksit Village Scheme, which provides for an allocation of 72 crore per Assembly constituency.

OFFICE THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION, JAMMU EAST

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Short e-NIT No. 03 of 2026-2027/Jammu East Dated 15-04-2026

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir e-tenders are invited on percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory of J&K, CPWD, Railways, MES and other State / Central Govt. for each of the following works :-

S. No	Name of Work	Name of Division	Advertise d Cost (Rs. Lakh)	Cost of document (in Rs.)	Earliest Money (in Rs.)	Time Allowed for completion (in Days)	Time and date of opening of tenders	Class of Contractor
1	Renovation & upgradation of guest washroom by way of demolition of existing washroom and creating new facilities including brickwork and other allied civil work and interior works, plumbing and sanitary fixtures etc. at 7 Akbar road HLG residence, New Delhi.	PWD (R&B) Division Jammu East	3.96	600	2% of Advertised Cost	05 Days	(1100 Hrs) on or after 21-04-2026	A,B,C&D

NOTE:- The work is of an emergent nature. Bidders must note that immediately after the opening of the financial bid, the work shall be commenced on a war footing. In the event that the L-1 bidder fails to initiate & execute the work as required, the same shall be undertaken through the L-2 bidder. Position of AAA/TS: Accorded

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the departmental website <http://jtenders.gov.in> as per below schedule :-

S. No	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	15-04-2026
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	15-04-2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 15-04-2026 to 20-04-2026 upto 1800 Hrs
3	Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting	18-04-2026 at 1200Hrs. in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Jammu East
4	Bid submission Start Date	15-04-2026
5	Bid Submission End Date	20-04-2026 upto 1800 Hrs
6	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	21-04-2026 on or after 1100 Hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Jammu East
7	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of e-challan through Treasury indicating Treasury Voucher No. & date, e-NIT No. and name of work duly crediting to MH 0059 (Revenue) favoring Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Jammu East and upload the same Le treasury challan / receipt, Earnest money / Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Jammu East. The CDR/FDR/BG shall be valid for 45 Days beyond the bid validity period. The original instruments in respect of cost of documents, EMD and relevant documents of L1 be submitted to the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Jammu East at the time of allotment.

2. The electronic bidding system would not allow any late submission of bids after due date and time as per server time. Bidders may modify their bids by uploading their request for modification before the deadline for submission of bids. For this, the bidder needs not to make any additional payment towards the cost of tender document. For bid modification and consequential re-submission, the bidder is not required to withdraw his bid submitted earlier. The last modified bid submitted by the bidder within the bid submission time shall be considered as the bid. For this purpose, modification/withdrawal by other means will not be accepted. In online system of bid submission, the modification and consequential submission of bids is allowed any number of times. The bidders may withdraw his bid by uploading their request before the deadline for submission of bids; however, if the bid is withdrawn, the re-submission of the bid is not allowed. No bid shall be modified or withdrawn after the deadline of submission of bids.

3. The date and time of opening of Financial-bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jtenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through a e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financial-bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Jammu East. The date for same shall be intimated separately.

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

5. The earnest money shall be forfeited, if-
a) Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.

b) Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period after issue of letter of acceptance.

c) Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement on same day of allotment of work contract as per Chief Engineer PW (R&B) Department Jammu's Circular No. CEJ/G/12660-87 dated 07-10-2021.

6. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

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

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

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

6.4. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned above.

6.5. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents mentioned in NIT and SBO with technical bid online.

Note:- Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

7. The department will not be responsible for any delay in online submission due to any reasons.

8. Scanned copy of cost of tender document in shape of e-challan through Treasury indicating Treasury Voucher No. & date, e-NIT No. and name of work duly crediting to MH - 0059 (Revenue) favoring Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Jammu East and upload the same Le treasury challan/receipt, Earnest money/ Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Jammu East and Correctness of Information on the notarized affidavit which must be notarized between the period of downloading of bidding document as per the format mentioned in the e-NIT/SBO with the technical documents of the bid.

9. Bidders may contact office of the Chief Engineer PW (R&B) Department, Jammu or concerned Executive Engineer for any guidance for getting DSC or any other relevant details in respect of e-tendering process.

No:- 756-66
Dated:- 15-04-2026
Sd/-
Executive Engineer
PWD (R&B) Division
Jammu East

DIP/J-663/26

NOTICE
I, ABDUL LATIEF S/o ABULLAH R/o Gujranah Sombaha Tehsil Pogal Paristan and District Ramban I have applied for correction of my Child Adhar name and date of birth which has wrongly recorded as adhar AFARAH BANOO and date of birth is 01-03-2015 and the actual name as per record is IFRA TABASUM and Date of Birth is 01-02-2016 Now the public at large is hereby informed that it is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection

NOTICE
I, SACHAN SINGH S/o OMKAR SINGH R/o GAM Tehsil and District Ramban I have applied for correction of my Adhar name and date of birth which has wrongly recorded as adhar Sachin Singh and date of birth is 26-06-2007 and the actual name as per record is Sachan Singh and Date of Birth is 05-07-2006 Now the public at large is hereby informed that it is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection

IN THE COURT OF TEHSILDAR EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS RAJGARH

Mukesh Singh S/o Giridhari Lal R/o Ghari Tehsil Rajgarh District Ramban

Versus
Applicant
Through BDO Assar
Non-Applicant
IN THE MATTER OF:
Application for seeking direction upon the non applicant to enter/register the birth
Particulars of the applicant's Cousins in the Birth Register.

NOTICE FOR PUBLIC AT LARGE
Whereas the applicant named above has filed an application seeking direction to the Non applicant to register the Date of Birth particulars of Cousins as mentioned Below in the concerned register:
S.No Name Father Name 1 SATYA DEVI BHAGAT RAM Mother's Name GOGRU DEVI 2 SANDYA DEVI BHAGAT RAM GOGRU DEVI 3 MONIKA DEVI BHAGAT RAM GOGRU DEVI Date of birth 26-02-2006 15-02-2015 11-12-2016 Place of Birth AT HOME Address Chakka (Halwas) AT HOME Chakka (Halwas) AT HOME Chakka (Halwas)
Therefore by virtue of this notice at large is informed that if any person have any objection in respect in the above mentioned application, he/she shall file his/her objection in this office within seven days from the issuance of this notice falling which said application shall be dealt into accordance with law
Issued under my hand and seal of this court today on date 16/04/2026

Executive Magistrate
1st class Rajgarh

DC Anantnag chairs meeting with religious clerics, calls for collective fight against drug abuse

ANANTNAG, APRIL 16: As part of the 100 day campaign under Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan launched by Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor, Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat, today chaired a meeting with prominent religious clerics, including Masjid Imams and scholars, at Dak Bunglaw Khana-bal. The meeting was aimed to seek their support in intensifying the fight against drug abuse and was attended by ADC, ACR, DSWO besides other concerned officials, religious clerics and Masjid Imams. Speaking on the occasion, the DC described drug abuse as a grave social evil that is steadily entering homes and destroying the moral and social fabric of society. He emphasized that religious leaders, being influential voices within communities, have a crucial role in guiding youth towards a life free from addiction. He urged the clerics to sensitise the masses about the ill effects of drug abuse by referring to religious scriptures and values and to consistently promote awareness within their respective communities. He called upon them to dedicate a segment of their Friday Sermons and congregations on drug addiction and social consequences of drug abuse and invoke moral and theological teachings to tackle substance abuse. Termining the

fight against drugs a 'collective responsibility', the DC stated while administration and law enforcement agencies are targeting the supply side, the role of parents, teachers, religious figures and civil society is essential to constantly persuade and motivate the vulnerable population not to use contraband substances and assist in eliminating the menace from society. During the meeting, Dr. Bilal reiterated, while stringent action is being taken against drug peddlers and suppliers under the provisions of the NDPS Act, a compassionate and non-stigmatised approach must be adopted towards the victims. He stressed the importance of identifying affected individuals at the community level and facilitating their treatment and rehabilitation at designated Drug De-addiction Centres and Addiction Treatment Facilities, while ensuring full privacy and confidentiality. Cautioning about the devastating impact of addiction on individuals and families, the DC called for sincere and collective efforts from all sections of society to curb the menace. He expressed hope that with the active involvement of religious institutions, the ongoing campaign against drugs will gain further strength and lead to the realisation of a drug-free district, Union Territory and country.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-1 Tender Notice
The interested party and on behalf of the President of India invites E-Tenders for the following work. Bidders are to submit their original sealed bids up to closing date and time only.
Tender No: 751-3-663-1-31-2026-27
Name of work: Electrical Work in the form of provision of air conditioning in Station Master's Cabin at Parvathi Road, Jammu. Category of work: Electrical work.
Approximate cost: Rs. 40.00
Earnest Money: Rs. 53,000.00
Completion period: 03 months
Opening of tender: 03.05.2026 at 10:00 AM
Website Particulars: www.nra.gov.in
No:- 751-3-663-1-31-2026-27
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE



Satish Sharma inaugurates Synthetic Volleyball Court at Govt HS Datyal, Khour; Rs.20 lakh project to boost grassroots sports

KHOUR, MARCH 16: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, IT, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, Satish Sharma, today inaugurated a state-of-the-art synthetic volleyball court at Government Higher Secondary School Datyal, Khour, marking a significant step towards strengthening the sports infrastructure in the region.

The modern facility has been developed by the Department of Youth Services and Sports at a cost of ₹20 lakh and is expected to greatly benefit the students and local youth by providing them with quality training infrastructure.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister highlighted the government's firm commitment to promote sports at the grassroots level, ensuring equi-



table access to the modern facilities across the rural and far-flung areas. He emphasized that sports play a crucial role in over-

all development of youth by instilling discipline, teamwork and a spirit of healthy competition. "Development of sports

infrastructure in rural areas remains a key priority. Facilities like these will help in identifying and nurturing the local talent and

providing them opportunities to compete at district, UT and national level," the Minister said.

Satish Sharma also interacted with the students, sports persons and the local residents, encouraging them to make optimum use of the newly created facility.

The Minister directed the concerned to ensure proper maintenance of the court and facilitate regular coaching and sports activities so that the facility is fully utilized. The local representatives, officers of the Youth Services & Sports Department, school staff and a large number of students and sports enthusiasts were present on the occasion. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from the local community, also reflecting the growing interest in sports in the area.

Bharat Priye encourages youth through sports at U-14 Cricket Final in Akhnoor

Jammu, Apr 15: In a vibrant celebration of sportsmanship and community spirit, JKPCSS Kissan Congress Chairman Bharat Priye attended the final match of the Under-14 Cricket Tournament at Garkhal in Akhnoor Sub-Division, where he felicitated the winning and runner-up teams along with standout performers. The tournament concluded on an exciting note, with Sra No. 1 defeating Bhawal Bhrath in a closely contested final, drawing enthusiastic cheers from a large gathering of local residents and sports lovers. Bharat Priye distributed prizes to both teams and presented the Man of the Match and Man of the Series awards, lauding the young players for their passion, discipline, and emerging talent. He remarked that



such platforms are crucial in identifying and nurturing hidden talent, especially in rural areas where opportunities often remain limited. Addressing the gathering, Bharat Priye underscored the growing importance of organizing sports

tournaments at the grassroots level. He stated that in rural regions, such initiatives serve as a powerful tool to engage youth in meaningful activities, keeping them away from the menace of drug abuse and other social evils.

He emphasized that rural sports events not only promote physical fitness but also instill values like teamwork, leadership, and resilience among youngsters. "When youth are involved in constructive pursuits like sports, they develop confidence, discipline, and a sense of responsibility, which are essential for nation-building," he said.

Highlighting the broader social impact, Bharat Priye added that such tournaments strengthen community bonding and create a positive environment where young minds can thrive. He called upon local organizations and authorities to encourage and support more such events to ensure that rural talent gets the recognition and opportunities it deserves.

Apex CC Clinch Convincing 40-Run Victory

Arun Sharma's All-Round Show Sinks Gentle Giants

Jammu, April 16: In the ongoing 1st Jammu Lochan T20 Cricket Tournament organized by the Jammu and Kashmir Masters Games Association (JKMGA) at Maulana Azad Stadium, Apex Cricket Club registered a commanding 40-run victory over Gentle Giants in an exciting encounter played today. Winning the toss, Apex Cricket Club skipper Arun Sharma elected to bat first. Putting up a competitive total, Apex CC posted 174 runs on the board, losing all wickets in the allotted 20 overs. The innings was powered by some explosive batting performances, with Ajay Singh smashing



40 runs off just 16 balls, while Eshan contributed a quickfire 30 off 13 deliveries. Shobnam added a steady 32 runs, and Arun Sharma chipped in with a crucial 25 runs. For Gentle Giants, Sahil and Bobby Thakur were the pick of the bowlers, claiming three wickets each. Anmol sup-

ported well with two wickets, while Ashish Kohli bagged one. In response, Gentle Giants failed to build momentum and were bowled out for 134 runs in 19 overs. Vishavjeet Singh stood out with a fighting knock of 50 runs off 34 balls, but lacked support from the other end.

Harmanpreet backs Kashvee for key role in South Africa series

New Delhi, Apr 16:

Skinner Harmanpreet Kaur has thrown her weight behind young seam-bowling all-rounder Kashvee Gautam to play a key role in India's upcoming five-match T20 series against South Africa, as the team builds towards the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in June. India have opted for a pace-heavy combination suited to South African conditions, with Kashvee in line for a potential T20 debut, especially as Amanjot Kaur continues to recover from a back injury.

"Kashvee is someone who is very talented. She can contribute with both batting and bowling, and she is a great fielder also. So, having these kinds of players is very important. Bringing her to the T20 cricket is very important because now, as Aman is



not here, she is someone who can do really well for the team. "So, I think this is a very important series for all the young players who haven't played much international cricket. But giving them the opportunity here will make a lot of difference for us," Harmanpreet said in the pre-series press conference. Kashvee has impressed in the Women's

Premier League with Gujarat Giants, picking up 19 wickets in 18 matches. She has also shown promise with the bat, including a 43-run knock in an ODI in Brisbane and an unbeaten 34 in the one-off Test in Perth earlier this year. Explaining the team combination, Harmanpreet highlighted the need for additional pace options in South African conditions.

Stokes targets May return after facial injury setback

New Delhi, Apr 16: England Test skipper Ben Stokes is targeting a return to competitive cricket next month after recovering from a facial injury sustained during a training session in February, an incident he admits could have been far more serious. Reflecting on the injury, the England skipper said, "Pretty nasty but, funnily, probably the best result of a bad situation, to be honest. I copped one straight in the face. Just a couple of inches one way or the other. I might not be here doing this interview if I didn't turn my head round." "All things considered, although I had a pretty major facial surgery to sort it out, it was a bit of a mess under there (cheekbone) - I've got out quite lucky. So pretty thankful for that." The injury has ruled Stokes out of the early part of the County Championship season as he continues his recovery. However, the all-rounder is optimistic about returning in time to build match fitness ahead of England's crucial



home summer. "It obviously set everything back about a month, with getting back to where I wanted to be to play at the start of the season for Durham. "I just had to sort of quickly go back to the drawing board and put a plan together to get me ready to play a couple of games for Durham before the Test summer starts," he added. England's upcoming schedule includes a high-profile three-match Test series against New Zealand starting June 4 at Lord's Cricket Ground.

PM SHRI High School Sooli Organizes Intramural Tournament Games 2026

Doda Sooli, April 16, 2026 — PM SHRI High School Sooli proudly announces the successful inauguration of its Intramural Tournament Games 2026 from April 16, bringing together students in a vibrant celebration of sportsmanship, teamwork, and holistic development. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from approximately 100 students across various classes. The tournament featured a diverse range of indoor and outdoor games, including Kabaddi, Kho-Kho, Javelin Throw, Carrom Board, Ludo, and Chess. Each competition was designed to encourage physical fitness, strategic thinking, and cooperative spirit among students. The school campus came alive with energy and



excitement as participants showcased their skills and determination. Traditional outdoor sports like Kabaddi and Kho-Kho highlighted agility and teamwork,

while indoor games such as Chess and Carrom tested concentration and strategic abilities. The inclusion of Javelin Throw added an element of athletic challenge to the

event. The Headmaster of PM SHRI High School Sooli (Mohd Iqbal) appreciated the efforts of both students and staff in making the event a grand success. Emphasizing the importance of sports in education, the Principal stated that such activities play a crucial role in developing discipline, leadership qualities, and a healthy lifestyle among students. Teachers and organizing staff ensured smooth conduct of all events, maintaining fairness and encouraging maximum participation. Winners were applauded for their achievements, while all participants were recognized for their enthusiasm and sportsmanship. The Intramural Tournament Games 2026 shall continue throughout the week.

Mumbai Indians sign Krish Bhagat as Ankolekar replacement

New Delhi, Apr 16: Mumbai Indians have signed 21-year-old Punjab all-rounder Krish Bhagat as a replacement for Atharva Ankolekar, who has been ruled out of the ongoing Indian Premier League (IPL) due to an unspecified injury. Ankolekar, a left-arm spin-bowling all-rounder from Mumbai who has represented India at the Under-19 level, was picked up by MI at his base price of Rs 30 lakh in this year's auction. Bhagat, a right-arm pacer who can contribute with the bat in the lower order, has featured in seven first-class and nine List-A matches for Punjab. He has been on Mumbai Indians' radar for some time, hav-



ing attended trials over the past two seasons, and was

also part of the setup as a net bowler earlier this year.

CSK lose Khaleel; SRH suffer Payne blow ahead of Saturday's clash

Chennai Super Kings and Sunrisers Hyderabad have both been hit by fresh injury setbacks in the ongoing Indian Premier League 2026 season, even as SRH received a timely boost with the impending return of their captain Pat Cummins. CSK's left-arm seamer Khaleel Ahmed has been ruled out for the remainder of the tournament due to a right quadriceps injury. Confirming the development, the franchise said, "The injury sustained will take more than 12 weeks to heal. Khaleel suffered the injury during CSK's clash against Kolkata Knight Riders in Chennai on April 14, leaving the field midway through his final over. Rookie Gurjapreet Singh completed the over and is now expected to take on greater responsibility in his absence. The setback further weakens a CSK squad already dealing with multiple injury concerns. MS



Dhoni continues to recover from a calf injury, with his return timeline extending beyond the initially expected two weeks. While he has resumed training, he is yet to return to full-intensity practice. Meanwhile, Nathan Ellis has been ruled out of the entire season, and his replacement Spencer Johnson is also recovering from injury and

has not yet joined the squad. CSK, currently with two wins from five matches, could turn to domestic options such as Mukesh Choudhary or Ramakrishna Ghosh to fill the void. Ghosh, in particular, impressed during the 2025-26 domestic season, including a standout 7 for 42 in the Vijay Hazare Trophy and a quickfire

unbeaten 64 against Mumbai. SRH lose Payne with ankle injury Meanwhile, SRH, too, have endured their share of injury troubles. Seamer David Payne has been ruled out of the remainder of the IPL with an ankle injury after featuring in just two matches. He had joined the squad as a replacement for Jack Edwards, who was sidelined with a foot injury. The Hyderabad-based franchise had earlier lost Brydon Carse to a hand injury without him playing a game, prompting the signing of Dilshan Madushanka as his replacement. There was, however, encouraging news for SRH with captain Pat Cummins cleared to rejoin the squad after undergoing scans on his back in Sydney. Having missed the season so far, Cummins could target a return against Rajasthan Royals on April 25.

NDA, oppn leaders spar over women's reservation, delimitation bills

New Delhi, Apr 16: NDA leaders on Thursday defended bills to amend the women's quota law and set up a delimitation commission, saying women have waited for years for reservation, while opposition leaders alleged the way the government was proceeding with it could undermine the country's federal and democratic structure. According to a bulletin issued on April 15, the Constitution (One Hundred and Thirty-First Amendment) Bill, 2026, 'Delimitation Bill, 2026' and 'Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026' will be introduced and debated for passage in the Lower House on Thursday. The three-day sitting of Parliament, during which amendments to the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, commonly known as the Women's Reservation Act, mandating 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, will be brought for passage so that it can be implemented by 2029.

BJP MP Giring Singh expressed confidence that the amendments to the Women's Reservation Act for its early implementation will receive broad support in Parliament. "I have full confidence that when they come to the House, they will develop sensitivity towards women. Women have been waiting for years, and now their patience is running out. This

will be passed collectively," Singh told reporters inside the Parliament House complex. He rejected the opposition's concerns on the delimitation exercise as unfounded. "There will be no discrimination against anyone or any state. There will be no loss to the southern states and no one needs to worry," he added. BJP MP Sandhya Roy termed the move on the delimitation exercise as "unfounded." "There will be no discrimination against anyone or any state. There will be no loss to the southern states and no one needs to worry," he added. BJP MP Sandhya Roy termed the move on the delimitation exercise as "unfounded." "There will be no discrimination against anyone or any state. There will be no loss to the southern states and no one needs to worry," he added.

Lovely Anand criticised the opposition for raising objections. "Why is the opposition against delimitation when nothing has happened yet? This is in favour of women - half the population is finally getting its due. The opposition is worried because it sees the ground slipping beneath its feet," she said. Opposition leaders expressed concern over the proposed delimitation exercise. Congress leader K Suresh said his party supports women's reservation, but opposes the delimitation plan linked to it. "We are not against the women's reservation bill. We are totally opposing the delimitation bill," he said. Congress MP Hibi Eden said he has moved a procedural notice against the proposal. "We have given notice under the relevant rules of procedure to oppose this. The delimitation bill is a direct attack on the Constitution. It takes away the rights of southern states and is an attack on the cooperative federal structure of the country," he said. "There is concern over the proposed increase in seats and the imbalance it may create between northern and southern states. Proper discussion and consultation with state governments are needed," he added. "It also affects the democratic and secular nature of the country. Southern states have performed better in population control and delimitation based on

population will penalise them," Eden said. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav said his party supports reservation for women, but is opposed to the manner in which the government is proceeding with it. "We are not against women's reservation, but we oppose the haste and the way it is being brought. Without a fresh census, relying on 2011 data will not ensure accurate representation," he said. "If a census is conducted, there will be a demand for a caste census and appropriate reservation. This is not real empowerment but symbolism," Yadav added. Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Arvind Sawant spoke in the same vein. "We are not against women's reservation, but we have reservations about the delimitation bill. There are concerns about how such exercises are carried out," he said. DMK MP T R Baalu said, "Yesterday, our leader M K Stalin burnt the draft Bill at a public rally in Salem, which shows that we have to oppose it." The total strength of the ruling NDA in the Lok Sabha stands at 292, while the major opposition parties have 233 MPs. For the Constitution amendment bill to be passed, it requires a two-thirds majority of those present in the House at the time of voting.

Stalin burns copy of Delimitation Bill, calls it a threat to Tamil identity

Chennai Apr 16: Hoisting a black flag to protest against the Delimitation Bill being tabled in Parliament, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and DMK president M.K. Stalin on Thursday burnt a copy of the draft, describing it as a legislative move aimed at turning Tamil people into refugees in their own country.



"I am lighting yet another fire persons so far in the Paratwada minors' alleged abuse and blackmail case, with a Special Investigation Team (SIT) now leading the probe and more arrests expected. The case has triggered widespread concern after details emerged suggesting the alleged exploitation may have affected a large number of minor girls. According to inputs reported by IANS, the primary accused is suspected of targeting over 180 minors and recording hundreds of objectionable videos, pointing to the possible scale of the crime and the likelihood of a wider net.

Bill by raising black flags at homes and in public places. While the Chief Minister hoisted a black flag in Namakkal, where he is on an election campaign, black flags were also seen at the DMK headquarters. Anna Arivalayam in Chennai, as well as in districts and at the residences of leaders and functionaries of the

Maharashtra SIT arrests 4 in Amravati minor girls' abuse case

Mumbai, Apr 16: Police in Maharashtra's Amravati have arrested four persons so far in the Paratwada minors' alleged abuse and blackmail case, with a Special Investigation Team (SIT) now leading the probe and more arrests expected. The case has triggered widespread concern after details emerged suggesting the alleged exploitation may have affected a large number of minor girls. According to inputs reported by IANS, the primary accused is suspected of targeting over 180 minors and recording hundreds of objectionable videos, pointing to the possible scale of the crime and the likelihood of a wider net.

DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance across the state. "#Delimitation: Let the fire spread all over Tamil Nadu! Let the hubris of the BJP be defeated," Stalin wrote in a social media post, adding, "The flames of anti-Hindi imposition had once reached Delhi and subsided only after its capitulation."

BJP promises Rs 3,000 monthly aid to women, Smriti Irani launches Matrishakti card

New Delhi, Apr 16: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has stepped up its outreach to women voters in West Bengal, promising a monthly allowance of Rs 3,000 if voted to power, even as questions arise over the scope and implementation of the scheme. At a Press conference on Wednesday, BJP leader Smriti Irani sought to dispel confusion surrounding the party's poll promise, asserting that the benefit would be extended to all women in the state without discrimination. "There will be no distinction. Every woman in Bengal will receive Rs 3,000 per month. This is BJP's resolve," she said. The clarification comes against the backdrop of the party's

election manifesto, which mentions financial assistance for women belonging to lower and lower-middle-income groups. The apparent discrepancy had triggered debate over whether the scheme would mirror the state government's 'Lakshmi Bhandar' initiative or remain restricted to specific economic categories. During the event, Irani, flanked by Leader of Opposition, Suvendu Adhikari and BJP leader Rupa Ganguly, unveiled the 'Matrishakti Bharosa Card', symbolising the party's commitment to women-centric welfare. Five women were handed over the cards as part of the launch. The BJP's women's wing has already begun distributing the

cards door-to-door in several areas, including Durgapur East, where members are collecting personal details such as names, addresses, and phone numbers of prospective beneficiaries. Political observers, however, note that while the announcement is aimed at consolidating women voters, ambiguities remain. The manifesto's wording in the latest assertion by Irani appear to be at variance, raising questions about fiscal feasibility and eligibility criteria. Analysis suggests that clarity on funding and execution may only emerge after the election results. Meanwhile, signs of organisational discord surfaced during Irani's visit to Chitaur in Hooahy district today. A 'Nababarsa

Sankhanda' rally, organised by the BJP began later scheduled from near the party's district office. Sources indicated that Irani expressed displeasure over the delay and the absence of key district leaders. Notably, the Hooahy organisational district BJP president Gautam Chattopadhyay was absent from the programme, and Irani reportedly left midway through the procession. Though she arrived at the venue, she did not address the scheduled public meeting at Ghari More, leading to disappointment among party workers, who had gathered in large numbers under the scorching sun. BJP candidate Subir Nag later stated that Irani had to leave due to prior commitments, but

acknowledged that cadres were disheartened by her absence from the rally. In her absence, Nag formally initiated the 'Annappuma Bhandar' scheme locally, reiterating the party's promise of monthly financial support to women.

'OBC women should get their rightful share of representation...: Telangana Jagruthi President K Kavitha

New Delhi, Apr 16: Telangana Jagruthi President Kavitha Kalvakuntla on Thursday said that Delimitation should be linked with an OBC sub-quota instead of the Women's Reservation Bill so that OBC women

can get their rightful share of representation. She highlighted that the representation of Telangana is 3.13 per cent in the Parliament, and the Delimitation will further widen the gap. "3.13 per cent is Telangana's share in

the parliament as of date. That should be treated as a baseline during the delimitation exercise. The proportional representation of Telangana should only increase and not decrease in any case. A blanket 50 per cent increase that is

being proposed right now looks okay on the face of it, but when you look at the absolute numbers, the gap will increase. People of Telangana will hit the streets; our share of 3.13 per cent is diluted in any way," she said.

'No justification to oppose delimitation': BJP's Prakash Reddy hits out at INDIA bloc ahead of special session



New Delhi, Apr 16: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Prakash Reddy said there is "no justification in opposing the delimitation exercise" while criticising the INDIA bloc for what he called a contradictory stand on constitutional and legislative matters. Speaking to ANI, Reddy said, "INDIA alliance finally said that they will support the women reservation bill but they will not

support the delimitation bill." Reddy referred to past delimitation exercises across the country and said, "Earlier in 1971, the Congress party itself completed the delimitation bill, they passed the bill and reorganized the constituencies." He added, "Even during 2009 reorganization, though it started in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee period, the final reorganization and delimitation process

was completed by the Manmohan Singh government." He said multiple governments have carried out delimitation based on constitutional provisions. "You did the delimitation as per your interest, as per your political advantage," he said. Reddy stated that the current exercise follows a similar constitutional framework, adding, "Now it is the time for the BJP," also said the opposition should not politicise the issue and warned them of public scrutiny. "People are observing your activities, people are monitoring your activity and the time comes when people take their decision," he said. Three important bills are likely to be introduced in the special session of Parliament starting today, including one to reserve seats for women in the 2029 Lok Sabha elections and another to redraw constituency boundaries.

New Delhi, Apr 16: Infosys has rejected allegations circulating on social media about workplace harassment at its Business Process Management (BPM) facility in Pune, even as scrutiny intensifies on Maharashtra's IT sector over a separate and ongoing probe involving Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in Nashik. The clarification comes at a time when multiple complaints against TCS staff in Nashik have triggered investigations into alleged harassment and forced religious practices, putting workplace culture across IT firms in the state under sharp focus. Infosys responded after social media posts surface. The controversy around Infosys surfaced after a series of posts on social media platform X claimed

Infosys swats down harassment claims at Pune unit; TCS Nashik probe snowballs into wider crisis



inappropriate behaviour towards women employees at its Pune facility. The posts were later taken down. Maharashtra minister Nitesh Bane said the state government has taken note of the allegations. Responding to the claims, Infosys reiterated its policy stance. "Infosys maintains a zero-tolerance approach to any form of harassment or discrimination," the company said.

TCS Nashik probe expands with fresh complaints developments come alongside an ongoing investigation into allegations at TCS's Nashik facility, where several women employees have accused senior staff of misconduct over a four-year period from 2022 to 2026. The complaints include claims of sexual harassment, stalking, inappropriate physical contact, objectionable remarks, mental harassment, and alleged pressure to adopt specific religious practices. Investigators have reviewed more than 40 CCTV clips and are currently recording statements from both complainants and those accused. Police have also conducted an undercover operation using women personnel as part of the inquiry.

Officials have said the probe is still underway and conclusions will be drawn only after examining all evidence. Internal and external probes underway at TCS a related development, TCS officials carried out an unannounced inspection at the Nashik office earlier this week, as part of an internal review, according to NDTV Profit. The company has set up a special investigation committee, and senior officials have begun recording employee statements. Sources indicated that more complaints have surfaced during the process, expanding the scope of the inquiry. As a precaution, around 120 employees at the Nashik facility have been asked to work from home while the investigation continues.

NORTHERN RAILWAY						
E-Tender Notice						
By: CEE/S&F/2R acting for and on behalf of the President of India (Inv. E-Tenders (www.insp.gov.in)) against below titled tenders. Bidders will be able to submit their original/verified bids upto closing date and time only.						
Tender No.	Name of work	App. Cost. (in Rs.)	Estimate Money (in Rs.)	Completion period	Opening of tender	Website Particulars
27-Elect-650/1-06	Electrical works in the execution of 15 Nos. Lifts at PGW (03 Nos.), FZR (02 Nos.), HSR (01 No.), HOOP (02 Nos.) railway stations under Farespur division and at MCTM (02 Nos.), SOGAM (02 Nos.) & PTK (02 Nos.) railway stations under Jammu division and Electrical works in the execution of 04 Nos. Escalators at PGW (04 Nos.), FZR (04 Nos.), PPR (04 Nos.) railway stations under Farespur division and at MCTM (04 Nos.) railway station under Jammu division (www.insp.gov.in/MSDS)	2,39,22,170.00	4,78,000/-	05 Months	08.05.2026 15:00 hrs	www.insp.gov.in
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India's strong fundamentals to cushion global slowdown impact, says IMF chief

New Delhi, Apr 15: India's economy is likely to stay on a steady path even as global growth comes under pressure from ongoing conflicts, International Monetary Fund Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said, highlighting the country's strong fundamentals and policy framework. At a media briefing during the IMF Spring Meetings on Wednesday, Georgieva pointed to India's growth momentum as a standout in a slowing global landscape. "Look at India today. India's growth is more than two times higher than the average global growth," she said. Strong fundamentals keep India ahead of global peers. The IMF chief said India's economic resilience is rooted in years of policy strengthening and institu-



tional development. She underlined that economies with solid macroeconomic foundations are better equipped to navigate external disruptions. Georgieva noted that several emerging markets, including India, have significantly upgraded their policy frameworks over time. "That comes because of the strength of fundamentals," she said, adding that improvements in monetary policy have

East could weigh on global growth. "In an adverse scenario... we are going to see a slowdown in global growth," she said, adding that expansion could fall to around 2 per cent if the conflict drags on. She also flagged the uneven impact of rising energy costs, especially on countries dependent on imports. "The negative impact is highly asymmetric with the biggest burdens falling on countries that import energy," she said. India, along with other Asian economies, remains exposed due to its reliance on energy imports from the Gulf. "Asia is very severely impacted because of the dependency of imports," Georgieva noted, while adding that strong policy frameworks in the region are helping mitigate the impact.

India's domestic strength offers a cushion. Even amid global uncertainties, Georgieva maintained that economies with robust domestic demand and credible policy systems, such as India, are better positioned to absorb shocks. "We do not see a scenario under which there would be a dramatic development," she said, though she cautioned that financial stability risks must be closely monitored. India has remained among the fastest-growing major economies in recent years, driven by domestic consumption, infrastructure investment and structural reforms aimed at improving business conditions. Its growth trajectory continues to outpace global averages, reinforcing its role as a key engine of economic activity in Asia.

Sensex, Nifty open higher as geopolitical tensions ease

New Delhi, Apr 15: The Indian stock markets opened on a higher note on Thursday, with the equity benchmarks mirroring global cues amid hopes of easing geopolitical tensions between Washington and Tehran. Sensex opened 566 points or 0.73 per cent higher at 78,677 in opening trade, while Nifty began the session at 24,385, up 154 points or 0.64 per cent. Sectorally, gains were led by realty, media, consumer durables and financial stocks. Category-wise, small-cap and mid-cap stocks were the top gainers, with the Nifty Smallcap 100, Nifty Smallcap 250 and Nifty Midcap 100 rising up to 1 per cent in early trade. On Wednesday, FIIs remained net buyers to the tune of approximately Rs 666 crore, while DIIs turned net sellers with outflows of around Rs 569 crore. According to analysts, volatility could pick up again depending on global developments and upcoming triggers. After the recent sharp rally, the market may witness some consolidation or profit booking at higher levels, they added. In contrast, oil commodities traded on a firm note, with Brent crude futures at \$94.92 per barrel, down 0.03 per cent, while US WTI crude traded at \$91.52, up 0.25 per cent. On the global front, both US and Asian markets showed positive momentum. Japan's



Nikkei was trading over 2 per cent higher. Hang Seng climbed more than 1 per cent, and South Korea's KOSPI was up about 2 per cent. In the US overnight, Wall Street's major indices — the S&P 500 and the Nasdaq — ended 0.80 per cent and 1.6 per cent higher, respectively. Meanwhile, the US President said that China is 'very happy' with the permanent opening of the Strait of Hormuz. "I am doing it for them also — and the world. This situation will never happen again."

Stock markets climb in early trade amid hopes of US-Iran truce

New Delhi, Apr 15: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty climbed in early trade on Thursday as renewed optimism surrounding the progress in restarting US-Iran negotiations has helped ease immediate geopolitical concerns and driven crude oil prices lower. A positive trend in global markets and fresh foreign fund inflows also added to markets' optimism. The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 619 points to 78,730.32 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 169.65 points to 24,400.95. From the 30-Sensex firms, Eternal, Infosys, Tech Mahindra, Bajaj Finance, Tata Steel and InterGlobe Aviation were the major winners. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 0.04 per cent up at USD 94.97 per barrel. In Asian markets, South Korea's benchmark Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index were trading higher. US markets ended mostly higher on



Wednesday. "Renewed optimism surrounding the progress in restarting US-Iran negotiations has helped ease immediate geopolitical concerns, thereby enhancing overall risk appetite. Brent crude oil prices have moderated and are consolidating in the range of USD 94-95 per barrel, which is a constructive development for the domestic market," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 666.15 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

Bengaluru to host Zak Fenestration India Expo 2026 from April 28-30

Bengaluru, Apr 16: With South India continuing to see steady growth in construction and infrastructure, Bengaluru is set to host Zak Fenestration India Expo 2026, an exclusive expo bringing the Fenestration Industry together in one of the region's key markets. Zak Fenestration India Expo 2026 will be held from 28-30 April 2026 at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC), Bengaluru. The exhibition will bring together companies from the Glass, Doors, Windows, Façades, and Aluminium Extrusion under one roof. With steady growth in construction across India, there is an increasing focus on quality, performance, and sustainability in building design. The expo will showcase a range of practical solutions suited to current market needs, supporting better design,



execution, and long-term performance of building envelopes. The three-day event will feature 100+ exhibiting brands presenting products and solutions across uPVC and aluminium systems, façades, cladding, railings, hardware, software, machinery, and glass processing. The exhibition will also include live demonstrations, mock-ups, and product displays to help visitors understand applications in real project scenarios. The expo is relevant for architects, developers, fabricators, consultants, contractors, and other professionals involved in the building industry, offering an opportunity to review available solutions and connect with suppliers. Bengaluru being an active market for real estate and infrastructure, the event is expected to attract visitors from across South India. Says Mr. Syed Zakir Ahmed, Chairman, Zak Trade Fairs & Exhibitions, "Zak has consistently brought together the

Doors, Windows, Glass, Façades, and Aluminium Extrusions through its exhibitions. For the first time in Bengaluru, we are presenting a dedicated platform focused entirely on fenestration solutions, an area that plays a critical role in how buildings perform and evolve. The industry today is moving towards better materials, smarter systems, and more responsible construction practices. This exhibition is our effort to support that journey by creating a space where knowledge, products, and people come together in a meaningful way. With great pride, I invite you and your team to join us from 28-30 April 2026 at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre (BIEC), Bengaluru, and be a part of this collective step forward for the industry."

Compassion Unites: Cross-Sector Mental Health Alliance Convened at UK Parliament

London, UK | Apr 16: International Siddhashram Shakti Centre UK successfully hosted a landmark interfaith and cross-sector convention titled "Compassion Unites: An Alliance for Mental Health" on Tuesday, April 14, at the prestigious Porticulis House within the Parliament of the United Kingdom. The convention was led by globally recognised academic and mental health advocate Dr. Ishan Shivanand, in the esteemed presence of His Holiness Shri Rajarajeshwar Guruji. The event brought together a distinguished gathering of interfaith leaders, medical practitioners, and industry representatives to foster collaborative solutions to the growing mental health crisis. Prominent interfaith leaders, including Gopal Bhachu and Rabbi Kathleen Middleton, joined leaders from financial services



such as Nicola Amos, reflecting a unified commitment toward community wellbeing and coordinated action. A key highlight of the convention was the participation of special guest speakers Rev. Dr. Mark Oakley, Dean of Southwark Cathedral, and Sojan Joseph, Member of Parliament for Ashford and Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Mental Health. Both speakers delivered insightful addresses emphasising compassion, spirituality, and the urgent need for a robust societal response to mental health challenges.

In a symbolic gesture of cultural and spiritual unity, an icon of the sacred Shri Ram Mandir Ayodhya was presented to Rev. Dr. Mark Oakley by HH Shri Rajarajeshwar Guruji and Dr. Ishan Shivanand. The ceremony was attended by a diverse audience representing sectors including medicine, education, technology, professional services, and public policy, reinforcing the spirit of shared purpose. The Compassion Unites convention underscored the importance of collaborative engagement across faith communities, the public sector, and private enterprises in addressing mental health challenges. It also demonstrated strong support for the National Health Service (NHS), highlighting the vital role of compassion-led initiatives in promoting emotional wellbeing and societal resilience.

One Bangkok Hosted "Sunsational Songkran Festival 2026"

Bangkok [Thailand], April 16: One Bangkok, the global lifestyle destination in the heart of Bangkok, successfully hosted its "Summer Oner 2026" campaign, offering thrilling travel, dining, and shopping experiences. The key highlight was "One Bangkok Sunsational Songkran Festival," reigniting the rhythm of life amidst cascading waters and vibrant flora. The city's core was transformed into an immersive summer water park, blending the exhilaration of water, vivid colours, art, culture, and captivating music. Guests enjoyed an array of enticing summer promotions and live concerts featuring over 57 of Thailand's leading artists, performing



across six consecutive days, from 10 to 15 April 2026. The event commenced with a spectacular opening performance, "THE AWAKENING OF WATER," portraying water as more than a source of joy, but as a vital force of life, the diving energy of the city, and a symbol of renewal. The One Bangkok Sunsational Songkran Festival encouraged visitors to immerse themselves in the rhythmic flow of life, expressed through three core themes: Movement, symbolising the vibrant flow of water and diverse flora; Floral Expressions, representing the sustainable growth of our ecosystem and natural beauty; and Vibrant Energy, the luminous power that connects people through.

India's trade gap may widen in FY27 amid global and oil risks: Report

New Delhi April 16 : While India's March 2026 trade deficit came in lower than expected, Yes Securities has cautioned that underlying factors point to a likely widening in the coming months, driven by external shocks, slowing global demand, and structural pressures on the import bill. The report noted that "India's March trade deficit surprised at only USD 21 bn," aided by a temporary compression in imports and a sequential recovery in exports. However, it emphasized that this improvement may not be sustained. A major reason for the trade deficit was a sharp drop in imports, especially gold and oil. Gold imports fell to about USD 3.1 billion, and oil imports declined to around USD 12.2 billion. However, this decrease was not entirely due to lower demand. The report suggests that the fall may have been caused by the closure of

the Strait of Hormuz, which disrupted supply, pointing to supply issues rather than a long-term improvement. The report noted, "The drop... may be attributed to the closure of the Strait of Hormuz which disrupted supply," indicating supply-side constraints rather than structural correction. The report warned that such disruptions could reverse as supply normalizes, pushing the import bill higher again. Even with recent easing in crude prices following ceasefire developments, "the physical restoration of damaged infrastructure and full normalization of logistics will be a slower process," the report noted, suggesting persistent volatility in oil markets. On the exports side, the outlook remains fragile. Despite a month-on-month pickup, exports contracted by 7.3% YoY in March, reflecting weak global demand conditions.

Akasa Air to launch direct Mumbai-Hanoi flights from September 4, expands Southeast Asia network

Mumbai, Apr 15: Akasa Air on Thursday announced the launch of direct flights between Mumbai and Hanoi, marking its seventh international destination and a significant push into Southeast Asia's high-demand travel corridor. The airline will operate four weekly non-stop flights starting September 4, 2026, with bookings already open on its website, mobile apps, and leading online travel platforms. The move is expected to strengthen both tourism and business links between India and



Vietnam. The expansion comes amid a sharp rise in outbound travel from India to Southeast Asia, with Vietnam emerging as a preferred short-haul destination due to its accessibility, cultural appeal, and competitive pricing. Industry data indicates growing demand for direct

connectivity, particularly from metro cities, as Indian travellers increasingly opt for international leisure breaks. Akasa Air said the new route is part of its broader strategy to build a strong international network linking India with key global destinations. Hanoi, known for its historic architecture, centuries-old heritage, and globally recognised cuisine, has seen a steady surge in Indian footfall over the past few years. Anand Srinivasan, Co-Founder and Chief Commercial Officer of Akasa Air, said the launch underlines the airline's focus on expanding into high-growth markets. He noted that Vietnam has become one of the most attractive destinations for Indian travellers, and direct connectivity is expected to further accelerate travel demand. The airline is positioning the route as both a leisure and business offering, tapping into increasing economic engagement and cultural exchange between the two countries. With trade ties and tourism flows on the rise, direct air links are being seen as a key enabler of bilateral growth. With the addition of Hanoi, Akasa Air continues to scale up its international footprint while offering more direct, time-saving travel options. The airline said it aims to provide a seamless flying experience, banking on its growing reputation for reliable service and competitive fares.



SBDU, BHD Members imparted Capacity Building Training at IIM Jammu

JAMMU, APRIL 16: To strengthen the implementation of Mission YUVA, a two-day capacity building training programme for members of the Small Business Development Units (SBDUs) and Business Help Desks (BHDs) was organized at Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Jammu on April 15 and 16, 2026. The programme aimed at equipping the newly recruited field functionaries with the knowledge and tools required for effective facilitation, handholding and credit linkage of aspiring entrepreneurs under Mission YUVA. The sessions focused on key aspects of the Mission including entrepreneurial mindset development, credit guidelines and user journey, preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs), handling credit-related issues and strengthening rural livelihoods through Self Help Groups (SHGs) and sup-



porting through accessible network of SBDUs and BHDs. Training on functioning of MSME Health Clinics was also held by the Industries department. Session focused on monitoring the performance of MSMEs and extending handholding in case of distress. Experts from NABARD, J&K Bank, JKEDI, BISAG, Nirmat Bharat, Industries and other departments shared insights on financing mechanisms and institutional support for entrepreneurs.

Participants were also trained on capacity building strategies, analysis of sanctioned and rejected credit cases, promotion of Neo-innovative enterprises and onboarding of entrepreneurs on digital seller platforms under Mission YUVA. Sessions were conducted by domain experts and partners associated with Mission YUVA including DIC, Nirmat Bharat, etc enabling participants to better guide and support youth aspiring to start their own enterprises. Secretary Labour & Employment Department, Rajeev Ranjan expressed satisfaction over the team's performance under Mission YUVA across all deliverables. He emphasized the need for coordinated efforts by all stakeholders to achieve the scheme's objectives and to foster a robust entrepreneurial ecosystem in the Union Territory.

Rana advocates inculcating moral values, nurturing holistic growth among students

MENDHAR, APRIL 16: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today advocated the significance of inculcating high moral values and nurturing holistic growth among the students in shaping a brighter future for the nation. The Minister, while participating in the annual day celebrations at IDPS Mendhar, underscored the vital role of education in developing not just the intellect but also the character of the young learners. Addressing an enthusiastic gathering of students, teachers and parents, the Minister spoke about the evolving landscape of education in an era defined by rapid technological advancement. He said that



while digital progress has opened new avenues of learning, it has also underscored the need to instil strong moral values, discipline and a deep sense of responsibility in students. Emphasizing the shared responsibility of educators and families, Rana called for a collaborative approach to nurturing well-rounded individuals. He urged stakeholders to focus on building resilience, integrity and compassion among the young minds so they are better equipped to contribute meaningfully to society.

GDC Khour Organises Student Interaction Session on Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan

Khou, Apr 16: Degree Government College Khour organised a Student Interaction Session under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan. All members of the College Wellbeing and Anti-Substance Cell (CWASC) actively interacted with the students, creating awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse. The programme was held under the guidance of the Principal, T. K. Sharma, who sensitised students about the serious physical, psychological, and social consequences of drug abuse. He emphasised the need for awareness, self-discipline, and collective



responsibility in building a drug-free society. He also encouraged students to act as ambassadors of change within their communities. All members of the CWASC committee were present on the occasion. Prof. Jozafeen Afzal was also present during the session. The interaction aimed to promote a healthy lifestyle and reinforce the commitment towards a drug-free campus.

DLSA Udhampur reviews implementation of NALSA's SPRUHA scheme

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 16: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Udhampur on Thursday convened a meeting to discuss modalities for effective implementation of NALSA SPRUHA (Supporting Potential and Resilience of the Unseen, Held-back and Affected) Scheme-2025. The meeting, held in the District Court Complex, was chaired by Sub-Judge/Secretary DLSA, Sumati Sharma.



A welfare scheme launched by the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA), the scheme envisages providing comprehensive legal and social assistance to the families of incarcerated persons and crime victims. The scheme ensures these vulnerable

groups are not marginalized by poverty or social exclusion, offering counseling, education, and livelihood support to help them

rebuild their lives with dignity. During the meeting, Sumati Sharma stressed the importance of coordinated efforts to extend effective support to vulnerable and affected families. She further emphasized that the scheme should also be organised in Jails and Police Stations to sensitize convicts, under-trial prisoners, police personnel and other stakeholders regarding the availability of legal aid, the rights of dependents of prisoners and victims of crime and the institutional mechanisms established under the Scheme. The meeting was attended by Babu Ram from Tehsil Social Welfare Office; Meena Thakur, Administrative Officer One Stop Centre; LADCs, Panel Lawyers and PLVs of DLSA, TLSCs Rammagar, Majaila and Chenni.

United Against Drugs: Administration, civil society join hands to promote Nasha Mukht JK Abhiyan in Kishtwar

KISHTWAR, APRIL 16: A significant meeting under the ongoing Nasha Mukht JK Abhiyan was convened today by the District Administration Kishtwar, bringing together religious heads of all communities, representatives from civil society and NGOs to strengthen the implementation of the 100-day Nasha Mukht Campaign in the district. The meeting was held under the directions of the Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma and was chaired by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Pawan Kotwal. At the outset, District Social Welfare Officer



(DSWO) Tariq Parvez Qazi presented a comprehensive overview of the activities being undertaken by the stakeholder departments as per the schedule notified by the District Administration. The meeting witnessed active participation from prominent religious and community leaders, including the Sanatan Dharma Sabha President Mahant Ram Saran Dass; the Majlis-e-Shura Committee President and Imam Jamia Masjid Farooq Ahmed Kitchloo and the Gurdwara Prabandhak

Committee General Secretary, Charanjeet Singh and members of civil society and NGOs. The participants put forward several valuable suggestions to curb drug abuse, including the need for counseling of parents and students, village-level awareness announcements, establishment of an advanced rehabilitation centre in the district, strict action against drug peddlers and suppliers and greater parental responsibility in monitoring children. All the religious heads and other stakeholders assured their full cooperation to the District Administration in its efforts to eradicate the drug menace from the district. The ADC informed that volunteers are being identified at the MC ward and Panchayat levels to actively support anti-drug efforts. In line with the directions of the Lieutenant Governor the ADC instructed the concerned departments to constitute Mahila Nigrahi Samitis at Mohalla and ward levels for community monitoring. The involvement of Self-Help Groups (SHGs) was also stressed. The meeting concluded with a strong collective resolve to make Kishtwar a drug-free district through coordinated action and sustained community participation.

BADC Welcomes Approval of Poonch Rail Line Survey

JAMMU, Apr 16: The Jammu and Kashmir Border Area Development Conference (BADC), a registered organisation working for the welfare of border residents and tribal population of Jammu and Kashmir, has welcomed the Ministry of Railways' approval for conducting the Final Location Survey (FLS) of the proposed new railway line for Poonch under Northern Railway, at a sanctioned cost of approximately Rs. 24 crore. The organisation termed the development a significant and long-awaited step towards improving connectivity in the border districts, which have remained relatively underserved for decades. Dr. Shazaad Ahmed Malik, Chairman of BADC and former Vice Chancellor, welcomed the survey approval and said it shows renewed attention towards the needs of border areas. However, he also mentioned that aspirations and suggestions of the people of border districts must be given weightage



in final draft of the survey and the route should include both Rajouri and Poonch districts. The BADC Chairman added that his organisation has long pushed for better connectivity between border districts and the mainland, and this step is part of that ongoing effort.

DC inspects progress of AMRUT 2.0 works in Kathua Township



KATHUA, APRIL 16: Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma today conducted an extensive inspection of the works being executed under AMRUT 2.0 across various urban locations in Kathua town to assess progress and ensure adherence to quality and timelines. The Deputy Commissioner inspected progress of works at Old Sabji Mandi, New Bus

Stand, Tara Nagar (Ward No. 13), Kalibari in Upper Shiva Nagar, Lower Shiva Nagar, near KK Birla Park and Waterfront. Reviewing the status of works, the DC directed the executing agencies to expedite the pace while strictly maintaining quality standards. He emphasized completion of all works within stipulated time frame to ensure timely delivery of improved civic amenities to the public. Highlighting the significance of AMRUT 2.0 in strengthening urban infrastructure, the DC underscored that the works being undertaken are crucial for augmentation of basic services including water supply, drainage and overall urban development. He further stressed on taking adequate safety measures at all work sites to safeguard both workers and the general public. The executing agencies were also asked to minimize inconvenience to residents during the course of execution and ensure proper restoration of roads and surroundings after completion of works. CPO Ranjeet Thakur, XEN PHE Sumesh Hangloo and other concerned officers accompanied the Deputy Commissioner during the inspection.

Commissioner STD reviews strategy for new Financial Year Stresses on proactive monitoring, analytical scrutiny to identify defaulters



JAMMU, APRIL 16: Commissioner State Taxes Department (STD), P.K. Bhat chaired a meeting here today to review the department's strategy for the newly commenced financial year. The meeting was attended by Additional Commissioner (Administration & Enforcement), Namrita Dogra and all tax officers

of State Taxes Department. During the meeting, detailed deliberations were held on strengthening compliance mechanisms and enhancing deterrence against tax evasion at the circle level. The meeting laid emphasis on outcome-based actions aimed at augmenting GST revenue across the Union Territory. Addressing the participants in the meeting, the Commissioner stressed the need for initiating actionable measures from the very first month of the financial year to effectively curb the menace of fake Input Tax Credit (ITC). He underlined the importance of proactive monitoring and analytical scrutiny to identify defaulters at an early stage. He expressed confidence that with focused efforts, the new financial year will prove more productive for the UT of J&K. Highlighting the role of technology, the Commissioner urged officers to leverage digital tools and data analytics for efficient tracking of cases, timely interventions, and improved enforcement outcomes. He emphasized that technology-driven governance would be key to

ensuring transparency, accountability, and higher revenue realization. Additional Commissioner Namrita Dogra called upon State Tax Officers, Inspectors, and field functionaries to work in close coordination and as a cohesive team within their respective circles. She stressed that collective effort, discipline, and accountability are essential for enhancing departmental productivity and achieving revenue targets. The department also appealed to all taxpayers to adhere to GST norms, ensure timely filing of returns, and maintain transparency in their transactions, emphasizing that voluntary compliance is crucial for fostering a fair and robust tax ecosystem.

CS assesses the impact and implementation of PMIS

JAMMU, APRIL 16: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today convened a meeting to assess the implementation status of the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme (PMIS) in Jammu and Kashmir and outlined a comprehensive strategy to enhance its outreach and impact across the Union Territory. Those who attended this meeting include Commissioner Secretary, School Education Department; Secretary, Employment and Skill Development; MD, Skill Development Mission along with other concerned officers, Director, PMIS in Ministry of Corporate Affairs, GoI attended the meeting through video link. The Chief Secretary underscored the importance of the scheme in improving youth employability by providing structured internship opportunities in reputed companies. He noted that PMIS, launched under the Union Budget 2024-25, offers internships of 6 to 9 months with a monthly stipend of ₹9,000 and an additional one-time grant of ₹6,000, thereby enabling young individuals to gain valuable industry exposure. Reviewing the



progress, it was informed that Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed encouraging response in terms of registrations, with over 4,400 youth registered on the portal and more than 2,800 profiles completed so far. However, only 68 internship opportunities are currently available in the UT, despite J&K ranking among the top states in registrations. The Chief Secretary took this occasion to impress upon the concerned to bridge the gap between registrations and available opportunities, he also emphasized the need for aggressive industry engagement with the role of the Ministry in doing the same for J&K. He observed that increasing participation of companies is crucial to ensuring that the registered youth are meaningfully absorbed under the scheme. The Chief Secretary directed the department to significantly scale up registration efforts and set an ambitious target of achieving at least 2 lakh registrations from across the districts of Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized that this can be achieved through a mission-mode approach involving educational institutions, employment centres, and grassroots-level outreach mechanisms. Highlighting the limited presence of large corporate houses in the UT, he stressed the need to scale up internship opportunities manifold for the youth across the States/UTs of the country. He called for proactive engagement with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to enhance the number of internship opportunities to at least 1,000 in the coming days, so as to bridge the existing gap between demand and availability. The Chief Secretary directed that PMIS registration be integrated with institutional mechanisms, including ITIs, polytechnics, and colleges, to ensure maximum coverage of eligible youth. He also called for active involvement of District Employment & Counselling Centres, Common Service Centres, and placement cells in facilitating registrations. The Secretary, SDD, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan apprised the meeting of a 100-day roadmap aimed at significantly scaling up registrations and improving outcomes. The plan targets 20,000 registrations in the initial phase, with a structured approach involving campus drives,

establishment of help desks, mass awareness campaigns, and deployment of mobile registration units in remote areas.

A key focus of the strategy, he revealed, pivots on the convergence with Mission YUVA to leverage its extensive youth database and grassroots network. He further divulged that over 4.73 lakh 'willing to work' youth have already been identified under Mission YUVA, and around 2,000 YUVA Doots will be mobilized to carry out door-to-door awareness and registration drives across all districts. Stressing the need for effective monitoring, he instructed departments to conduct regular reviews and ensure real-time tracking of progress through digital platforms. He further directed that bottlenecks, if any, be promptly escalated for timely resolution. Highlighting the transformative potential of the scheme, the Chief Secretary said that PMIS can play a pivotal role in bridging the gap between education and employment and in preparing the youth of Jammu and Kashmir for the demands of the modern job market.

Tawi Mohatsav Baisakhi Mela to be elevated as Jammu's major festival: Deputy Chief Minister

Participates in Tawi Arti, felicitates Dangal, cultural program participants



JAMMU, APRIL 16: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today said that the Baisakhi Mela on the banks of River Tawi will be promoted into one of the biggest festivals of Jammu and Kashmir, aimed at attracting the tourists from across the country and beyond. Addressing a large gathering during the concluding day of Tawi Mohatsav celebrations, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the vibrant mela has fulfilled a long-cherished dream of the people of Jammu to celebrate such a grand cultural festival along the banks of River Tawi, also revered as Maa Surya Putri. He said that the government is working earnestly towards promoting Jammu as a key cultural and religious destination, adding that sustained efforts will be made to further enhance the scale and outreach of the Baisakhi Mela in the coming years. He also appreciated the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha and the Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah,

for their continued support and encouragement in organizing such a grand event. He also lauded the efforts of the Jammu Municipal Corporation, Smart City officials, Tourism Department and other concerned agencies for their coordinated work in making the festival a grand success. Highlighting the collective efforts behind the event, the Deputy Chief Minister said that while planning plays a crucial role, it is the dedication and hard work of officers and officials on the ground that ensure successful execution of such mega events. He further said that all efforts shall be taken to elevate the Baisakhi Mela into one of the biggest festivals of Jammu and Kashmir, drawing participation from artists, tourists and cultural enthusiasts from across the globe. The Deputy Chief Minister also called for incorporating public feedback and suggestions to further improve the event in the coming years, ensuring that the festival continues to grow in scale, quality and appeal. The three-day event witnessed a series of cultural programmes, musical performances, traditional activities and large public participation, reflecting the rich cultural heritage and festive spirit of Jammu region. On the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister also witnessed Dangal, cultural events and participated in Arta puja held on the banks of river Tawi. He also felicitated various participants of dangal, cultural events and others for their role in making the festival a big success. Commissioner JMC, Dr. Devansh Yadav, Joint Commissioner and other senior officers were also present on the occasion.

DC Jammu reviews availability of commercial LPG

Assures hospitality industry of mandated quota supply, action against black marketing



JAMMU, APRIL 16: Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Dr Rakesh Minhas on Thursday convened a meeting with hoteliers and hospitality industry representatives to review availability of commercial LPG. The DC attended to the industry concerns and grievances, acknowledge-

ing that they constitute a significant part of the local economy. In view of the upcoming wedding season, the DC assured to ensure that mandated/allocated quota of the gas supply is provided to the industry. He assured that strict action would be

taken against black marketing and any other irregularity. Assistant Directors from Food Supply & Consumer Affairs, Haroon Naik and Santosh Sharma, besides representatives of Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) were present at the meeting.

DC Reasi reviews preparedness for Rainy Season

Directs for identification of vulnerable areas, deployment of adequate machinery

REASI, APRIL 16: Deputy Commissioner Reasi Kumar Abhishek today chaired a meeting to review preparedness of stakeholder departments for the rainy season. He directed the concerned officers to identify vulnerable locations and ensure permanent installation and availability of machinery to effectively tackle any eventuality arising due to heavy rains. Emphasizing prompt and efficient response during disasters, the Deputy Commissioner instructed GRIF, PWD and PMGSY to take concrete steps at individual level. The



departments were asked to maintain close coordination with Sub-Divisional Magistrates for timely action. He also called for detailed reports on bridges and culverts requiring

desilting and repair, while directing the PHE Department to take preventive measures to ensure adequate supply of safe drinking water during the season. SDRF teams

were instructed to remain fully prepared for emergency situations. Later, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed the physical and financial progress under various sectors and schemes being implemented in the district, along with preparations for the current year development plan. He assessed the progress of the District Capex Budget 2025-26 under the UT component and reviewed ongoing works of Jal Shakti, PWD and the Aspirational Development Programme. He directed officers to finalize land before floating tenders and stressed

that all development works should be executed on state land with strict monitoring for timely completion. The DC also emphasized participatory planning, directing officers to prepare the draft development plan for 2026-27 in consultation with Gram Sabhas, while ensuring completion of all pending works within the stipulated timeframe. The meeting was attended by ADDC Sukhdev Singh Samyal, ADC Rakesh Kumar, ACR Nitin Kumar, ACD Varinder Gupta, SDMs of Mahore, Dharmari and Katra, BDOs and officers from various departments.

DC Ramban urges media to promote Nasha Mukta Campaign

Calls for united fight against Drug Abuse

RAMBAN, APRIL 16: To strengthen the ongoing Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir - Nasha Mukta Ramban campaign, Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Alyas Khan today chaired an interactive meeting with media persons of the district, underscoring its pivotal role in building a drug-free society. The meeting was attended by SSP Arun Gupta; Additional Deputy Commissioner Varunjeet Singh Charak; ACD Sheraz Ahmed Chouhan; Tehsildar Deep Kumar; officials from the Information Department and representatives from the media fraternity. Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner stressed that the success of the anti-drug Abhayan largely depends on effective



public awareness, wherein the media can act as a powerful medium. He urged media professionals to become the voice and driving force of the Nasha

Mukta Ramban initiative by spreading the message across every household and remote corners of the district. Emphasizing innovation in

outreach, the Deputy Commissioner shared several creative and result-oriented ideas to further intensify the media campaign. He encouraged extensive

use of digital and social media platforms to amplify the campaign's reach and meaningful engagement of the youth in the fight against drug abuse. SSP Arun Gupta reaffirmed the Police Department's commitment to eliminate drug trafficking from the district. He assured full support in enforcement and appealed to the media fraternity to actively collaborate in disseminating awareness and promoting a collective societal response against substance abuse. The Media persons assured full cooperation to administration in making Nasha Mukta Ramban Abhayan a people's movement and ensuring a healthier, safer future for the youth of the district.

DIPR Cultural Unit organizes Anti-Drug Awareness Programme at GSS Balhama

SRINAGAR, APRIL 16: As part of the ongoing 100-Day Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir campaign launched by the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor J&K, and in line with the calendar of activities of District Administration Srinagar, the Cultural Unit Kashmir of the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) today organized an awareness programme titled "Say No to Drugs and Yes to Life" under the ongoing Nasha Mukta J&K Abhayan at Girls Secondary School (GSS), Balhama. The programme witnessed active participation of students and staff, aiming to sensitize young minds about the harmful effects of drug abuse and the importance of leading a healthy and responsible life. Assistant Commissioner



Development (ACD) Srinagar, Tariq Reshi; BDO Khornoh, Muqit Wani; and AECO Cultural Unit, Syed Shakeel Shan, addressed the gathering. The speakers highlighted the serious physical, psychological, and social consequences of drug addiction and emphasized the need for collective efforts

to eradicate this menace from society. They urged students to stay away from drugs and become ambassadors of a drug-free society. As part of the awareness initiative, the Cultural Unit presented a thematic folk song and a short play carrying strong anti-drug messages.

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