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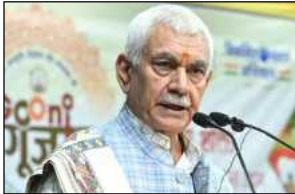
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National Security Flows From Soldiers At The Borders And Border Village Residents: LG Sinha

JAMMU, APR 17: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha asserted that national security flows from soldiers at the borders and border village residents who dwell there.

The Lieutenant Governor was speaking at a public gathering during his visit to Vibrant Village Sariah in Rajouri on Friday, where he inaugurated the Common Service Centre and initiated several development projects.

These projects include water conservation works and development of play-



He said that the vision is clear that border village development is integral to national security, and every border village must rank

among the nation's most prosperous. LG Sinha emphasised that a nation is defined by its remotest village, where our borders begin, and our identity shines before the world.

Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India is advancing with renewed resolve. Border areas are no longer the nation's edge but its first village and foremost opportunity. A new commitment thrives and connection with the main-

stream has taken root," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Sinha said that through the Border Area Development Programme under the Vibrant Villages Programme, infrastructure and welfare schemes are being ensured in every border village.

"No map fully captures the true essence of our border villages, which reveal only lines. Within those lines, I see a vibrant society and steadfast families advancing the nation's progress," he said.

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Constitution Amendment Bill To Give Women Quota In 2029 Defeated In LS; Govt Vows To Continue Fight

NEW DELHI, APR 17: In a major setback to the government, a Constitution Amendment Bill to implement 33 per cent reservation for women in legislatures in 2029 and increase the number of Lok Sabha seats to 816 was defeated on Friday, with the ruling dispensation asserting that the struggle to give the rights to women will continue. While 298 members voted in support of the bill in Lok Sabha, 230 MPs voted against it. Out of 528 members who voted, the bill required 352 votes for a two-third majority. According to the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, Lok Sabha seats were to be increased to 816 from the current 543 to "operationalise" the women's reservation law before the 2029 parliamentary polls, following a delimitation exercise based on the 2011 Census. Seats were also to be increased in state and Union territory assemblies to accommo-

date 33 per cent reservation for women. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, senior ministers Rajnath Singh and Amit Shah, Leader of Opposition Rahul Gandhi were among those present during the voting. This was for the first time a bill under the Modi government was defeated in Parliament. After the legislation was defeated during the voting, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla adjourned the House for the day and announced that it would meet again on Saturday. The three-day special sitting was convened from April 16 to 18 for getting the Parliament's approval to the Bill. When the Constitution Amendment Bill was defeated, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Kiren Rijiju conveyed to the Speaker that the government has no intention to move ahead with the two other bills — the Delimitation Bill and the Union

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Dr Jitendra Felicitates Top Performing Central Ministries States; Highlights Government's Capacity Building Initiatives



NEW DELHI, APR 17: Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO,

Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh felicitated top-performing

Ministries, Departments and States at the "SAD-HANA Saptah 2026" ceremony. Addressing the gathering, Dr. Jitendra Singh

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J&K To Distribute Free Ration To Migrants From April 18

JAMMU, APR 17: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Thursday announced the distribution of free ration to migrants from April 18 across designated ration depots in the Union territory. According to the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction, the ration distribution will be carried out under a special scheme for migrants in both Kashmir and Jammu divisions as notified by the government on March 5. "All relief ration card

holders, irrespective of their categorisation into priority household or special category, will continue to receive 11 kg of free ration per person per month along with 1 kg of sugar as per the existing scale". Relief Commissioner Arvind Karwani said. Individuals registered with the relief department under the non-relief category, such as pensioners and classified under non-priority households, will receive ration at government-approved

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CM unveils Sher-i-Kashmir Cricket Club jersey, releases wildlife publication



JAMMU, APR 17: Minister for Youth Abdullah on Friday unveiled the jersey of Sher-i-Kashmir Cricket Club (SKCC) at a function held

here. The event was attended by Minister for Youth Services & Sports Satish Sharma, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani and members

of the club. Appreciating the club's contribution to promoting cricket, the Chief Minister said that the government is committed

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BRIEF NEWS

Over 21 kg of poppy seized in Kathua, 1 booked

JAMMU, APR 18: Jammu and Kashmir Police has seized over 21.68 kg of illegally cultivated opium (poppy) plants and booked one person in connection with the case in Kathua district, officials said.

Acting on specific information about the illicit cultivation of poppy in the Pallan area of Billawar, a police team launched an operation under the supervision of senior officers on Thursday, they said.

During the action, police seized 21.68 kg of poppy cultivation and destroyed it on the spot in the presence of an executive magistrate, following due procedure, they said. The police booked Khushi Mohd, a resident

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Police attaches properties of 2 drug peddlers

JAMMU, Apr 18: Jammu and Kashmir Police has attached properties worth more than Rs 55 lakh belonging to two drug peddlers in Rajouri and Udhampur districts as part of a crackdown on narcotics, officials said on Friday. In Rajouri, police attached a single-storey residential building worth about Rs 43.13 lakh owned by Sourab Kumar from Muradpur, an accused in multiple cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, they said. In Udhampur, police attached a Honda City car bearing a fake registration number worth around Rs 12 lakh belonging to Rakesh Kumar, a known drug peddler from Bishnah, the officials said. It was found that the car was purchased using

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CJI warns new advocates-on-record against outsourcing legal work to AI

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17: Underlining the ethical obligations of the legal profession, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Friday warned the newly qualified batch of advocates-on-record (AORs) against outsourcing legal work to artificial intelligence (AI) or other external parties.

According to the rules framed by the Supreme Court under Article 145 of the Constitution, only advocates designated as advocate-on-record can plead for a party in the top court.

The top court conducts the examination for lawyers before designating them as AORs. Addressing the AORs during their induction cere-

mony, the CJI said they are not only members of the bar but also formal "officers of the court" that the judiciary relies heavily on their diligence and that the trust placed in them is the foundation upon which they must build their reputations.

Urging that all legal drafting be performed personally by the AORs, the CJI warned against outsourcing legal work to AI or other external third parties.

"Do not treat filing as a routine exercise. Read every brief carefully," the CJI said, noting that every petition bearing an AOR's name is a direct reflection of their professional judgment and

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Statutory framework well-armed to deal with mining mafias, authorities dragging feet: SC



NEW DELHI, APR 18: The Supreme Court on Friday said the statutory framework is well-armed to deal with mining mafias, but apparently, the administrative authorities are "dragging their feet" for reasons which are not difficult to discern.

While issuing a slew of directions to deal with rampant illegal sand mining activi-

ties in the National Chambal Sanctuary, the apex court said issues arising in the matter transcend mere questions of regulatory compliance and strike at the very heart of environmental governance.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta said directions issued by it were in furtherance of

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Iran Says Strait Of Hormuz 'Completely Open' For All Commercial Vessels, Trump Welcomes Move

TEHRAN/WASHINGTON, APR 17: Iran on Friday said that the Strait of Hormuz is "completely open" for all commercial vessels, a move welcomed by US President Donald Trump. "In line with the ceasefire in Lebanon, the passage for all commercial vessels through the Strait of Hormuz is declared completely open for the remaining period of the ceasefire," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said in a post on X. The announcement of the reopening of the vital waterway by Araghchi comes a day after President Trump announced a 10-day ceasefire between Lebanon and Israel. Araghchi, however, said the ships must sail "on the coordinated route as already announced" by the Ports and Maritime Organisation of Iran. Minutes later, President Trump also shared the announcement in a post

on Truth Social. "Iran has just announced that the Strait of Hormuz is fully open and ready for full passage. Thank you!" Trump said, retweeting a post of Hormuz. Iran effectively blocked the Strait of Hormuz following its conflict with the US and Israel, crippling global energy supplies. Trump, however, said the naval blockade against Iran will remain in "full force" until Tehran reaches an agreement with the US to end the war. He said the Strait of Hormuz "is completely open and ready for business and full passage, but the naval blockade will remain in full force and effect as it pertains to Iran, only until such time as our transaction with Iran is 100% complete. This process should go very quickly in that most of the points are already negotiated." The development comes a day after

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Admin bans inflammatory social media content for 60 days, warns strict action

JAMMU, APR 18: The administration on Thursday imposed a blanket prohibition on posting or sharing communally sensitive and inflammatory content on social media platforms across Jammu district for a period of 60 days, citing threats to public order and communal harmony. It pointed out that social media platforms have been increasingly misused to spread communally provocative, false and inciting content, which has the potential to disturb public peace, cause com-

munal tensions, and endanger lives and property. "In exercise of the powers conferred under Section 163 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNS), I hereby order that posting, uploading, sharing or forwarding any content -- text, image, video, audio, meme, graphic or reel -- that promotes enmity, hatred or ill-will between communities on grounds of religion, race, caste, community, language or region is

(Contd on Pg 2)

LG Saxena Inaugurates First Water Body Made Operational Under Project Him Sarovar



LEH, APR 17: Just three weeks after his visit to Stok village on March 26, during which he had instructed the renovation of the reservoir at Phikar, Stok, the Lieutenant Governor of the UT Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena, today inaugurated the first water body under Project Him Sarovar. He also operationalised the water body by releasing glacial melt into it. The operationalisation of the first water body comes just a week after the launch of Project Him Sarovar, which envisages the creation of small water bodies across Ladakh to conserve snowmelt and ensure long-term water security in Ladakh. Project Him Sarovar was launched on April 10. During his visit to Stok, the Lieutenant Governor also announced

adopting the village to develop it as a model village that is self-reliant, culturally vibrant, and sustainable. He further informed that Stok, along with Likir, is being envisioned as a model for holistic, sustainable rural development in Ladakh. The water body has been created by restoring a heavily silted depression in the village. During his first visit to the site on March 26, the Lieutenant Governor had directed to clean, dredge and de-silt the depression. The depression was also stone-pitched by the administration with the active support of the locals to prevent the seepage of water. Spread over 1.824 sq mtr, the water body will hold nearly 35 lakh litres of water, benefiting approximately 150 hectares of land within its command area.

Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor

expressed satisfaction at witnessing the realisation of his vision, within a short span of three weeks, with the successful remodelling and operationalisation of the reservoir at Phikar, Stok. He stated that Stok village is leading the implementation of Project Him Sarovar, which will play a crucial role in ensuring water security and addressing water scarcity challenges in Ladakh. Describing it as a critical initiative, he called for active public participation to ensure its success. Saxena informed that under Phase I of the project, 50 water bodies—30 in Leh and 20 in Kargil—are proposed to be developed, covering nearly 25 percent of villages in Ladakh. He further

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IGP Kashmir Reviews Security Arrangements Ahead of Forthcoming Events

SRINAGAR, APR 17: Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, V.K. Birdi-IPS, chaired a security review meeting at PCR Kashmir to evaluate and finalize security arrangements for the forthcoming events in the Kashmir Valley. The meeting primarily focused on review of security arrangements in anticipation of the forthcoming events. Deliberations emphasized the need to further strengthen the existing security framework, and optimize deployment of personnel at critical and sensitive locations. IGP Kashmir directed officers to intensify surveillance on anti-national elements and to enhance area domination in their respective

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FROM PAGE ONE

National...

The Lieutenant Governor said that national security flows from soldiers at the border and the people residing well there. "A road reaching a border village builds not just passage but unshakable confidence in our defence. Electricity lighting a border village home offers not mere illumination but fresh hope. Employment for a border village youth transforms not only one life but the trajectory of an entire community," he said.

"My vision is clear that border village development is integral to national security, and every border village must rank among the nation's most prosperous," he added.

Shah said that since assuming responsibility for Jammu and Kashmir in August 2020, he has prioritised border villages' aspirations. "In border villages where women rise each dawn dreaming of brighter futures for their children amid challenges, where farmers toil in their soil through hardships, and where communities stand as sentinels without uniforms, we have ignited a new dawn of progress," Shaha added.

He also called upon officers to achieve 100 per cent saturation of HADP, Mission Youth, Mudra Yojana, and all welfare schemes, leaving no eligible citizen behind. "Our commitment has transformed lives, and I affirm with confidence that change is tangible in Jammu and Kashmir's border villages, where roads made smoother, electricity shining, and digital connectivity is transforming the education sector, and residents now feel integrated with India's rapid growth," the Lieutenant Governor said.

"I call upon Saniya's residents to unite in realising the Vibrant Village resolve. All officials will ensure 100 per cent saturation of every central scheme and welfare programme," the Lieutenant Governor said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor visited the exhibition on Gyan Bharatam and inspected the stalls installed by various departments and stakeholders. He launched the Vibrant Village Anthem and handed over sanction and appointment letters to beneficiaries under various schemes.

Constitution...

Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill — as both the legislations were interlinked with the Constitution Amendment Bill, Jijiju said the Opposition lost a historic opportunity to honour the country's women but the Modi government's struggle to give rights to women will continue. "We will not take rest till we ensure that the country's women get reservation in legislatures," he said. After the bill was defeated, Union Home Minister Amit Shah blamed Congress, TMC, DMK, and Samajwadi Party for not allowing its passage. He said after the bill was defeated, the opposition parties were celebrating and raising victory cries which is beyond imagination and condemnable. "Now, the women of the country will not get the 33 per cent reservation in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies, which was their right. The Congress and its allies have done this not for the first time, but repeatedly. Their mindset is neither in the interest of women nor of the country," he said in a post on X in Hindi. Shah said this "result to the women of the country will not stop here but will travel far and wide." The opposition will have to face the wrath of women not only in the 2029 Lok Sabha elections, but at every level, in every election, and at every place," he said. Earlier, in a bid to get the bill passed, while replying to the two-day long debate, Shah assured the opposition of an official amendment mentioning a 50 per cent increase in Lok Sabha seats in all states and Union territories if the opposition parties support the women's reservation bill. However, the opposition did not budge. "The women's reservation amendment bill will fall flat if the opposition does not vote in its favour. But women of the country are watching who the obstacle is," he said. The home minister alleged that the opposition parties are against women's reservation in Lok Sabha and state assemblies as well as an increase in the number of SC, ST seats. "If anyone hears this discussion carefully, one will realise that nobody opposed the constitutional amendment for women's reservation. Everyone said 'we welcome this move'. But all the members of the INDIA group repeatedly opposed women's reservation," Shah said. The home minister said the Constitution provides for periodic delimitation and that includes provisions for increasing the SC and ST seats in proportion to their growing population. "In a way, those opposing delimitation are also opposing the increase in SC and ST seats," he said in a strong rebuttal to opposition's charges of a hidden agenda behind the government's proposal of delimitation of constituencies. The home minister also said that there are 127 seats where there are more than 20 lakh voters and it goes against the spirit of the principle of "one person, one vote and one value." At some places, 45 lakh voters have one representative, and at some places, six lakh voters have one representative. As a result, the value of each vote is not equal across constituencies," he said, adding therefore there was a need for rationalisation of voters in every constituency. Shah also dismissed the claim that the Constitution amendment bill brought for providing women reservation in legislatures was aimed at dividing the country during elections. "A meeting of the Union Cabinet in 2025 decided to carry out caste enumeration along with the census exercise and the process has already started," he said. Earlier, in social media posts, Modi urged all Lok Sabha MPs to vote in favour of the bill and said the time has come to ensure that half of the nation's population receives its rightful due in decision-making. Shortly before the voting on the Constitution Amendment Bill, he urged all members not to do anything that may hurt the sentiments of women across India. "I would like to appeal to all members of Parliament... Please reflect upon your conscience, remembering the women in your own families. Please do not deprive our 'mami shakti' of new opportunities," he said. While participating in the debate, Gandhi said the Constitution amendment bill has nothing to do with women's reservation and is instead an attempt to change the country's electoral map to retain power — a "shameful act." The Congress leader said the proposal does not address women's empowerment. "This (bill) is an attempt to change the country's electoral map, using and hiding behind India's women," he said. Shah also said that a false narrative has been created that the southern states would be discriminated against during the delimitation exercise. "I want to say that the southern states have as much right over this House as the northern states do. This country should not be divided by a North-South narrative. Shortly before the voting, we take it with our heart. Those who have taken the oath with the Constitution in hand are trying to create a divide between north and south. We will not allow this," he said. Shah said some members have spread the misconception that Muslim women should get reservations but he would like to clarify that the Constitution does not accept reservations based on religion. After the bill was defeated, Rahul Gandhi said if the prime minister is serious in providing women reservation in Parliament, he should bring the 2023 law and the opposition would extend its support outrightly. "As I have said, it was an attack on the Constitution and we defeated that. We clearly said that this was not a women's bill, but an attempt to change India's electoral structure which we have stopped," he said.

Dr Jitendra...

said the awards system has been reoriented away from individual profiling to performance linked to flagship programmes and the resolution of complex challenges at the district level, marking a shift towards results-based evaluation in governance. Highlighting the scale of participation, the Minister said the week-long initiative

reoriented over 3.18 crore course completions, with nearly 47 lakh government employees taking part. Of these, more than 33 lakh completed the prescribed four hours of learning. He noted that the activity was nearly eight times higher than the earlier National Learning Week, reflecting both scale and a behavioural shift towards continuous learning in government.

Describing "SADHANA Saptah" as a "people-driven movement", Dr. Jitendra Singh said the initiative has fostered a culture where officials across cadres are engaging in learning out of professional commitment rather than compulsion, contributing to what he termed a broader shift towards professional pride and self-improvement within the civil services. The Minister emphasised that the initiative has been notably inclusive, with strong participation from Group C and D employees and frontline functionaries, alongside senior officers. This, he said, reinforces the idea that capacity building must cut across hierarchies and directly strengthen service delivery and public trust.

Dr. Jitendra Singh also underlined the role of States and Union Territories, noting their leadership and active involvement in driving participation, particularly at the grassroots level where the impact of improved skills is immediately visible in citizen-facing services. Referring to institutional mechanisms, he highlighted the contribution of the Capacity Building Commission as a relatively new initiative that has enabled wider outreach and collaboration, including engagement with the private sector, helping scale up capacity-building efforts across the system.

The Minister said the government is also expanding the scope of training to new domains, including science administrators and academicians, with similar orientation efforts being explored for parliamentarians and ministers, reflecting a broader approach to preparing institutions for evolving governance demands.

On technology, Dr. Jitendra Singh described artificial intelligence and digital tools as key enablers of future-ready governance, noting that government employees are increasingly adopting emerging competencies to keep pace with change. At the same time, he cautioned that technology must complement human judgement, stressing that integrity remains central to public service. The Minister also pointed to the evolution of the government's learning platform from a "primitive" beginning into a widely used interface, supporting large-scale participation and continuous engagement across departments.

Congratulating the awardees, including Ministers, States, training institutions and ecosystem partners, Dr. Jitendra Singh said such recognition sets benchmarks for the broader Mission Karmayogi framework and reinforces the need to carry forward the spirit of continuous learning as an integral part of governance. The developments under the Centre's ongoing efforts to institutionalise capacity building as a continuous process, linking learning with governance performance while preparing civil services for emerging technological and administrative challenges.

J&K To...

rates as per their entitlement under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), the official said. The government has already made necessary amendments to the Jammu and Kashmir Food Security Rules, 2021, and the Targeted Public Distribution System (Control) Order, to integrate migrant ration cards with the NFSA database. "This integration enables migrants to avail benefits under various government welfare schemes," the relief commissioner said.

Karwani also said that according to the government order, the existing scale of ration distribution and procedures related to inclusion, deletion, bifurcation, conversion and corrections in ration cards will continue as per the norms of the relief department.

The department has also issued multiple public notices and awareness jingles to inform the beneficiaries about the scheme. The scheme will be launched formally in Jammu at 11 am on April 18.

CM unveils...

to extending all possible support to encourage sports activities and nurture young talent across Jammu and Kashmir. On the occasion, SC President Aman Chhokra highlighted the club's achievements, noting that it has participated in and won several tournaments. He added that the club is playing a positive role in engaging youth and steering them away from negative influences such as drug abuse by channelizing their energy into sports.

Earlier, the Chief Minister also launched a wildlife magazine titled Checklist of Mammals of Jammu and Kashmir, India. A delegation of wildlife ecologists led by Muzaffar Kichloo briefed him on their ongoing and upcoming projects.

The Chief Minister commended their efforts and emphasized the importance of scientific research and conservation in preserving the region's rich biodiversity.

CJL warns...

integrity. He underlined that the role of an AoR is a "significant milestone" that carries the weight of being the primary point of responsibility between litigants and the Supreme Court. To ensure the highest standards of legal practice, CJL Kant highlighted several critical mandates. Advocates must ensure that pleadings are properly drafted, facts are meticulously verified and legal grounds remain sound. He also cautioned the AoR against filing matters based solely on instructions from other counsel without performing their own due diligence.

The CJL said key pillars for their practice include a conduct marked by honesty, thorough preparation and deep respect for the judicial institution, besides maintaining punctuality and clarity in their submissions to effectively assist the court. He said that while seniority is a product of time, professional credibility must be established from the very first day.

Iran Says...

Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir held talks with top Iranian leadership in Tehran as part of Islamabad's efforts to resolve the conflict between the US and Iran. Munir, who led a high-level political-security delegation to Iran, met Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf and top Revolutionary Guards commanders on Thursday. Ghalibaf, who had led the Iranian delegation to Pakistan for talks with the US over the weekend, has urged the US to commit to any peace agreement in Lebanon. Munir, the first foreign military leader to visit Tehran since a two-week ceasefire was agreed between Iran and the US last week, also visited the Khatam al-Anbeya Central Headquarters of the Revolutionary Guards, where he met with its commander, according to Iran's official IRNA news agency.

During the meeting, he discussed with the commander of the IRGC the steps taken under the framework for ending the war and their recent talks in Tehran. The two sides discussed the situation in the region and the prospects for peace and stability. Iranian official media reported.

Munir stressed that ongoing efforts to end the war should continue. Iranian media had reported that the Pakistani delegation's visit was to deliver a US message to the Iranian leadership and to plan the next round of negotiations. Meanwhile, Pakistan has started preparing to host the second round of high-stakes talks between the US and Iran during the next week. The US and Iran held rare direct talks over the weekend, aimed at ending their conflict, but the talks ended early Sunday without any agreement. Official sources in Pakistan on Friday said a feverish diplomatic

activity followed to bring the two sides back to the negotiating table. It was met with success as both continue to observe the temporary two-week ceasefire, allowing Pakistan to relaunch its mediatory peace talks.

After working behind the scenes, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif embarked on a tri-nation tour on Wednesday, while Field Marshal Munir travelled to Tehran. Shehbaz, after discussion with the Saudi and Qatar leaders, on Thursday night reached Turkey, where he met Senior Adviser to the US President for Arab and African Affairs Masoud Boulos on Friday.

During the meeting in Antalya, PM Shehbaz and Boulos discussed "current regional developments, including Pakistan's peace efforts that led to the ceasefire as well as the historic Islamabad Talks," the prime minister's office said. According to officials in Islamabad, preparations for the second round of talks have "started in Islamabad and neighbouring Rawalpindi as thousands of police and paramilitary personnel have started coming from other provinces".

During the first round of talks, more than 10,000 security personnel were deployed. There are also reports that transport companies have been approached by the Islamabad and Rawalpindi districts officials to inform them that traffic coming from other cities or leaving the twin cities may face drastic restrictions.

According to a message shared on social media, such restrictions, once imposed, may continue until the end of next week. It urged citizens to avoid unnecessary travel during the next week or plan well in advance. The chances of a peace deal got further support when President Trump told reporters on Thursday that he may travel to Islamabad if a final agreement with Iran is signed there, while claiming that Tehran has accepted "almost everything" currently under negotiation.

"If a deal is signed in Islamabad, I may go... They want me," he told the reporters on the White House lawn before departing for Nevada and Arizona.

Trump expressed optimism about Pakistan-led diplomatic efforts to end hostilities and secure a settlement before the current ceasefire expires, indicating that he would extend it, although he suggested such a move might not be necessary if a deal is reached in time. The conflict began after the US and Israel launched attacks on Iran on February 28, killing Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and several top commanders.

The ceasefire between the US and Iran would expire on April 21. Adm. bans...

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"If a deal is signed in Islamabad, I may go... They want me," he told the reporters on the White House lawn before departing for Nevada and Arizona. Trump expressed optimism about Pakistan-led diplomatic efforts to end hostilities and secure a settlement before the current ceasefire expires, indicating that he would extend it, although he suggested such a move might not be necessary if a deal is reached in time. The conflict began after the US and Israel launched attacks on Iran on February 28, killing Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and several top commanders.

The ceasefire between the US and Iran would expire on April 21. Adm. bans...

strictly prohibited within the territorial jurisdiction of district Jammu." District Magistrate Dr Rakesh Minhas said.

said. It directed these three states to ensure installation of high-resolution, Wi-Fi-enabled CCTV cameras, mounted on appropriately elevated poles/masts, at all routes frequently used for illegal sand mining as well as along vulnerable stretches of river where such activities are prevalent.

It directed authorities to undertake a detailed assessment with regard to the positioning and placement of CCTV cameras, in consultation with the Central Empowered Committee, to ensure that installation was carried out in a manner that minimises ecological disturbance and complies with all applicable environmental regulations.

The bench said in the event of detection of any instance of illegal mining or allied unlawful activity, the concerned officer shall be under an obligation to initiate prompt action in accordance with law, including mobilisation of enforcement teams and initiation of necessary legal proceedings.

It directed these states to place on record by May 11 a detailed report indicating the feasibility of establishing dedicated control rooms in each district falling within or adjoining the sanctuary, wherein live CCTV feeds and data collected through surveillance mechanisms may be centrally monitored and analysed.

"The report shall also include the proposed framework for coordination between the concerned departments and enforcement agencies, so as to ensure that timely and effective action is taken in accordance with law on the basis of such real-time inputs," it said.

It said such concerns mechanisms so as to effectively address situations across the states, shall initiate appropriate, time-bound proceedings for assessment, imposition and recovery of environmental compensation from all violators, strictly in accordance with the "polluter pays" principle.

Such exercise shall be undertaken in a scientific, transparent and objective manner, having due regard to the extent of environmental degradation, and shall be effectively enforced to serve both compensatory and deterrent purposes," it said.

The bench said that at all checkpoints, the officers deployed shall be provided with adequate and modern equipment, including protective gear, communication devices, surveillance aids and necessary arms to ensure that they are fully equipped to effectively deal with unlawful and potentially dangerous illegal mining activities.

It directed these states to ensure that such personnel are appropriately trained and supported so that they can respond swiftly and efficiently to any emergent situation arising at such checkpoints.

The bench said these states, in close coordination with one another, would formulate and implement a uniform standard operating procedure (SOP) to effectively deal with incidents involving illegal sand mining, particularly those involving violent or armed resistance by persons engaged in such activities.

It said the SOP shall provide for robust inter-state coordination and communication mechanisms so as to effectively address situations having inter-state and cross-border ramifications and to ensure seamless enforcement across territorial boundaries.

"Any dereliction of duty, negligence, inaction, or failure to comply with the directions of this court shall be viewed with utmost seriousness," it said.

It directed these states to place on record by May 11, affidavits indicating the progress made in compliance with the directions, along with a detailed plan of action outlining the further steps proposed to be undertaken and timelines for achieving effective compliance with the directives.

LG Saxena...

expressed optimism that nearly 50 percent of villages would be covered under Project Him Sarovar within a year. Emphasising the importance of scientific water management, he highlighted the need for innovative and sustainable solutions to address the growing challenges of climate change and water scarcity in the region. He stated that the project will serve as a shield against climate change while ensuring water security, and will stand as a model of convergence involving government departments, armed forces, and local communities.

Announcing the adoption of Stok Village, the Lieutenant Governor remarked that he now considered himself a member of the village and assured full support for its sustainable and inclusive development. He emphasised that with active community participation, Stok can be developed into a premier tourist destination. Saxena also launched work on block-paving the roads in Stok and noted that the proposed infrastructure improvements, including paving main roads with blocks on both sides, would enhance the village's aesthetic appeal and provide a clean, dust-free environment for visitors.

He further stated that tourists visiting Stok should return with a memorable and enriching experience of Ladakhi hospitality, emphasising the importance of treating visitors as part of the community. He outlined key focus areas for developing Stok as a model village, including promoting organic farming, harnessing solar energy, and strengthening tourism infrastructure.

IGP Kashmir...

jurisdictions. He stressed the necessity of strengthening security arrangements around vulnerable installations including prominent tourist destinations, to ensure a safe and secure environment for visitors. He further emphasised strict surveillance along inter-district boundaries to prevent any suspicious movement. Special directions were issued regarding effective traffic management in Srinagar city, with instructions to implement a comprehensive traffic plan aimed at easing congestion, ensuring smooth vehicular movement, and minimizing inconvenience to the public.

IGP Kashmir also reviewed preparedness related to Hajj arrangements, directing officers to ensure adequate security, facilitation, and coordination at all designated points to guarantee the safe and orderly movement of pilgrims. VK Biri instructed district heads to maintain strict vigilance over social media platforms to curb the spread of misinformation that could adversely impact public safety and order. IGP Kashmir also called for intensified cordon and search operations, particularly in sensitive areas across the Valley and along National Highways. The meeting concluded with a firm resolve to maintain the highest standards of preparedness, coordination, and responsiveness to ensure the smooth and successful conduct of all forthcoming events. The meeting was attended by IG CRPF Srinagar Sector, IG CRPF KOS, Additional Commissioner SB Srinagar, DSG of CRPF (North Srinagar & KOS), DIG Traffic Kashmir, DIG CRR, DIG SKR, DIG BSF Ops; PIR, DIG SSB Srinagar, DIG ITBP, All District SSP of Kashmir Zone; Assistant Director SIB Srinagar; Colonel GS 15 Corps; SSP of PCR Kashmir, Railfco Kullu Kashmir, Railways Kashmir, Security Officer Kashmir, SDRP 1st Bn Srinagar, CID CI Kashmir, APCR, Traffic City Srinagar and other senior officers.

Over 21...

of Pallas in Kullu's Billawar Tehsil. A case under has been registered at police station Billawar and further investigation is underway.

Police...

proceeds of narcotics trafficking, they said. The actions were part of the "Nasha Mukh Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan" to curb drug trafficking and dismantle the financial networks of those involved in it, the officials said.



Omar Govt Turning Tide in Jammu with new development momentum: Rattan Lal Gupta

Says, "BJP Turned Blind Eye to Jammu's Suffering, Misused Public Mandate"

Jammu, April 17: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Provincial President (Jammu) Rattan Lal Gupta on Thursday launched a sharp attack on the Bharatiya Janata Party, asserting that the party is rapidly losing ground in Jammu as people have begun to see through what he described as its 'years of hollow promises, neglect, and political opportunism.' Interacting with a public deputation from Ward No. 32, Gole Gujral, Talab Tillo Jammu, led by Sardar Harcharan Singh, Gupta said that the BJP's track record in Jammu stands exposed. "For years, the BJP sought votes in the name of development and regional aspirations, but once in power—whether in local bodies, legislature, or even



during direct rule—they abandoned Jammu and its people," he said. District President Jammu Urban Chandar Mohan Sharma was also present on the occasion. Gupta accused the BJP of turning a blind eye to pressing civic and urban challenges, including traffic congestion, poor transportation systems, environmental degradation, waste management failures, faulty drainage leading to flooding, recurring power outages, dilapidated roads, and the lack of

affordable housing. "Not a single concrete step was taken. No upgradation, no augmentation, just empty slogans and blame games," he remarked. He further alleged that the BJP "misused the mandate of the people of Jammu," adding that even during times of crisis, its representatives were missing from the ground. "During the recent floods, it was only the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and his cabinet colleagues who were seen actively responding. BJP

MLAs were nowhere to be found," he said. Taking aim at the party's broader governance record, Gupta said that despite having power at the Centre and previously being part of the government in Jammu and Kashmir, the BJP failed to deliver on urban development or preserve the region's identity. "Instead of working for the people, they focused on creating divisions. Today, our temples are in disrepair, heritage is crumbling, and key public institutions are weakening. This is the legacy of BJP's governance," he added. Gupta said the political mood in Jammu is now shifting decisively. "People are no longer willing to be misled on the basis of region or religion. They have understood the reality and are ready to hold the BJP

accountable for its failures," he asserted. Highlighting the efforts of the current administration, Gupta said that the government led by Omar Abdullah is working with commitment to reverse the developmental setbacks of the past decade. "There is a visible change on the ground. The Chief Minister and his team are accessible, responsive, and focused on real governance. Jammu is finally witnessing leadership that listens and acts," he said. He acknowledged that the challenges inherited are substantial. "The scale of neglect over the past 10-11 years cannot be corrected overnight, but the government is making steady and meaningful progress through focused and sustained efforts," he added.

"Amarnath Yatra set to break all records" Devotees must adhere to guidelines issued by SASB: Raman Suri

Jammu, April 17: Senior Raman Suri, a prominent leader of the Bharatiya Janata Party, today described the annual Amarnath Yatra as a deeply spiritual and divine experience that every devotee should undertake at least once in their lifetime. Highlighting the unprecedented enthusiasm among pilgrims, he expressed strong confidence that this year's Yatra will surpass all previous records especially when lakhs of devotees have already registered themselves through hundreds of designated bank branches across the country ever since the registration process commenced. Raman Suri said that this reflects devotees' unflinching faith and eagerness to undertake the sacred Amarnath Yatra. He said, "The massive response witnessed during the initial



days of registration itself speaks volumes about the devotion of devotees from across the country." "This growing participation is a testament to the spiritual connection people have with the holy cave shrine," he stated. He further noted that the extended duration of the Yatra this year will play a crucial role in accommodating a larger number of pilgrims. "With more days allocated for the pilgrimage, we are optimistic that a record-breaking number of devotees will pay obeisance at the

holy shrine. The enthusiasm this year is unprecedented," he added. Emphasizing the transformation of Jammu Kashmir into a hub of spiritual tourism, Raman Suri said that continuous improvements in infrastructure, enhanced road connectivity, and better facilities have made the Yatra more accessible than ever before. "Facilities such as improved lodging arrangements, medical services, and helicopter services have significantly eased the journey for pilgrims, encouraging greater participation," he said. Raman Suri also urged all devotees to strictly adhere to the guidelines issued by the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board (SASB). "It is imperative for all pilgrims to follow safety protocols and instructions laid down by the authorities.

No Shortage of Gas in Reasi District; Public Cooperation Needed: Abdul Qudir Kundra

Reasi, Apr 17: Eminent Dogri Writer and Social Activist Abdul Qudir Kundra has stated that there is no shortage of gas in Reasi district, and the current situation requires mutual cooperation between the public and the gas company. He appealed to people from all sections of society to remain patient and extend their support during this time. He explained that over the past few days, the process of gas cylinder distribution has slowed down due to the implementation of the OTP-based delivery system. As a result, people are experiencing delays, leading to a perception that there is a shortage of gas.



Referring to the statement of HP Gas agency manager Mr. Romail Singh, Kundra clarified that the company has assured there is no deficiency in gas supply. He emphasized that the situation will gradually improve, and people are requested to remain calm. The district administration is also making continuous

efforts to resolve the issue and ensure smoother delivery in the coming days. Kundra further added that he has personally listened to the concerns of the public. At the same time, employees of the gas company are also facing challenges due to the newly introduced OTP system, which has caused temporary inconvenience for everyone. The company management has informed that gas delivery is currently being carried out smoothly in town areas. Efforts are underway to restore normal supply in rural areas as well, and within a few days, services will be streamlined there too.

NC nominated Ward Presidents & Ward Incharges 76 Jammu East Constituency of Jammu Municipal Corporation

Jammu April 17: With the approval of the Provincial President Jammu Mr Rattan Lal Gupta, Mr Chandar Mohan Sharma District President Jammu Urban has nominated the following Ward Presidents & Ward Incharges 76-Jammu East Assembly Constituency. On the recommendation of Mr Ashwani Charak Block President Jammu East, The list of all the Wards Presidents & Ward Incharges is as under:-
Mr Puraan Chand Ward No 1 Panjithirhi, Mr Arun Thothla Ward No 2 Jhullaka Mohalla, Mr Sanjay Suri Ward No 4

Bhabriani Kali Jani, Mr Moshin Salaria Ward No 5 Talab Khatikan, Mr Haji Umar Din Ward No 6 Gujral Nagar, Mr Sanjay Kumar Ward No 7 Kanji House, Mr Narinder Bhagat Ward No 8 Dogra Hall, Mr Shukar Ahmad Ward No 9 Ustaad Mohalla, Mr Prabhat Kapai Ward No 11 Mohalla Malhotriani, Mr Rakesh Kumar Ward No 14 Bhagwati Nagar, Mr Jugal Khullar Ward No 15 Partargah, Mrs Veena Ward No 16 New Plot, Mr Rajan Kumar Ward No 17 Ambphalla, Mr Yash Kumar Ward No 18 Sarwal Colony, Mr Taraseem Mehra Ward

No 19 Chand Nagar and Mr Jamat Ali Ward No 71 Tawi Vihar as Ward Presidents.
Mr Ayudhya Sharma Ward No 1 Panjithirhi, Mr Arun Thothla Ward No 2 Jhullaka Mohalla, Mr Sanjay Suri Ward No 4 Bhabriani Kali Jani, Mr Raja Naveed Ward No 5 Talab Khatikan, Mr Haji Umar Din Ward No 6 Gujral Nagar, Mrs Sapna Gill Ward No 7 Kanji House, Dr Gorav Ward No 8 Dogra Hall, Mr Ashwani Charak Ward No 9 Ustaad Mohalla, Mr Prabhat Kapai Ward No 11 Mohalla Malhotriani, Mr Rakesh Kumar Ward No 14

Bhagwati Nagar, Mr Parshant Sharma Ward No 15 Partargah, Mr Som Raj Taroch Ward No 16 New Plot, Mr Rajan Kumar Ward No 17 Ambphalla, Dr Vikas Ward No 18 Sarwal Colony, Mr Taraseem Mehra Ward No 19 Chand Nagar and Mrs Shama Akhtar Ward No 71 Tawi Vihar as Ward Incharges.
Mr Rattan Lal Gupta expressed full confidence that the newly nominated Ward Presidents and Ward Incharges will deliver their best performance in their respected wards in the forthcoming Urban

Local Bodies elections of Jammu Municipal Corporation. He hoped that each ward President shall work tirelessly to connect with the people, address local issues, and convey the achievements and welfare initiatives of the Omar led Government to every household. He urged all party workers to support the Ward Presidents, Ward Incharges and ensure the party's message of good governance and development reaches every corner of the Jammu city which shall be made as modern and beautiful city.

Director Agriculture Jammu Inspects S.M. Farm Lamberi; Reviews Ongoing Agricultural Activities

Jammu, April 17: Director Agriculture Jammu, Sh. Anil Gupta, along with Joint Director Agriculture (Extension), Sh. Sanjay Anand, today visited the Seed Multiplication (S.M.) Farm Lamberi in District Rajouri and conducted a detailed inspection of the ongoing agricultural activities at the farm. During the visit, Director Agriculture undertook a comprehensive review of ongoing developmental works, farm operations, with particular focus on cropping patterns, seed production activities, and the agricultural practices being followed. He assessed the status of seasonal crops and emphasized the importance of adopting improved and scientific methods of cultivation to enhance productivity and maintain quality standards in seed multiplication. Director Sh. Anil Gupta also



reviewed the utilization of available land resources and stressed the need for optimal planning to maximize output from the farm. He interacted with the ADO (Vegetables), Rajouri, Sh. Rajinder Singh Salathia and field staff, and took stock of the progress of ongoing

works. He directed the concerned officers to ensure timely execution of all farm activities and effective implementation of departmental programmes at the grassroots level. Sh. Anil Gupta highlighted the crucial role of seed multiplication

farms in strengthening the agricultural sector and ensuring the availability of quality seeds to farmers. He urged the field staff to maintain close monitoring of farm activities and adopt best management practices for achieving better results. Earlier, the Director Agriculture Jammu Sh. Anil Gupta also visited Sub-Division Akhnoor along with Joint Director Agriculture (Extension), Sh. Sanjay Anand. During the visit, he chaired a review meeting to assess the physical and financial progress of various ongoing departmental schemes. The meeting was attended by Sh. Rajesh Langer ASCO Akhnoor, Sh. Rajan Sharma SDAO Akhnoor SMS-SDL, and other officers and field functionaries of the Agriculture Department. Emphasis was laid on timely implementation of schemes and achieving targets efficiently.

Ramakrishna Mission Held a Free Neurology Medical Camp

JAMMU, Apr 17: The Ramakrishna Mission Medical Centre Jammu successfully organized a one-day Free Neurology Medical Camp at the Mission Hospital in Udhewala Jammu. The camp featured Dr. Susheel Razdan, Neurologist; Dr. K.K. Pandita, Physician and Dr. Rajni Razdan, Gynaecologist. The health camp provided a comprehensive range of free medical services, including consultations with Neurologist, Gynecologist, Dental Surgeons, Allopathy Physicians and Physiotherapist. A total of 112 patients benefited from the expertise of 11 doctors at this camp. 52 no. of



patients were benefited with Various Services including ECG, X-ray, Dental, Physiotherapy, Ultrasound, pathology Etc. A Full Body Check-up covering 65 parameters, including CBC, LFT, KFT, Lipid profile, BSE, Urine tests, and thyroid function tests (T3, T4, TSH), was

available for a nominal fee of Rs. 1200, a substantial discount from the usual price of Rs. 2300. This camp was a part of Ramakrishna Mission Medical Centre's ongoing commitment to serving the community and providing accessible healthcare services to all.

BSP Raises Serious Concern Over Collapse of Education System in J&K

Darshan Rana Demands Immediate Filling of Vacant Posts
Jammu, April 17: Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) Jammu and Kashmir UT President Darshan Rana has expressed grave concern over the alarming condition of the education sector in the Union Territory, where a large number of key administrative and teaching posts are lying vacant. In a statement issued today, Darshan Rana said that more than 15 posts of Chief Education Officers (CEOs) and equivalent are vacant, while around 50 educational zones, 134 Government Higher Secondary Schools and 167 High Schools are functioning without heads. He termed the situation as "extremely unfortunate and dangerous for the future of students." He further stated that due to negligence, delay in decision-making, and administrative failure, nearly 35 to 50 percent posts of lecturers and teachers are lying vacant in many schools. "This has badly affected the quality of education and academic environment, especially in rural areas where students depend entirely on government institutions," he added.

Darshan Rana also criticized the practice of assigning multiple charges to a single officer, saying that officers are handling double and even triple responsibilities, which is making the system ineffective and weak. "One officer managing multiple institutions is nothing but mockery of the education system," he said. He warned that if immediate corrective measures are not taken, the education system in Jammu and Kashmir may face complete collapse, leaving thousands of students without proper guidance and learning opportunities. The BSP leader demanded that the government should immediately fill all vacant posts of CEOs, Principals, and Headmasters Expedite recruitment of teachers and lecturers Ensure accountability and timely administrative action Strengthen the education system to safeguard the future of students Darshan Rana reiterated that BSP stands committed to protecting the rights of students and will continue to raise its voice against injustice and administrative failure.

Dr. Ritu Singh Leads Nasha Mukti J&K Initiative at DPS Jammu

Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar Graces as Chief Guest
Jammu, Apr 17: Under the able guidance and visionary leadership of Kunwarani Dr. Ritu Singh Ji, Hon'ble Founder and Pro Vice Chairperson of DPS Jammu, Nagbani, and Katra, Delhi Public School, Jammu, organised a Special Assembly on "Nasha Mukti Jammu & Kashmir Pledge Campaign" here today, aligned with the flagship Nasha Mukti Abhiyan led by the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of J&K. The programme was graced by Shri Ramesh Kumar (IAS), Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, as the Chief Guest. The Chief Guest was accorded a warm and ceremonial welcome with a reception by the school



band and a traditional tilak. The programme commenced with the auspicious lighting of the ceremonial lamp, invoking divine blessings for the noble cause. Delivering an impactful address, Shri Ramesh Kumar (IAS) administered the Nasha Mukti Bharat Pledge to the

students and staff. He sensitised the gathering about the causes and far-reaching consequences of substance abuse, emphasising that addiction adversely affects health, families, careers, and society at large. He highlighted practical strategies to combat stress and prevent substance abuse, including

maintaining discipline, engaging in sports and creative pursuits, seeking guidance from mentors and family, and building emotional resilience. Urging students to remain vigilant and responsible, he encouraged them to actively spread awareness and make informed life choices. The Divisional Commissioner also appreciated the commendable efforts of the DPS fraternity, lauding the students for their awareness, confidence, and commitment, and encouraging them to continue serving as agents of positive change. In her welcome address, Kunwarani Dr. Ritu Singh Ji emphasised that the vision of a Nasha Mukti J&K is a shared societal responsibility. Reflecting the school's guiding philosophy of "Service Before Self," she highlighted the importance of nurturing responsible, aware, and compassionate citizens. She urged students to uphold strong values, make wise choices, and actively contribute towards building a healthier, drug-free society. She also appreciated the collective efforts of students and staff in achieving milestones of excellence. In a remarkable show of collective commitment, around 5,000 students, their parents, and members of the teaching and administrative staff of DPS Jammu signed pledges in support of the Nasha Mukti campaign, significantly amplifying

Symposium on Road Safety Awareness at GCW Udhampur

UDHAMPUR APRIL 17, 2026: In a significant move to curb road mishappenings and instill traffic discipline among the youth, the Road Safety Club, Government College for Women (GCW) Udhampur, in collaboration with the IQAC organized a comprehensive Symposium on Road Safety Awareness program today. The event held in the college's multipurpose hall, saw enthusiastic participation from students and faculty members of the college. The symposium was graced by Dr. Nalini Pathania, Principal of GCW Udhampur, who served as the Chief Guest of the program. The event commenced with a formal welcome address by the Nodal Officer of the Road Safety Club, Prof. Pardeep Singh who highlighted the alarming statistics of road-related fatalities in the region and the urgent need for behavioral change among young commuters. During the symposium, students presented well-researched arguments and emotional appeals



regarding traffic safety. After a rigorous evaluation by a panel of judges based on content, delivery, and impact, the winners were announced. Sonia Devi of semester 8th secured the prestigious First Position for her compelling discourse on the psychology of defensive driving. Renu followed the Second Position with an insightful presentation on the legal implications of traffic violations, while Manisha clinched the Third Position among ten participants. In her keynote address, Chief Guest Dr. Nalini Pathania Principal of the college lauded the participants for their depth of knowledge and passion. She remarked, "Road safety is not merely a set of rules but a culture of respect for one's own life and the lives of others. Our students are the most effective change-makers in society. By becoming 'Road Safety Ambassadors', they can carry this vital message from this campus to every household in Udhampur. She further emphasized that adhering to speed limits, avoiding the use of mobile phones while driving, and wearing ISI-marked helmets are non-negotiable practices for a civilized society. In the end of the program, Certificates of Participation was given to the participants and refreshment was distributed to all the students who have attended the program. The event concluded with a formal vote of thanks by Mr. Yash Kumar from Dept. of Music GCW Udhampur who expressed gratitude to all staff members and students for their active participation on this important occasion. The program was attended by the senior-most faculty including Dr. Monika Gupta, Dr. Mool Raj, Dr. Ajay Sharma, Dr. Ravinder Kumar, Dr. Om Parkash, Prof. Yash Paul, Dr. Mukesh Sharma, Dr. Sanjay Kumar, Dr. Mukteshi Sharma, Prof. Sufian Chaudhary, Dr. Ravi Kumar and around Hundred students of college.

Kunwarani Dr. Ritu Singh Appoints Mahant Rohit Shastri as Advisor to Shri Raghunath ji ki Jammu Aarti Sanstha

Jammu, Apr 17:

Today marks a significant and proud milestone in the history of Shri Raghunath ji ki Jammu Aarti Sanstha, as the organization formally announced the appointment of renowned scholar, eminent spiritual thinker, and dedicated social worker Mahant Rohit Shastri Ji as its Advisor.



This decision has been made on the recommendation of the Chairperson, Kunwarani Dr. Ritu Singh, reflecting the institution's visionary leadership. On this occasion, Vice Chairperson Baldev Khullar lauded that Mahant Rohit Shastri Ji has been consistently working towards the preservation and promotion of Devvani Sanskrit in the region. With his profound knowledge of astrology, deep understanding of Vedic traditions, and spiritual discipline, he has established a distinct identity in society. His life has been devoted to social service, cultural awakening, and the preservation of Vedic heritage. He further added that under the guidance of Mahant Rohit Shastri Ji, religious awareness will gain renewed momentum, and positivity, moral values, and cultural ethos will be further strengthened in society. His experience and

vision will prove instrumental in taking the institution to greater heights. The core objective of Jammu Aarti Sanstha is to promote religious, cultural, and spiritual activities while fostering moral values in society. The organization firmly believes that Mahant Rohit Shastri Ji, guidance of Mahant Rohit Shastri Ji, these goals will be achieved more effectively, and social welfare initiatives will gain new momentum.

Awareness Camp on New Criminal Laws Organized at GDC Ramgarh

Ramgarh, April 17: Government Degree College, Ramgarh, in collaboration with District Police Samba, organized an awareness camp on the recently introduced three new criminal laws. The programme was conducted by the NSS Unit 'Prabha' and NCORD Cell of the college under the supervision of Principal, Prof. (Dr.) Meeru Abrol and was coordinated by NSS Programme Officer Dr. Snobor, along with the support of other faculty members of the college. The awareness camp aimed to sensitize students and staff about the key provisions and significance of the newly enacted criminal laws, namely the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), 2023, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, and Bharatiya Sakshya Adhinyam (BSA), 2023, which have replaced the earlier Indian Penal Code (IPC), Code of



Criminal Procedure (CrPC), and Indian Evidence Act respectively. DSP Sh. Arun Jamwal, SDPO Vijaypur, Inspector Ravi Singh Parihar, Incharge Police Station Ramgarh and PSI Anshul Sharma, Incharge BPP Swankha graced the occasion as chief guests. The entire event was conducted under the expert supervision of worthy Principal GDC Samba, Prof. (Dr.) Nirlape Kour. She emphasized the health risks associated with excessive consumption of junk and packaged food. She urged students to adopt healthy eating habits and include nutritious, home-cooked meals in their daily routine for better physical and mental well-being. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation of school students (age 4-13 years) and NSS volunteers. The event was also attended by faculty of GHS balore. NSS volunteer

GDC Samba NSS Unit conducts Awareness session on Hazards of Junk and Packaged Food

Samba, April 17: The National Service Scheme (NSS) unit 'maitri' of GDC Samba conducted an awareness session on Hazards of Junk and Packaged Food under 8th edition of Poshan Pakhwada 2026 at govt. High school Balore. Poshan pakhwada is an initiative of Ministry of women and Child development. The entire event was conducted under the expert supervision of worthy Principal GDC Samba, Prof. (Dr.) Nirlape Kour. She emphasized the health risks associated with excessive consumption of junk and packaged food. She urged students to adopt healthy eating habits and include nutritious, home-cooked meals in their daily routine for better physical and mental well-being. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation of school students (age 4-13 years) and NSS volunteers. The event was also attended by faculty of GHS balore. NSS volunteer



Pratika of semester IV interacted with the students and presented a detailed presentation highlighting the long-term effects of unhealthy dietary choices such as obesity, diabetes, and weakened immunity. NSS Programme Officer, Prof. Babita Kumari (NSS PO) served as a key speaker during the session. Her lecture focused on Practical tips on how to

label a food or beverage as junk based on its ingredients and nutritional content. She also highlighted the long-term medical risks and physiological disorders associated with consuming processed and packaged foods and defining clear differences between traditional, home-cooked diets and modern processed alternatives.

GDC Khour organized debate and quiz competition on NashaMukt Bharat Abhiyan

Khaur, April 17: The College Wellbeing and Anti Substance Cell (CWASC) in coordination with NCC Wing of GDC Khour organized a debate and quiz competition on NashaMukt Bharat Abhiyan under the patronage of Prof. Dr. T.K. Sharma, principal GDC Khour. The objective of the event was to understand facts and take responsibility for a drug free society. The event was started by Prof. Shivani Sharma, Nodal Officer CWASC with a briefing of rules and regulations of the debate and quiz competition. The events were conducted on theme "Responsibility and Action for a Drug Free India" to sensitize the students about the harmful effects of substance abuse and role of youth in building a drug free nation. Five teams participated in the quiz competition, while in Team A comprising of Cdt. RashidKahajuria and Cdt. Rishu Bharti emerged as winner. In the debate competition, A total 15 students participated and Cadet Arvind Sharma secured 1st Position for his arguments on preventive strategies of substance abuse. Prof. (Dr.) T. K. Sharma, Principal GDC Khour appreciated the efforts of CWASC and also sensitized the students about substance abuse and role of youth in building a drug free nation.

Label a food or beverage as junk based on its ingredients and nutritional content. She also highlighted the long-term medical risks and physiological disorders associated with consuming processed and packaged foods and defining clear differences between traditional, home-cooked diets and modern processed alternatives.

Divine Satsang in Kathua highlights essence of Sanatan Dharma and spiritual living

Kathua: A deeply spiritual and uplifting atmosphere enveloped Ward No. 7, Kathua, where Smt. Savita Jamwal and Shri Balram Singh Jamwal organized a grand Divya Satsang Darbar at their residence on the auspicious occasion of the wedding celebrations of their beloved son, Aditya Singh Jamwal. The sacred event was graced by revered Swami Shri Umeshchandra Ji Maharaj of Raghunath Dham, Bhojpur, whose divine presence and soulful discourses captivated the gathering. Devotees from Kathua and adjoining areas gathered in large numbers to partake in the spiritual congregation, immersing themselves in devotional bhajans and enlightening



teachings. In his profound address, Swami Ji elaborated extensively on the significance of Sanatan Dharma, describing it as the eternal path that upholds truth (satya), righteousness (dharma), compassion (karuna), and self-realization. He emphasized that Sanatan Dharma is not merely a religion but a way of life that guides humanity towards harmony with nature, society, and the divine. Highlighting the importance of satsang within Sanatan Dharma, Swami Ji stated that satsang acts as a powerful medium to connect individuals with higher consciousness and divine wisdom. He explained that in today's era of material distractions and moral challenges, satsang serves as a guiding light, helping individuals cultivate inner peace, discipline, and spiritual awareness. It fosters positive thinking, ethical conduct, and strengthens faith in divine principles. Swami Ji further emphasized that Sanatan Dharma teaches universal values of unity, tolerance, and service to humanity. Through satsang, individuals are reminded of their duties towards family, society, and nation, while also striving for spiritual upliftment. He urged the younger generation to remain rooted in their cultural and spiritual heritage, and to embrace the teachings of the Vedas, scriptures, and saints to lead a purposeful and balanced life. The discourse also highlighted how regular participation in satsang helps in cleansing negative tendencies, reducing stress, and instilling a sense of devotion and gratitude. It encourages collective harmony and strengthens social bonds, making society more compassionate and value-driven. The programme concluded with a devotional Aarti, followed by a langar for all devotees. The event left a profound spiritual impact, inspiring attendees to incorporate the teachings of Sanatan Dharma and the practice of satsang into their daily lives. The gathering resonated with devotional chants and expressions.

Label a food or beverage as junk based on its ingredients and nutritional content. She also highlighted the long-term medical risks and physiological disorders associated with consuming processed and packaged foods and defining clear differences between traditional, home-cooked diets and modern processed alternatives.

Indian Army organises Lecture on Narco terrorism & Drug Abuse

Sarsoti, April 17: The Indian Army conducted a lecture on "Narcoterrorism and Drug Abuse" at High School Sarsoti on 17 April 2026, with the aim of creating awareness among the local population, especially the youth, about the growing threat of drug abuse and its linkages with terrorism. During the session, the concept of narcoterrorism was explained in detail, highlighting how the illegal drug trade is used as a source of funding for anti-national and terrorist activities. The speaker elaborated on the harmful effects of drug abuse on individuals, families and society at large. Special emphasis



was laid on the ill effects of drug addiction, including deterioration of physical and mental health, financial instability and social breakdown. Real-life examples and case studies were shared to make the session more impactful and relatable for the audience. The participants were also educated on preventive measures, early identification of drug abuse and the importance of seeking timely medical and psychological assistance. The role of families, communities and educational institutions in addressing this issue was highlighted. The lecture encouraged

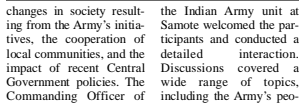
the youth to stay away from drugs and contribute positively towards nation-building. An interactive session followed, wherein participants actively engaged with the speaker and clarified their queries. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students and local residents and the initiative was widely appreciated for spreading awareness on such a critical issue. The lecture proved to be informative and beneficial, further strengthening the bond between the Indian Army and the local populace while promoting the vision of a drug-free and secure society. The lecture encouraged

Indian Army organises interaction with prominent locals at Samote

Poonch, April 17: The Indian Army has been consistently contributing to the progress and development of society and the nation. Whether in times of peace or crisis, the Army has always stood alongside its citizens. In Jammu & Kashmir, its dedicated efforts in countering militancy have played a significant role in fostering growth and advancement of the Awam. With this background, the Indian Army organised an interaction at Samote with prominent locals, including village elders, VIPs, Ex-Servicemen (ESMs) and residents. The aim of the interaction was to highlight positive

changes in society resulting from the Army's initiatives, the cooperation of local communities, and the impact of recent Central Government policies. The Commanding Officer of the Indian Army unit at Samote welcomed the participants and conducted a detailed interaction. Discussions covered a wide range of topics, including the Army's people-friendly approach, inclusion of Gujjar and Bakarwal communities, education, development initiatives and public participation in nation-building. A total of 107 participants attended the event. The participants actively engaged in the session, sharing their views and experiences. The interaction served as an eye-opener, helping to clarify perceptions and spread awareness on key issues. At the conclusion of the event, attendees expressed their gratitude to the Indian Army for the initiative, stating that it would further strengthen the bond between the Indian Army and the Awam.

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GMC Srinagar conducts UT-level Psychiatry Virtual Medical Board Meet

SRINAGAR, APRIL 17: Department of Psychiatry, Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS), GMC Srinagar, today successfully conducted the first UT-level Virtual Medical Board Meet in Psychiatry.

The academic meet witnessed an overwhelming participation of around 200 delegates, including senior faculty members, consultants, postgraduate scholars and trainees from all medical colleges across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, including GMC Jammu SKIMS Medical college GMC Anantnag, GMC Baramulla, GMC Handwara, GMC Doda, GMC Kathu , GMC Rajouri and also Psychiatrists from Teleman team.

The session was inaugurated by Principal GMC Srinagar who emphasized the need for strengthening academic integration and clinical uniformity across all medical institutions of the UT. The Scientific session mainly revolved around newer role for mECT particularly in Neuro Cognitive Disorders. An atypical clinical case with diagnostic and management implications was presented by Dr. Chandini Wani senior resident and moderated by Dr. Yuman Kawoos,



Assistant Professor Psychiatry and Dr Faisal, Assistant Professor Anaesthesia provided insights about anaesthetic implications of the

procedure. The meet served as an important platform for discussion on key psychiatric and mental health priorities, standardization of clinical practices, interdepartmental referrals, and structured academic activities aimed at improving mental healthcare delivery. The role of IMHANS, GMC Srinagar, was particularly significant in facilitating the academic coordination, expert interaction, and structured conduct of the virtual board meet, reaffirming its position as a leading mental health and academic hub in the UT. The participants actively engaged in discussions related to evolving challenges in mental health care, strengthening institutional collaboration, and enhancing coordinated psychiatric services across Jammu and Kashmir. The initiative was widely appreciated by attendees as a step forward towards unified mental health planning and improved academic networking. The Department of Psychiatry at GMC Srinagar reiterated their commitment to continue such UT-level academic and clinical engagements in the future, with the goal of enhancing both patient care and academic excellence in the field of Psychiatry across the region.

NIT Srinagar hosts Rajbhasha Saptah, organises various competitions

Srinagar, April 17: The Rajbhasha Cell of National Institute of Technology (NIT) Srinagar on Friday concluded the Rajbhasha Saptah, held from April 13 to 17, featuring a series of engaging activities and competitions on campus. As part of the week-long programme, various competitions, including Administrative Vocabulary and Essay Writing were organized for the ministerial staff to promote the use of Rajbhasha in official work. The events witnessed enthusiastic participation, with experts such as Dr. Neelofar Hameed, Hindi Anuvadak at RRIIUM Srinagar, and Dr. Mudassir Ahmad, Assistant Professor, Department of Hindi, University of Kashmir, serving as judges.



Mr. Mohammad Iqbal Dar, Assistant Registrar (Academics) and Hindi Teaching & Training Supervisor of the Rajbhasha Cell, In-Charge Hindi Officer Dr. R.P. Shukla (Assistant Professor, Civil Engineering Department), and Coordinator of the event, Dr. Sabzar Gani, played a key role in organizing the events. Appreciation awards were presented to the top three

performers in each competition, while certificates were distributed to all participants. In his message, Director NIT Srinagar, Prof. Binod Kumar Kanaujia, emphasized the importance of promoting Rajbhasha as an official language. He also encouraged staff and students to actively participate in such initiatives to strengthen linguistic inclusivity and administrative efficiency.

Hakeem Yaseen welcomes 'Nasha Mukht J&K' campaign, seeks wider role for society

SRINAGAR, April 17: President of Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Front and former Cabinet Minister Hakeem Mohammad Yaseen on Friday welcomed the launch of the 100-day "Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir" campaign announced by the Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, terming it a much-needed and timely initiative to combat the growing menace of drug abuse in the Union Territory. Addressing the various delegations at party headquarters in Srinagar, Hakeem said the firm resolve expressed by the administration to take strict action against drug smugglers, including punitive measures such as cancellation of passports, Aadhaar cards, and attachment of properties, sends a strong message that those involved in running the future of youth will not be spared at any cost. He said such decisive steps are essential to dismantle the network of drug trafficking and protect society from its devastating impact. While appreciating the government's commitment, Hakeem emphasized that the fight against drug abuse cannot be won by the administration alone. He stressed the need

for a collective societal effort, calling upon civil society members, parents, teachers, and community leaders to actively participate in this campaign. He particularly highlighted the important role of schools, colleges, and religious institutions, stating that Imams and scholars can play a vital role in spreading awareness and guiding youth away from substance abuse. Hakeem further said that awareness must be complemented with sustained engagement at the grassroots level. He urged educational institutions to organize regular counseling sessions, awareness drives, and youth-centric activities to keep students informed and motivated. He also underlined the importance of community vigilance in identifying and reporting suspicious activities related to drug peddling. Raising concern over the supply chain of narcotics, Hakeem said that law enforcement agencies must thoroughly investigate the roots of drug trafficking, identify the main sources, and take stringent action to break the nexus. "Unless the origin and networks behind these drugs are exposed and dismantled, the problem will persist," he added.

India's Award-Winning Hilo Makhbaz Targets Global Nutrition Gaps With Fortified Bakery Products

"Substandard Food Is A Silent Threat To Public Health; Our Goal Is To Serve Humanity With Nutritious & Safe Food"

SRINAGAR, April 17: In a significant development for India's food innovation landscape, founder of Hilo Makhbaz (The Sweet Bakery), Gulam Mohi-ud-Din Sofi, has emerged as a leading force in fortified bakery products, gaining recognition on national platforms and expressing ambitions for global expansion. Hailing from Nowgam in Srinagar district of Jammu & Kashmir, Gulam Mohi-ud-Din Sofi began his entrepreneurial journey in 1993 with a modest family-run bakery at Jamia Chowk, Srinagar. Over the years, Hilo Makhbaz has transformed into one of Kashmir's most respected bakery brands, known for high standards of hygiene,



consistent quality and nutrition-focused innovation. Widely acknowledged as India's first fortified baker maker, Mohi-ud-Din Sofi introduced bakery products enriched with iron, folic acid and vitamin B12, an initiative aligned with national efforts to combat anemia and micronutrient deficiencies. His work also extends to

millet-based and functional bakery products, reinforcing the role of daily diet in preventive healthcare. Hilo Makhbaz owner Gulam Mohi-ud-Din Sofi said, "Our mission is to produce and serve healthy bakery products that contribute to saving lives across the globe." He added, "For years, I observed declining public health linked to sub-

standard food consumption. That reality led me to dedicate myself to producing nutritious, safe and accessible food for all, without discrimination." This initiative is driven by a commitment to humanity, sincerity of purpose and a vision to deliver better health outcomes through everyday food," he said. Mohi-ud-Din Sofi's pioneering work has

earned him a series of prestigious awards and recognitions across regional and national platforms, including: an award from the Commissioner, Food & Drug Administration (May 9, 2023) for pioneering fortified bakery products in Jammu & Kashmir; an Appreciation Award from the Kashmir Bakers & Confectioners Association (2023); the MSME India Business Award recognizing entrepreneurial excellence; recognition from the India Book of Records (2024); the Best Entrepreneur Award presented by Member of Parliament, Dr. Ghulam Ali Khattana (2024); an award from the Kashmir Traders and Manufacturers Federation (KTMF) (2025).

District Admin Shopian strengthens grassroots vigilance under Nasha Mukht Abhiyaan

Lambardars, Chowkidars assigned key role in identifying drug hotspots and supporting enforcement

SHOPIAN, APRIL 17: Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Shishir Gupta convened a meeting today at Shopian, to review and strengthen the implementation of the Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan, with a particular focus on enhancing grassroots level vigilance and awareness. During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the critical role of Lambardars and Chowkidars as the "eyes and ears" of the administration in rural areas. They were directed to actively monitor and report drug related activities and contribute to the prevention of



substance abuse at the village level. Key directions issued during the meeting included identification of potential drug hotspots, thereby generating awareness and other enforcement measures. Participants were instructed to assist law enforcement agencies

by generating local awareness on the substance and drug abuse. Lambardars and Chowkidars were also directed to ensure strict surveillance around educational institutions to prevent the sale of tobacco products within restricted zones. Emphasis was laid

on active participation in Gram Sabhas to pass anti drug resolutions and mobilize community support. Further, Lambardars and Chowkidars were encouraged to lead awareness initiatives, including organizing anti drug pledges, displaying helpline numbers, and disseminating information in prominent locations. Collaboration with local leaders, teachers, and religious figures was highlighted as essential for spreading awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse. The DC also stressed the importance of promoting healthy alternatives for youth through sports and skill development activities. Early identification of drug users and facilitating their access to de-addiction, rehabilitation and counseling services were underscored as key measures. Ensuring confidentiality of victims was highlighted to maintain trust within the community. The meeting was attended by SSP Shopian, Mst. Shabir Ahmad Choudhary, Additional Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faza, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Shopian, Shakoor Ahmad Dar, Sub Divisional Magistrate Zainapora, Bilal Ahmad, DIO, DSWO.

Handwara unites against Drugs: Mega Pad Yatra ignites a mass movement against Drug menace

HANDWARA, APRIL 17: In a powerful show of unity and resolve against drug menace, the District Administration Kupwara today organized a mega Pad Yatra in Sub-Division Handwara, sending a strong message against drug abuse and reaffirming the collective commitment towards a healthier, drug-free society. The rally, flagged off from Chotipora, witnessed the gracious presence of MLA Handwara, Sajad Gani Lone, Commissioner Secretary, School Education Department and District Mentor-100 days NMBA campaign, Ram Niwas Sharma, Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Balasheeb Suse,

to eliminate the menace from society. The march moved through key streets and markets, drawing widespread public attention and energizing the anti-drug campaign at the grassroots level. Participants also took the "Nasha Mukht" pledge, reaffirming their determination to stand united against substance abuse. The rally culminated at Government Degree College Handwara, where speakers and dignitaries emphasized that the fight against drugs is not just an administrative responsibility but a societal mission requiring collective vigilance, awareness, and sustained action.

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Annual Urs of Hazrat Baba Hyder Reshi (RA) Commences in Anantnag DC visits Shrine, takes stock of arrangements

ANANTNAG, APRIL 17: The annual Urs of the revered saint Hazrat Baba Hyder Reshi, popularly known as Reshmool Sahib (RA), commenced today with religious fervour at the Ziyarat Shariat in Anantnag. As per long standing tradition, the Urs will be observed for a period of six days, attracting a large number of devotees from across the region. The first day marked the arrival of a number of devotees from different places who thronged the shrine to make prayers and pay their obsequence. In this regard, Deputy Commissioner,

Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat, visited the revered place and took stock of the arrangements being made available to the devotees. He was accompanied by ACR, CEO and Secretary MCA besides other senior officials of administration and line departments. On the occasion, the DC paid his obsequence and offered prayers for the prosperity and overall betterment of the district. He said the administration has streamlined all necessary services, including power, water, and sanitation, during these auspicious days and shall facilitate smooth observance of the Urs.

Interacting with the congregation, the DC stated that the shrine has long stood as a symbol of reverence and deep devotion, defining the region's heritage and commitment to spiritual values. These occasions provide apt opportunities for people from different places to interact with each other and share ideas on piety and harmony, he remarked. Dr. Bilal issued on spot directions to the concerned departments to ensure all necessary facilities are provided to the devotees in a smooth and uninterrupted manner.

DC Pulwama reviews functioning of Kisan Khidmat Ghars Interacts with Krishi Udyamis

PULWAMA, APRIL 17: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom reviewed the functioning of Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs) and held an interaction with Krishi Udyamis at Circuit House Pulwama. During the review meeting, the Chief Agriculture Officer Pulwama gave a detailed presentation on the establishment and operational status of Kisan Khidmat Ghars in the district. The presentation discussed the progress achieved and the role of KKGs in ensuring doorstep delivery of agricultural inputs and extension services to farmers. The DC took a comprehensive review of input supply mechanisms, service delivery systems and the overall performance of Kisan Khidmat Ghars in the district. He



emphasised the need for strengthening last-mile delivery to ensure that farmers receive timely and quality services.

Stressing the importance of Kisan Khidmat Ghars, the DC directed that these centres be made fully functional as single-window facilitation hubs for farmers. He called for maintaining transparency, accountability and efficiency in all service delivery processes. Dr. Qayoom further stressed the need for regular capacity-building programmes for Krishi Udyamis to enhance their effectiveness and outreach. Earlier, Krishi Udyamis shared their field experiences and provided valuable feedback aimed at further strengthening service delivery mechanisms. The meeting was attended by senior officers of Agriculture and allied sectors and Krishi Udyamis from across the district.

North in News
EDITORIAL

J&K needs a big boost in
Health and Education sector

The health and education sectors in Jammu and Kashmir require a substantial and sustained boost because they form the twin foundations of human development, economic productivity, and long term peace, and while the Union Territory has seen measurable progress after 2019 in terms of new medical colleges, upgraded district hospitals, and higher school enrollment, the gap between demand and delivery remains wide due to topography, legacy deficits, conflict related disruptions, and a young population that needs quality services at scale, and unless both sectors are expanded together they cannot break the cycle of poverty leading to poor health and poor education leading to poor health awareness, which keeps households vulnerable to poverty, drug abuse, and migration; in health the immediate challenge is access, as people in remote areas of Kishtwar, Doda, Ramban, Kupwara, Gurez, and Poonch still travel long distances for secondary and tertiary care, and harsh winters cut off road links that delay maternal deliveries, trauma care, and cardiac emergencies, so the UT needs a hub and spoke model where sub district hospitals are strengthened with 24x7 emergency rooms, blood storage units, and telemedicine links to Government Medical Colleges in Jammu and Srinagar, while Primary Health Centres must be equipped with diagnostic labs, trained lab technicians, and digital X ray facilities so that routine testing does not require a 50 kilometre trip, and the Ayushman Bharat PM-JAY cards must be saturated across all tehsils with on-site kiosks in PHCs to enroll left out families, because financial protection is meaningless if empanelled hospitals are too far or lack specialists; human resource is the critical gap, as vacancies of doctors, nurses, ANMs, and paramedics persist in hard areas, and the solution lies in a mix of incentives like hardship allowance, assured rotation, housing facilities, and fast track promotions, combined with a large scale recruitment of local youth trained through new nursing colleges, paramedical institutes, and skill centers, and the recent GMCs in Anantnag, Baramulla, Kathua, Doda, and Rajouri must be mentored by AIIMS Jammu and SKIMS so that faculty quality, research, and super specialty services scale up quickly, while district hospitals should start DNB programs to produce specialists who are contractually bound to serve in J&K for a fixed period, and ASHA and Anganwadi workers need smartphones, performance based pay, and training in mental health first aid because they are the first contact for addiction, anemia, and adolescent issues, and their data on tablets can feed a UT wide health dashboard that tracks immunization, institutional deliveries, NCD screening, and drug de-addiction referrals in real time; infrastructure must be climate resilient, with power backup, heating, and snow clearance for hospitals in high altitude belts, and helicopter evacuation protocols for critical cases during roadblocks, while cancer care, dialysis, and neonatal ICUs should be decentralized to at least one unit per district to reduce load on Jammu and Srinagar, and the drug supply chain needs end to end digitization from warehouses to sub-centres to prevent stockouts of insulin, anti-hypertensives, and psychiatric medicines, because interrupted treatment pushes patients back to informal providers; public health campaigns must move beyond episodic IEC to year round behavior change in schools, panchayats, and religious gatherings, focusing on nutrition, anemia, tobacco, substance abuse, mental health, and sanitation, with local language content in Dogri, Kashmiri, Gojri, Pahari, and Urdu, and the Nasha Mukat Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan has shown that when health workers, teachers, and police coordinate, screening and counselling numbers rise, so that model should be institutionalized for NCDs and mental health too, while mobile health units must run on fixed day routes with published schedules so that nomadic populations and seasonal laborers can access care, and traditional medicine under AYUSH should be integrated for preventive care and chronic conditions with proper referral pathways to allopathy to avoid delay in acute cases; education faces parallel challenges, as learning outcomes, teacher availability, and infrastructure vary sharply between urban centers and hilly blocks, and although enrollment is high, foundational literacy and numeracy in primary grades need urgent attention, so the UT must implement NEP 2020 with a J&K specific plan that trains all Anganwadis and Grade 1 to 3 teachers in play based pedagogy, supports standardized workbooks, and conducts monthly assessments that are shared with parents through SMC meetings, and every primary school must have at least two rooms, functional toilets with water, electricity, and a library corner, because children cannot learn in unsafe or undignified spaces, and where buildings are damaged by weather or conflict, rapid prefab classrooms should be deployed instead of waiting years for conventional construction, and in snow bound zones the academic calendar, heating, and winter uniforms must be budgeted so that schooling days are not lost; Himalayan ecology should be funded through UT specific grants, and colleges need placement cells, incubation centers, and credit for startups so that youth see education as a path to income rather than frustration, and coaching for UPSC, JKPSC, NEET, JEE, and CUET should be offered free in district libraries with online mentors to democratize access; girls education demands special focus, with self defense training, sanitary pad vending machines, functional toilets, hostel stipends, and female wardens in hostels, because dropout spikes at menarche and at secondary transition, and KGBVs and Eklaya schools in tribal areas must be expanded with quality benchmarks, while scholarships should be disbursed by September through direct benefit transfer to avoid cash flow stress on families, and bridge courses must be run for students who lost learning years due to unrest or COVID so that age appropriate enrollment does not mask ability gaps; sports, arts, and vocational education are not extras but preventive tools, as they keep youth engaged and away from drugs, so every higher secondary school should have a play-ground, a trained PFI, and equipment for at least three disciplines, and ITIs and polytechnics must be modernized with CNC machines, drone labs, and electric vehicle courses that match market demand, with lateral entry to degree programs to remove stigma around vocational tracks, and the Samagra Shiksha, PM-SHRI, and UT apex need to be converged to avoid duplication and to saturate all schools with basic standards before chasing model schools, while social audit by SMCs and students should be annual and public to ensure funds translate into benches, labs, and books; health and education must converge at the school level, with annual health checkups, deworming, iron supplementation, vision and hearing screening, and mental health sessions, and the data should trigger referrals to PHCs, while health curriculum must teach nutrition, first aid, substance abuse, and adolescent health in age appropriate ways, and mid day meals should use local products; Third party evaluations by universities and NGOs should be commissioned every two years to correct course, and community ownership must be built by involving PRIs in school and health facility management with unlit grants and training, because local monitoring reduces absenteeism and theft; in sum, J&K stands at a demographic window where a big, coordinated boost to health and education will yield dividends for decades by producing a healthy, skilled, and aspirational youth cohort that can drive tourism, services, agriculture, and startups, and this boost must be measured not in press releases but in functional PHCs within 5 kilometers, specialists in every district hospital, grade level learning, and a clear path from classroom to career, because without these basics the UT cannot achieve sustainable peace or economic growth, and with them it can become a model of human development in the Himalayan region.

RAJNI SHARMA, EDITOR

Diaspora can fuel India's export growth

SUKHPAL AHLUWALIA

A few years ago, India set itself a bold target: \$2 trillion total exports by 2030, split evenly between goods and services. While recent remarks from Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal suggest the target could slip to 2032, there are still grounds for optimism. While recent landmark trade deals with the EU and US will bring us closer to that goal by increasing market access, agreements alone do not equal exports.

The challenge lies in turning access to sustained growth, and this requires something less visible than trade agreements, but equally as powerful: trust and knowledge. This is where India's extensive network of diaspora entrepreneurs can play a decisive role in accelerating exports. The Indian diaspora is the largest in the world, and I'm proud to be a part of it. As I spend more time on the ground and begin to think about the long-term role I want to play when I retire to India, I find myself increasingly drawn to building and strengthening the bridges that connect India with the wider world.

And I'm not alone in that belief. I've spoken to so many diaspora entrepreneurs and leaders who feel similarly: that those of us living and working abroad have a responsibility to use our positions to deepen the connections between Indian businesses and global investors, partners, and markets. The Indian diaspora is an underutilised asset. Embedded in foreign markets worldwide, they offer two distinct advantages: a practical understanding of how those markets func-



tion, and established credibility within them. This means they can help Indian firms get to grips with a foreign market and build trust with prospective buyers. While all first-time exporters would benefit from the experience and connections of diaspora entrepreneurs, it is India's Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) that stand to gain the most. Less than 1.5 per cent of India's MSMEs are exporting (PWC), despite accounting for 46 per cent of India's total exports last year. Expanding the pool of exporting MSMEs represents a clear avenue for export growth. They're held back by limited market knowledge and difficulties building trusted networks and finding first buyers.

Diaspora entrepreneurs can help address each of these in turn. The first way that diaspora entrepreneurs can help is by closing the knowledge gap that confronts Indian firms when they first look to export to foreign markets. Unfamiliar and complex regulations, standards, and procurement rules act as a friction on export growth, slowing businesses down - or deterring them from

exporting altogether. Navigating these rules requires an understanding of foreign markets that many MSMEs lack, but which diaspora entrepreneurs understand intimately. They are familiar not only with regulatory requirements but also with the cultural expectations that shape negotiations, payment terms, and risk assessments. By sharing this insight, they can help Indian firms shorten the learning curve associated with exporting, helping their products reach foreign markets sooner. That acceleration matters if India is to make sustained progress towards its export target. The second way diaspora entrepreneurs can bring India closer to the 2030 export target is by helping first-time exporters build trust in foreign markets. Trust is a critical asset in export markets. It impacts buyers' perceived risk, which, in turn, affects their willingness to buy from exporters. It's a luxury that first-time exporters lack.

However strong their product, they enter new markets without a track record on delivery, quality, or reliability. Diaspora entrepreneurs can

bridge that credibility gap. By vouching for Indian suppliers, embedding them into trusted distribution systems, or even acting as first buyers themselves, they reduce the perceived risk of engagement. In doing so, they help firms secure their first contracts - often the hardest to win. This creates the reference points needed for continued export growth. The remaining question is not whether diaspora entrepreneurs are willing to help. I think it's whether India can coordinate that willingness effectively.

From my conversations with fellow diaspora entrepreneurs, I've found a clear appetite to support Indian businesses. For many, it's both a way of contributing to India's growth and an opportunity to deepen commercial ties with the country. But often what is missing is clarity: which firms to support, and how. There are some relatively simple interventions that could help bridge that gap. Targeted diaspora-MSME networks or mentorship programmes formalise knowledge sharing, while structured matchmaking platforms could connect diaspora entrepreneurs with relevant Indian firms.

This would create clearer pathways for diaspora leaders to act as first buyers or introduce Indian firms to their existing networks. The export target is ambitious but achievable, provided India mobilises the experience and influence of India's diaspora.

Trade policy opens markets; diaspora networks help firms compete within them. If India wants to see \$2 trillion in exports by 2030, it needs both.

Wars are affecting the environment

B K SINGH

One of the worst environmental disasters Tehran experienced recently was when its oil refineries and depots were hit by US and Israeli jets. Thick black smoke billowed into the sky, making day seem more like night. Toxic rain mixed with oil fell from the air, while a central boulevard was lined by a wall of flame. The explosion released large quantities of toxic hydrocarbon and sulfur and nitrogen oxides.

While residents were confined inside their homes, they could barely breathe. Highly acidic rainfall could further cause chemical burns to the skin and has the potential to damage the lungs severely. Despite rain dispersing much of the pollutants, the smell of the smoke was quite intense. The intensifying war in the middle East has sent energy prices soaring and led to global economic uncertainty. It is a repeat of what the region had experienced in the 1990s. Iraq's then president Saddam Hussain had blown up 700 Kuwaiti oil wells during the first Gulf war. It took more than ten months to extinguish the fire, that too after using sea water. This was the third biggest environmental disaster after the Chernobyl nuclear disaster and the Bhopal gas tragedy.

The fire in Kuwaiti oil wells that burned for ten months and threw pollutants across the region had also caused black snow in the distant Himalayas. It impacted the Indian monsoon in that period. Turkey, Bulgaria and Pakistan, too, experienced black rains. Environmental

damage in Kuwait was severe and experts estimated that it would take at least hundred years to recover. Ninety per cent of Kuwaiti soil was contaminated. Use of sea water to extinguish the fire added salinity to the soil. The firefighters engaged in putting out the fire suffered from severe health issues.

Medical experts, who examined the lungs of firefighters, said that each of them had smoked for three years at the rate of three packs of cigarettes a day. It was a huge environmental and health cost to the nation. The recent hits by the US and Israel on one side and Iran on the other on energy infrastructure, oil refineries, oil stocks and ships transporting oil in Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Israel and UAE ensures that the environmental damage is aggravated. The recovery of Kuwaiti oil certainly gets postponed by another century. The black rains that followed in Tehran in the recent conflict contain all atmospheric pollutants.

The environment is choked with the pollutants released from the burning of heavy fuel - a low quality byproduct of oil refining, and these are methane chloride, benzene and acetone. We should be aware that benzene causes cancer. Whenever there is a fire in huge quantities of oil, the combustion is incomplete and unburnt particles are released in the atmosphere to trigger human health risks. In contrast, combustion inside a car engine is always complete. Oil also contains sulphur and nitrogen, which are oxidized in burning and result in formation of oxides.

The oxides reacting with moisture bring acid rains. The sulphuric, sulphurous, nitrous and nitric acids come along with rains, which can immediately cause irritation in human eyes and throat. The water finding its way into the drainage system makes surface and underground water hazardous for aquatic and human life. 'Scientists for Global Responsibility', a UK-based organization have estimated that 5 per cent of annual global emission, equivalent to 520 Mega tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, is caused by burning of fossil fuel in defense sectors across the globe.

The emissions arise from intensive fossil fuel reliance in military operations, transport and supply chains. The US military is the world's largest emitter of greenhouse gases. In addition to this, wars cause massive emissions through direct combustion, infrastructure destruction, land and sea mines and fire in the landscape. The Strait of Hormuz connecting the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman is identified as an energy choke point, through which one-fifth of global requirement of crude-oil and gas pass. Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps along with the country's traditional navy control movement of ships through this strait, and have capability to deploy a 'gauntlet' of dispersed mine laying craft, explosive laden boats, and shore-based missile batteries.

The laying of mines in the sea can damage the environment and remains as a threat to aquatic life. The missiles and drones that are intercepted gen-

erate chemical laden debris, which fall on the agriculture lands on the outskirts of military and oil infrastructure locations. Aided by the fire on the land, the chemicals remain in the soil and bring down agricultural productivity considerably. In Russia's war in Ukraine's Donbass region, forests have been destroyed and set on fire for facilitating operations. It has considerable environmental consequences.

Trees are known to use carbon dioxide in 'photosynthesis' and when burned/ destroyed, the gas is emitted back in the atmosphere - a double whammy. Ukraine's energy infrastructure was hit leading to power outage, when the population faced severe winter at minus 20 degree Celsius. They had no option but to burn coal and wood to keep themselves warm. This too caused environmental degradation. 'Scientists for Global Responsibility' have estimated that 254 Mega tons of carbon dioxide equivalent was emitted in US's aggression in Iraq, 32 Megatons of carbon dioxide equivalent was emitted in Israel's 15-month long Gaza war and 340 Megatons of carbon dioxide equivalent has been emitted in four years of Russian aggression in Ukraine.

To put it in perspective, the greenhouse gases emitted in the Russia-Ukraine war so far has been equal to the annual emission from France. The warming planet has been the cause of climatic catastrophes and disrupts the lives and livelihoods of vulnerable populations. Some island nations located between the tropic of Cancer.

Mission YUVA: SBDU, BHD Members imparted Capacity Building Training at IIM Jammu

JAMMU, APRIL 17: 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.



The programme aimed at equipping the newly recruited field functionaries with the knowledge and tools required for effective facilitation, handling 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

mechanisms and institutional support for entrepreneurs. Participants were also trained in 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. Director Employment cum MD Mission YUVA J&K, Harvinder Singh addressed the trainees and interacted with the newly hired staff. During the session, he highlighted the vision and objectives of Mission YUVA and elaborated on the positive impact the initiative is creating on the ground by promoting entrepreneurship and self-employment among youth. He shared the future course of action under Mission YUVA and emphasized the importance of proactive outreach,

effective guidance and continuous handholding of aspiring entrepreneurs. He further guided and motivated the members of the SBDUs and BHDs, encouraging them to work with dedication and coordination to ensure the successful implementation of the mission across the districts. Director, Indian Institute of Management Jammu Prof. B. S. Sahay also addressed the team and emphasized the importance of developing detailed job profiles for all members with clearly defined roles and responsibilities to ensure greater clarity, accountability and effective functioning of the team. Dr. Mughli Burhan (Chairperson CEISD) and Prof. Pranav Das (Chairperson SBDU),

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS TEHSILDAR RAMBAN

KIRNA DEVI W/O AJAY SINGH R/O SERI, TEHSIL & DISTRICT RAMBAN

V/S UT OF J&K THROUGH BLOCK DEVELOPMENT OFFICER RAMBAN.

PUBLIC NOTICE Whereas the applicant named above has sought a direction from Block Development Officer Ramban for registration of Date of birth of applicant's daughter, namely Ruchi Devi, in Birth/Death record Register who was born on 19-12-2022, at home in village Ser. Whereas the public at large is informed through the medium of this notice that if any person/persons have any objection regarding the registration through person, post, e mail or any other justified medium with respect to the birth of the applicant's daughter, mentioned above, he or she shall file his/her objections within 07 days to this court from the date of publication of this notice in the newspaper, failing which appropriate order shall be passed. In case the date fixed is declared as holiday, the matter shall be taken up on the next working day.

Given under my hand and seal of this Court on 17-4-2026 Sd/ Executive Magistrate 1st Class Tehsildar Ramban

Samba: HADP beneficiary grows Seedless Cucumber in Hi-Tech Poly House

SAMBA, APRIL 17: Reflecting ground level impact of Agriculture development interventions, progressive Farmer Sham Singh has grown seedless cucumbers at its Hi-Tech Poly House established at village Badoi-Bari Brahmana by availing benefits of Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) schemes.



Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Jagdish Singh inaugurated the first harvest of the exotic crop, which was started today in the presence of the Chief Agriculture Officer Dr. Rakesh Khajuria, AEO Yakh Deepak Jamal and other departmental officials of Zone Yakh. The Hi-Tech Poly House project, a cornerstone of the Holistic

to traditional open-field farming. During the harvest, the ADC commended the beneficiary farmer for adopting innovative practices. The project has placed Samba on the map for high-quality, exotic produce, besides benefiting the owner," he stated. The progressive Farmer hopes to harvest around 65 quintal seedless cucumbers in 3 months, fetching him handsome income. He appealed to the young generation to come forward & adopt innovative farming by establishing Hi-Tech Polyhouses instead of running for jobs.

CORRECTION IN DL

OLD NAME - BISHAN SINGH/NEW NAME BISHAN CHAND/FATHER NAME OLD - PREM SINGH/NEW NAME PREM NATH/DATE OF BIRTH OLD 24-07-1988/DATE OF BIRTH NEW - 01-01-1991/DL NO JK142010004162

DHJ inspects Processing-cum-Training Centre-Udhewalla

JAMMU, APRIL 17: The Director Horticulture Jammu Gul Syed accompanied by Assistant Director Sunil Gupta on Friday inspected the work performance and ongoing activities at Modern Processing-cum-Training Centre-Udhewalla. The Director inspected the facilities, assessed the functioning of the centre and emphasized the importance of value addition, skill development and efficient utilization of infrastructure for the benefit of farmers and stakeholders. The Director also visited the Government Fruit Plant Nursery (GFPPN)-Gandharwan Akhnoor, where he reviewed nursery operations, plant quality and propagation practices. During the tour, the Director also visited a dragon fruit orchard, where he interacted with farmers and reviewed the cultivation practices, growth performance and potential.

In the court of Executive Magistrate Ist Class (Tehsildar) Hiranagar

Bharti Sharma W/o Pawan Kumar R/o Village Ghura, Tehsil Hiranagar District Kathua. V/S UT of J&K through Block Development officer Hiranagar.

Notice to Public at Large Whereas, above titled application has been filed by the applicant for seeking direction to the non-applicant for registration of birth/death particulars and issuance of birth/death certificate of applicant's son namely Vishal Sharma R/o Tehsil Hiranagar, District Kathua who was born on 01.03.2009 at home.

Table with 5 columns: Name of the applicant, Name of father of the applicant, Name of Mother of the applicant, D.O.B./D.O.D., Place of Birth/Death. Row 1: Vishal Sharma, Pawan Kumar, Bharti Sharma, 01.03.2009, At Home.

Whereas through the medium of this proclamation, the public at large is informed that in case anyone has any objection in issuance of direction with respect to the issuance of the birth/death particulars of the Vishal Sharma R/o Pawan Kumar by the non-applicant, then he/she/they file the same before this office in person or through counsel within seven (07) days from the date of publication if the date fixed is declared holiday, the matter will be taken up on next working day.

Given under my hand and seal of this office today on 04-04-2026 NO.-Teh/Hir/JC/2025-26 Dated:-04-04-2026 Sd/ Executive Magistrate Ist Class (Tehsildar) Hiranagar

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER POSHAN PROJECT BARNOTI

Subject:Final Merit list along with final Select List regarding engagement of Sahayikas (AWHs) phase-V. Notification 06 Of 2026 Date: 15-04-2026

Whereas vide this Office Advertisement Notice No:01 of 2026 dated: 01-01-2026, application were invited from eligible female candidate against 11 vacant posts of Sahayikas (AWHs) Poshan Project Barnoti; Whereas 27 candidates have applied against 11 available vacant posts of Sahayikas (AWHs) in Poshan Project Barnoti; Whereas the scrutiny of application forms was fixed on 06-03-2026 vide CDPO Barnoti office letter No: CDPO/Br/2025-26/2730-37 dated: 05-03-2026. Whereas the merit and other necessary particulars of all the candidates were scrutinized/checked on 06-03-2026 by the Selection Committee for Sahayikas constituted vide Govt Order No. - 103 -JK(SWD) of 2023 dated: - 28-04-2023 and Govt Order No. 222 -JK(SWD) of 2022 dated: 30-11-2022; Whereas the Provisional/Tentative Merit & Select list was prepared/approved by the above referred committee in its meeting held on 06-03-2026 as per terms and conditions mentioned in Govt Order No. 103 -JK(SWD) of 2023 dated: 28-04-2023, Govt Order No.222 -JK(SWD) of 2022 dated:30-11-2022,MD/ICDS/Recruitment/2022-23/21349-72 dated,14-07-2023 and MDP/Estu/M-27-2023/25398-25539 ,dated,17-08-2023; Whereas vide this office notification No.03 of 2026 dated 12-03-2026 the Provisional/Tentative Merit & Select list regarding engagement of sahayikas was published in Daily Excelsior dated 18-03-2026 for seeking objections through the office of CDPO Barnoti within 10 days of publication; Whereas necessary rider(s)/observation(s) were put against the candidature of 05 candidates in Provisional/Tentative Merit list by the selection Committee in its meeting held on 12-03-2026; Whereas within the expiry of 10 days from the date of publication of Notification No.03 of 2026 dated 12-03-2026 in Daily Excelsior dated 18-03-2026 no objection was received from any candidate/stakeholder/general public; Whereas all have not submitted the requisite documents within the given time, thereby their candidature has not been accepted by the committee for further consideration in the selection process in its meeting held on 02-04-2026; Therefore, in view of the above and as per the procedure laid in the above referred Govt. Orders, the final Merit & Select list prepared/approved by the referred selection committee as per Annexure-A2 & Annexure-B2 respectively is hereby published for the information of general public and all concerned.

For grievance(s)/objection(s), (if any), the appeal in this regard shall be placed before Worthy Deputy Commissioner Kathua within ten days from the date of issuance of this notification.No grievance(s) objection(s) of any kind shall be entertained after ten days from the date of issuance of this notification/list.

No: CDPO/Br/2026-27/72-83. Date:15-04-2026. Barsha Rani (JKAS) Child Development Project Officer Barnoti

Table with 15 columns: S.No, Applicant Name, Name of the Candidate, Name of the SAC, M.O.B, Name of the Project, Merit Rank, Final Rank, Date of Birth, Gender, Education, Date of Birth, Date of Birth, Date of Birth, Date of Birth, Date of Birth. Rows include candidates like SHYAM SINGH, RAJESH KUMAR, etc.

Table with 15 columns: S.No, Name of Applicant, Name of the Candidate, Name of the SAC, M.O.B, Name of the Project, Merit Rank, Final Rank, Date of Birth, Gender, Education, Date of Birth, Date of Birth, Date of Birth, Date of Birth, Date of Birth. Rows include candidates like SHYAM SINGH, RAJESH KUMAR, etc.

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-Tender Notice. SRI DIGGAFZ acting for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-Tenders (www.irpg.gov.in) against below listed Tenders. Bidders will be able to submit their original tenders upto closing date and time only.



Shreyas Iyer's jaw-dropping catch leaves Sachin Tendulkar stunned

New Delhi, Apr 17: Shreyas Iyer produced one of the finest catches seen in the Indian Premier League, drawing widespread applause from cricket legends and fans alike during Punjab Kings' clash against Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium.

Among those left in awe was Indian great Sachin Tendulkar, who lauded Iyer's sensational relay effort and the awareness behind it. In a moment that quickly went viral, Iyer showcased remarkable athleticism and presence of mind near the boundary ropes. Leaping mid-air, he grabbed the ball and smartly relayed it to Xavier Bartlett before landing, completing a stunning dismissal of MI captain



Hardik Pandya.

Taking to X, Tendulkar highlighted that what made the moment truly special went beyond just athleticism. "What made Shreyas Iyer's catch so special was not just the athleticism, but the awareness behind it. He had to judge the speed of the ball, the height, where the boundary rope was, how close he was to stepping on it, and get his jump absolutely perfect. Then, while still in the air, he caught the ball and released it to a teammate

before landing, all the while knowing exactly where that fielder was positioned. To process all of that in a split second takes unbelievable awareness, timing, fitness, and composure." He summed it up by calling it one of the

finest efforts he has witnessed live. "Shreyas Iyer got everything spot on. One of the best catches I've ever seen live." After completing the catch, Iyer turned towards the crowd and cupped his ears, inviting applause, an image that quickly became one of the standout visuals of the match. Even MI stars Suryakumar Yadav and Rohit Sharma were left stunned by the brilliance of the effort, which ended Pandya's scratchy stay at the crease. Punjab Kings went on to dominate the contest, sealing a comfortable seven-wicket win over Mumbai Indians. With five wins in five matches, PBKS remain the only unbeaten side in IPL 2026 so far, setting the early pace and emerging as strong title contenders.

IPL 2026: BCCI takes strict action against RR manager Romi Bhinder over dugout phone row

New Delhi, Apr 17:

After days of deliberation, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has fined Rajasthan Royals team manager Romi Bhinder ₹1 lakh for breaching IPL dugout protocols during their clash against Royal Challengers Bengaluru.

The incident took place during the IPL 2026 match at the ACA Stadium on April 10, where Bhinder was seen carrying and using a mobile phone inside the dugout, an act prohibited under league regulations.

The BCCI's Anti-Corruption and Security Unit (ACSU) took note of the violation and issued a show-cause notice on April 12, seeking an explanation within 48 hours.

Also Read: RR manager Romi Bhinder served



show-cause notice by BCCI over dugout phone row

BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia confirmed that Bhinder's response was reviewed but found to be unsatisfactory, prompting disciplinary action.

"This violation occurred during the match in Guwahati, where our anti-corruption unit observed Bhinder carrying a mobile phone into the dugout area. While he may have a phone, it is not permitted in the dugout," Saikia said.

"He was issued a notice and responded within the stipulated time. However, his explanation was not satisfactory. Considering this was his first offence under IPL PMAO protocols, the unit imposed a fine of ₹1 lakh and issued a warning against any future violations."

As per the IPL's Players and Match Officials Area (PMAO) guidelines, team managers are allowed to use mobile phones inside the dressing room, but not in the dugout.

Sanjiv Goenka Slams "Unjust" Social Media Scrutiny Over 'One Incident'

New Delhi, Apr 17:

Whenever the Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) suffer an unfavourable result in the Indian Premier League (IPL), owner Sanjiv Goenka inevitably becomes a focal point of social media discourse. Goenka, a man of undeniable passion for the sport, is often seen engaging in on-field conversations with his players. A recent exchange with captain Rishabh Pant immediately drew comparisons to his animated discussion with then-skipper KL Rahul during the 2024 season. After fans shared edited clips of the interaction with Pant online, it sparked a fresh wave of controversy. In an exclusive interview with NDTV's CEO and Editor-in-Chief Rahul Kanwal in "Walk The Talk", Goenka opened up about becoming a "punching bag" for social media platforms seeking views through unjust narratives.



Goenka clarified that the interaction was far from the "scolding" it was portrayed to be. "Look, with a player like Rishabh, there is never a 'daat' (scolding) situation," Goenka explained. "But on social media, even if Sanjiv Goenka moves his hands a certain way, it becomes breaking news. I've become a very convenient punching bag. If you run a headline saying 'Sanjiv Goenka scolds his player,' you get instant views."

The "Scolding" Myth Addressing the recent chat with Pant,

Vinod Kambl's Wife Left Fuming Over "False Claims" Over Ex Cricketer's Health

New Delhi, Apr 17:

Former India cricketer Vinod Kambl hasn't been in the best of health for a long time. But serious concerns over his health emerged a few days ago when a friend of his revealed that Kambl has a 'clot in his brain' which has started to affect his memory. However, the retired cricketer's wife Andrea Hewitt has labelled the claims lies, saying someone is spreading misinformation about his health.



"By God's grace, Vinod is fine. I don't know who is spreading false information about his health," Kambl's wife Andrea Hewitt told India Today. It was Kambl's friend and a former first-class umpire, Marcus Couto, who claimed that the former cricketer is battling a serious health crisis.

"Ever since he was hospitalised in Thane about 18 months ago, Kambl has had a clot in his brain. His memory is not good. He remembers things and then forgets about them. That's all due to that clot in his brain," Couto told The Times of India. "Kambl has given up drinking, but he tends to smoke at times. Smoking is completely forbidden for him, because it puts him at risk of a brain stroke, as per the doctor Aadi Chaglia (famous neurosurgeon), who has been monitoring Kambl's treatment," he added.

KKR Told To Drop Ajinkya Rahane As India Great Suggests New Captain: "Wrong Move"

New Delhi, Apr 17:

It has been a horrible campaign for Kolkata Knight Riders till now in the IPL 2026. The Ajinkya Rahane-led side has not a single match till now and their only point in this year's competition came thanks to their match against Punjab Kings getting washed out.



They are struggling at the bottom of the points table and the players as well as team management has been facing criticism from both fans as well as experts. Although they have played just five games in IPL 2026, the management has already made multiple changes to their lineup with Rahane demoting himself in the batting order during their

last game against Chennai Super Kings. Amid the mounting pressure, legendary India batter Kris Srikkanth urged the KKR management to look beyond Rahane as captain and even suggested an alternative ahead of their match against Gujarat Titans on Friday. Rahane has scored 152 runs in IPL 2026 till now and his strike rate beyond the powerplay has taken a massive hit. Srikkanth said that the veteran India star should be given one or two chances at best and if he continues to disappoint, he should be replaced with Sunil Narine as captain. Besides Rahane, he also suggested a couple of changes in the playing XI and said that KKR should open with New Zealand international Rachin Ravindra.

ICC unveils schedule for inaugural Women's T20I Challenge Trophy in Rwanda

New Delhi, Apr 17:

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has unveiled the schedule for the inaugural Women's T20I Challenge Trophy, set to take place in Kigali, Rwanda, from April 19 to May 2. Matches will be played at the Gahanga Cricket Stadium, with its two adjacent grounds hosting the tournament.



The five-team competition will see Italy face hosts Rwanda in the opening clash while Nepal takes on the USA on the same day. Vanuatu will sit out the opening fixtures before beginning their campaign against Rwanda.

Introduced as part of the ICC's efforts to broaden competitive opportunities, the Women's T20I Challenge Trophy is aimed at pro-

viding greater international exposure to Associate Member teams. The event complements initiatives like the Emerging Nations Trophy, reinforcing the governing body's

push to strengthen the global women's game. The tournament features the top-ranked Associate teams from each of the ICC's five regions that did not qualify for the

Emerging Nations Trophy.

Qualification was based on performances in the 2025 regional Women's T20 World Cup qualifiers. Played in a double round-robin format, the competition will offer consistent match exposure and high-quality game time, key for emerging sides looking to bridge the gap at the international level. The event also aligns with the expansion plans for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup, which will grow to 12 teams in 2026 and further expand to 16 teams by 2030. Nepal and the USA head into the tournament as strong contenders, having featured in the most recent global qualifier. Nepal, ranked 21st in the ICC Women's T20I rankings, are the highest-ranked side in the competition.

Patanjali University wins 17 medals at All India Inter-University Thang-Ta Championship

Chandigarh, April 17:

Demonstrating excellent skill, discipline, and determination, students of Patanjali University achieved remarkable success at the All India Inter-University Thang-Ta Championship. The competition was held at Manipal University, Imphal, from April 6 to 9, 2026. The university team secured a total of 17 medals, including 2 gold, 1 silver, and 14 bronze. This achievement is being considered one of the university's best performances at the national level. Athletes from several universities across the country participated in the competition. Participation from students



ranging from first year to final year reflected the strong talent and guidance available at Patanjali University. The team showcased its competitive strength by winning medals across 11 different weight categories. The gold medals were won by Riya Gaur and Kirti, both second-year BPES students, highlighting the team's depth and consistency. A notable aspect of this achievement was that BPES students

was secured by Mansi (second-year BPES) in the above-76 kg weight category. Additionally, 14 bronze medals were won by students including Pooja, Sonia, Naina, Abhishek, Bhavana, Atul, Gauri, Saloni, Mahi, Palak, Prince, Yoginder, Kartikeya, and Hrishabh, highlighting the team's depth and consistency. A notable aspect of this achievement was that BPES students

Why Has Jasprit Bumrah Failed To Pick Any Wicket In IPL 2026? Irfan Pathan Answers

New Delhi, Apr 17:

Jasprit Bumrah continues to remain wicketless in the ongoing Indian Premier League season. The pacer returned with figures of 0 for 41 against Punjab Kings in an IPL 2026 match at the Wankhede Stadium on Thursday. This was the fifth consecutive match in the ongoing season that saw the ace pacer fail to claim a wicket. To make matters worse, Bumrah has leaked runs at an economy rate of 8.63. Irfan Pathan threw light on Bumrah's lean patch and suggested that the bowler not bowl too many slower deliveries.



"Wickets from Jasprit Bumrah's bowling are very important. There is no major issue with his form, but his average speed this season has been around 130 kmph. He has been using the slower ball about 44 per cent of the time, meaning almost every second ball is a slower

er one," Pathan said on his YouTube channel. The analysis video was uploaded on Thursday before the Mumbai Indians vs Punjab Kings game. "Now why is Jasprit Bumrah doing this? I think this needs a deeper look. If he bowls more fast

deliveries and reduces the percentage of slower balls, the results will come. It is a very simple solution. Bumrah does not need coaching, but the numbers are showing what is happening," he added. Bumrah seemed ineffective during the match against Punjab

Kings as the team chased down a 196-run target in just 16.3 overs. PBKS opener Prabhsimran Singh scored 80 not out off 39 balls, while captain Shreyas Iyer smashed 66 off 35.

As a result, MI suffered their fourth consecutive defeat in IPL 2026. They have won only their campaign opener and lost all the following games played so far.

"44 percent slower balls and an average speed below 130 kmph means he needs to increase his pace. Obviously, if you bowl more slow deliveries, your average speed will drop. But if you bring the slower ball percentage down to around 35 percent. If you keep it around 30 to 35 percent and bowl more fast deliveries, your slower balls will become more effective. And if you also get seam and swing, then you can dismiss batters as well," Pathan concluded.

Nitish Kumar gets elite Type-8 bungalow in Delhi, Z+ security cover after Rajya Sabha entry

New Delhi, Apr 17: Former Bihar chief minister and newly elected Rajya Sabha MP Nitish Kumar has been allotted a top-tier government residence in the national capital, marking his formal shift to Parliament after stepping down from office in the state. The development comes days after Kumar took oath as a Member of Parliament in the Upper House and resigned as Chief Minister, signalling a clear transition in his political role from Patna to New Delhi.

New address in high-security VIP zone

Kumar will now stay at 9 Sunehri Bagh, a Type-8 bungalow located in Lutyens' Delhi, one of the most secure and high-profile residential zones in the capital. The area houses several senior leaders, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi, and Union Minister



Chirag Paswan. Until now, Kumar had been residing at 6 Kamraj Lane in Delhi. With his elevation to the Rajya Sabha, he has been allotted a residence in the highest category of government accommodation. What defines a Type-8 bungalow Lutyens' Delhi, official residences are classified from Type-1 to Type-8, with Type-8 being the most premium category. These bungalows

usually cover between 8,000 and 8,500 square feet and come equipped with multiple bedrooms, large living and dining areas, a study, garage facilities, and spacious lawns at the front and rear. They are also fitted with high-end security arrangements, including round-the-clock personnel, CCTV monitoring, and dedicated control systems, reflecting the stature of occupants who are typically

among the country's top political figures.

Security upgraded to Z+ cover Alongside the change in residence, Kumar's security cover has also been enhanced. He has been provided Z+ category protection by the CRPF across the country, one of the highest levels of security granted to public figures in India. Reserved for top political offices bungalows in prime Lutyens' Delhi locations are usually allotted to leaders who hold or have held key constitutional or political positions. Among those who have been assigned similar residences are Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Rahul Gandhi, and former vice president M Venkaiah Naidu. Kumar was sworn in as a Rajya Sabha MP on April 10. He resigned as Bihar Chief Minister on April 13, following which a new government led by Samraj Choudhary took oath in the state.

Fadnavis flags organised angle in TCS Nashik case, calls charges 'extremely serious'

New Delhi, Apr 17: Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Friday described the allegations in the Nashik case involving Tata Consultancy Services as "extremely serious", indicating that early findings point to a structured and coordinated pattern of wrongdoing rather than isolated incidents. The remarks come amid a widening probe into multiple complaints filed by women employees, who have accused colleagues of sexual harassment, stalking and mental harassment over a period stretching from 2022 to March 2026, raising concerns about safety and accountability in one of India's largest IT firms. Probe points to organised 'module', not isolated inci-



dent. Speaking to reporters during his visit to Kolkata for election campaigning, the Chief Minister said preliminary findings suggest that the alleged acts were carried out under a "module", hinting at a systemic operation. "This matter is very serious, and we are taking very strict action on it. It has come to our attention that this was done under a module. Fortunately, a company like TCS has played a very significant role in the probe. They will not shield anyone," he said. Fadnavis also noted that central agencies have been kept informed of the developments, and their involvement may be sought if required as the investigation progresses. TCS stance, SIT probe and arrests so far

Karnataka tragedy: Six die as collision triggers massive fire on highway

New Delhi, Apr 17: Six people lost their lives in a devastating accident in Karnataka's Yadgir district on Friday after a car collided head-on with a private bus and caught fire. All six occupants inside the car were burnt alive, while two others were pulled out from a severe injury. One of them remains in critical condition. The incident, reported near Devarpur in Surpur taluk under the Surpur Police Station limits, adds to a series of fatal highway accidents in the state involving vehicles catching fire after collisions, raising concerns over road safety and emergency response timelines. Police said the car was on its way from Yadgir to Raichur when it ranned



completely swallowed by fire. They were shifted to a nearby hospital with serious injuries. Fire and emergency services teams reached the spot and worked to bring the blaze under control. The bus too suffered extensive damage after being caught in the fire. Police teams have begun an investigation to determine the cause of the crash. The identities of the deceased are yet to be confirmed. Investigation underway as cause remains unclear. Officials said further details are awaited as authorities piece together the sequence of events that led to the fatal collision. Traffic in the area was briefly disrupted as rescue and firefighting operations were carried out.

into a private bus coming from Bengaluru towards Kalaburgi. The impact was so intense that both vehicles caught fire within moments. The car was quickly reduced to a shell, and those inside had no time to escape. Flames shot up, and people nearby just ran to help. In those frantic moments, they managed to drag two people out of the burning car, just before it was com-

No relief for Pawan Khera: SC refuses to extend transit anticipatory bail, directs him to Assam court

New Delhi, Apr 17: The Supreme Court on Friday declined to extend Congress leader Pawan Khera's transit anticipatory bail, effectively asking him to seek relief from courts in Assam in the case linked to his allegations against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma's wife. In a development that tightens the legal timeline for Khera, the apex court made it clear that the matter must now be pursued before the competent court in Assam, while also underlining that earlier court orders will not influence the final decision. "The court deciding the application shall not be adversely influenced by any order granting transit bail or otherwise. This means that when an applicant seeks anticipatory bail it is filed before the competent court, such court shall decide the plea on its



own merits, uninfluenced by any prior order. In view of the above, the respondent is at liberty to approach the appropriate court. In case the court is not functioning, a request may be made to the court registry, and the same shall act in accordance with the law. With the aforesaid observations, the plea stands disposed of", the Court noted. Top court asks Khera to move Assam court, no interim relief. A Bench of Justices JK Maheshwar and Atul S Chandurkar refused to grant any interim protection from arrest or extend the relief till Tuesday, as

sought by Khera's counsel. "The respondent is at liberty to move the (Guwahati) High Court... The application shall be considered on its own merits," the court said, adding that the Assam court "shall not be influenced" either by the Telangana High Court's transit bail order or by the Supreme Court's earlier stay on it. The Bench also clarified that if the jurisdictional court is not functioning, Khera can seek urgent listing through the registry, which would act in accordance with law. Bench questions court, rejects plea for extension Senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, appearing for Khera, urged the court to grant protection till Tuesday, arguing that the earlier stay order was passed ex parte and that the one-week bail granted by the Telangana High Court was expiring on Friday.

No party has been serious about real interests of SCs, STs, OBCs, Muslims: Mayawati on women's reservation

New Delhi, Apr 17: Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief, Mayawati, on Friday launched a sharp attack on the Congress, Samajwadi Party (SP) and other political parties over their stand on constitutional and reservation-related issues, while also commenting on the women's reservation and delimitation debate. In a post on X, Mayawati said the Congress has historically failed to ensure constitutional and legal rights of SC, ST and OBC communities, accusing it of not taking initiatives to implement reservation quotas in any sector during its tenure in power. She wrote, "In the matter of constitutional/legal rights, etc., of the country's SC, ST, and OBC communities, the Congress, which changes its colour like a chameleon, is the same party that, now talking about these categories in women's reservation, never took any initiative during its central government to



fulfill their reservation quotas in any sector." She further alleged that the 27 per cent OBC reservation recommended by the Mandal Commission was not implemented by the Congress and was later enforced during the government of former Prime Minister V.P. Singh, which she credited to efforts by the BSP. Mayawati also targeted the SP over its approach to backward Muslim reservation in Uttar

Pradesh, claiming earlier reports were not implemented under its rule but were later acted upon by the BSP government in 1995. In another part of her post, she said both SP and Congress change their stance depending on whether they are in power or not, and cautioned communities against being misled. "Therefore, all these communities must always remain cautious of such deceptive and double-faced

parties," she said. On the issue of women's reservation and delimitation, she noted that if implementation is to be done quickly, it would have to be based on the 2011 Census, adding that even Congress, if in power today, would likely have taken a similar step. She also said, "In sum, the purport of saying this is that no party in the country has been serious about the real interests, welfare, and shaping the future, etc., of the SC, ST, OBC, and Muslim communities in any matter." On women's reservation, she added, "Therefore, in the matter of women's reservation, whatever these categories are getting now, they should accept it for the time being, and in this matter, when a better time comes ahead, proper attention will be paid to their interests — meaning, they should not fall for anyone's inducements because they themselves have to stand on their own feet and make their society.

'Attempt to change electoral map': Rahul Gandhi attacks delimitation in Parliament

New Delhi, Apr 17: Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Friday mounted a strong critique of the government's approach to the women's reservation bill and delimitation, arguing in Parliament that the exercise is less about empowerment and more about altering the country's electoral landscape. The remarks come as Parliament debates key proposals linked to women's reservation and a future delimitation exercise, both of which could significantly reshape representation in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies. The discussion has triggered sharp political exchanges over whether the reforms aim at inclusion or recalibration of power. "This is not a women's bill", Rahul Gandhi's central charge



Opening his intervention, Gandhi questioned the very premise of the legislation. "The first truth is that this is not a women's bill. This has nothing to do with the empowerment of women. This is an attempt to change the electoral map of India." He went a step further, calling the move "a shameful act" while reiterating that the intent behind the exercise was political rather than social reform. Alleges BJP trying to 're-jig' India's political map directly accused the ruling party of attempting to redraw political boundaries out of insecurity. "What you (BJP) are doing, because you are scared of the empowerment of women, you are scared of the erosion of your strength, and you are trying to re-jig the Indian political map. You did it in Assam, J&K, and now imagining you can do it in India. You need a constitutional amendment to do that."

Barmer sizzles at 42.9 degrees; IMD warns of dust storms in 8 Rajasthan districts



New Delhi, Apr 17: The Meteorological (MeT) Centre in Jaipur issued an alert for dust storms and light rain in eight districts of Rajasthan on Friday, as Barmer district recorded a temperature of nearly 43 degrees Celsius. According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), a weak weather disturbance is likely to trigger thunderstorms accompanied by gusty winds (30-40 km/h)

dry across the state from Friday till April 22. Cities like Barmer and Jaisalmer are likely to see temperatures crossing 43 degrees. Although a mild Western Disturbance is becoming active, its impact will be limited, offering little respite from the intense heat. In the Jodhpur division, only partial cloud cover is expected, with minimal fluctuations in temperature. On Thursday, temperatures in 10 cities crossed 41 degrees, while in 16 cities, including Jaipur, maximum temperatures hovered around the 40-degree mark. Barmer was the hottest in Rajasthan with 42.9 degrees Celsius, while Jaisalmer was 42.8 degrees Celsius. Bikaner recorded a temperature of 42 degrees, Kota had 41.6 degrees, Nagaur had 39.5 degrees, Churu had 42.4 degrees, Sri Ganganagar had 42 degrees.

'Political demonetisation': Shashi Tharoor warns against linking women's reservation to delimitation

New Delhi, Apr 17: Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Friday sharply opposed linking women's reservation to the proposed delimitation exercise, cautioning in the Lok Sabha that a rushed process could disrupt the federal balance and delay long-pending representation for women. The remarks came as Parliament continued discussions on the Constitution (One Hundred and Thirty-First Amendment) Bill, 2026, which seeks to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in Parliament and state assemblies. The debate has also centred on the Delimitation Bill, which proposes redrawing constituencies and expanding the Lok Sabha. Speaking during the debate, Tharoor urged the



government to delink the two issues and move ahead with women's reservation without delay. He argued that combining a widely supported reform with a complex administrative exercise risks derailing both. "The Prime Minister says the Government has bought Nari Shakti a gift of justice. But he has wrapped it in barbed wire, tethering the implementation of women's reservation to the expansion of Parliament, to

numbers from the 2011 Census and an exercise of delimitation. Why must we entangle a moral imperative with a demographic minefield? Women's reservation is ready for harvest... To link it to delimitation is to hold the aspirations of Indian women hostage to one of the most contentious and complex administrative exercises in our nation's history." Why Tharoor wants women's quota passed immediately Congress leader reiterated his party's support for reservation for women in legislatures, stressing that there is broad political consensus on the issue. He maintained that the measure could be implemented based on the existing strength of Parliament, without waiting for constituency reorganisation. "To link women's reservation to delimitation is holding aspirations of Indian women hostage. Delimitation is fraught with complications that will tear the fabric of federalism. There should be an extensive discussion on the delimitation process. It cannot be conducted in haste. Pass the women's reservation bill today, we will support it. As for delimitation, let us defer it. Give women their reservation... please consider the larger interest of the country." "Delimitation could alter balance between states" Tharoor flagged concerns that delimitation, if carried out without adequate consultation, could reshape political power across states in ways that may deepen regional divides. He pointed to disparities between states that have successfully controlled population growth and those that have not, warning that the exercise may reward the latter with greater representation. "We must be candid about what the implications of the delimitation are... Delimitation requires deliberation. There are three major faultlines: the balance between small and big states, then, the balance between states like Tamil Nadu and Kerala, which have implemented the national goals.

Adani overtakes Ambani to become Asia's richest

New Delhi, Apr 17: Tycoon Gautam Adani has overtaken fellow Gujarat business czar Mukesh Ambani to become Asia's richest person, as a sustained rally in shares of his ports-to-energy conglomerate lifted his net worth. With a net worth of USD 92.6 billion, Adani surpassed Ambani, whose fortune stands at USD 90.8 billion, to become the richest person in India and Asia, according to the latest billionaire rankings. Adani, founder of his eponymous group, oversees India's largest private seaport network, is the country's biggest renewable energy producer and private airport operator, and ranks among the world's largest coal traders. He is currently ranked No. 19 on the Bloomberg Billionaires



Index, which tracks the world's 500 richest individuals and is updated daily. Adani's wealth is largely derived from his shareholdings across the group's 10 listed companies. A recent surge in Adani Group stocks has added billions of dollars in market value, underscoring strong investor appetite for assets linked to India's economic

expansion and energy transition. By contrast, Ambani's wealth, anchored by his flagship conglomerate Reliance Industries that spans energy, telecom and retail, has seen comparatively modest gains, reshuffling the region's billionaire rankings. Topping the Billionaire ranking is Elon Musk, the chief executive of Tesla - the world's most valuable carmaker - and rocket manufacturer SpaceX. His net worth of USD 656 billion is more than double of his closest rival, Larry Page, Page, co-founder of Alphabet, the holding company for Google, is worth USD 286 billion. Jeff Bezos, founder of Amazon, is ranked at No.3 with a net worth of USD 269 billion. Adani and Ambani are the only Indians in the top 50. Ambani has consistently been India's richest for over a decade before Adani's eye-popping gains in company stock prices catapulted him to the top spot in February 2022. However, his group's stock tumbled in the aftermath of a damning report by a US short seller Hindenburg that led to Adani group losing USD 100 billion in market value at lowest point. This

Netflix co-founder and chairman Reed Hastings to step down from board of directors



New Delhi, Apr 17: The Netflix co-founder and chairman Reed Hastings will step down from the streaming service's board of directors in June when his term expires, the company said on Thursday. Hastings plans to focus on philanthropy and other pursuits. Hastings had served as Netflix's CEO for more than 20 years until 2023 after taking over the role from his

friend and fellow company co-founder Marc Randolph in the late 1990s. "My real contribution at Netflix wasn't a single decision; it was a focus on member joy, building a culture that others could inherit and improve, and building a company that could be both beloved by members and wildly successful for generations to come," he said in a statement. The company

announced Hastings' departure along with its quarterly results Thursday, its first earnings report since walking away from its offer to buy Warner Bros. Discovery's studio and streaming business in February. Netflix shares fell nearly 9 per cent to \$98.32 in after-hours trading after the company's outlook disappointed investors despite strong quarterly results.

Bisleri Cracks the Hydration Strategy with Punjab Kings

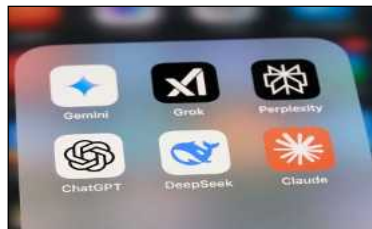
Mumbai, April 17: Bisleri International continues to build on its largest-ever cricket season association with a high-energy, digital-first campaign in collaboration with Punjab Kings. Rooted in cultural relevance, the brand has unveiled a cinematic digital film featuring fan-favourite cricketers Shreyas Iyer, Shashank Singh, and Ben Dwarshuis. With Punjab Kings, Bisleri delivers a film that builds like a breakthrough moment in the boardroom. Featuring Shreyas Iyer, Shashank Singh, and Ben Dwarshuis, the narrative begins with Shreyas declaring, "Maine crack kar liya," instantly sparking a sense of urgency among the players. The tension builds as the players master the #BottleFlip, a challenge requiring steady nerves to land the bottle on its base, before flipping into a clever reveal. The "breakthrough" turns out to be something far simpler: the idea that balanced hydration is the ultimate key to winning. Blending humour with a subtle insight, the film draws a playful link between



balance and performance, landing on a simple truth: when hydration is right, everything else tends to follow. Tushar Malhotra, Director of Sales & Marketing, Bisleri International, added, "We are delighted to partner with Punjab Kings to place hydration at the centre of the cultural conversation. Our latest reveal swaps high-decibel shouting for a smart and playful boardroom face-off with Shreyas Iyer, Shashank Singh, and Ben Dwarshuis, proving that the ultimate 'breakthrough' is actually just a well-timed sip. By combining this clever narrative with the #BottleFlip, we're shifting from passive ads to immersive.

OpenAI to spend more than USD 20 billion on Cerebras chips, receive stake

New Delhi, Apr 17: OpenAI has agreed to pay chip startup Cerebras more than \$20 billion over the next three years to use servers powered by the company's chips, under a deal that could also give the ChatGPT maker an equity stake in the firm. The information reported on Thursday, citing sources. The development comes as OpenAI attempts to pull ahead in the AI race and meet growing demand. In January, the company agreed to buy up to 750 megawatts of computing capacity from Cerebras over three years in a deal valued at more than \$10 billion. Reuters could not independently verify the report. OpenAI did not respond to a request for comment outside regular business hours, while Cerebras declined to comment. The deal highlights the industry's growing appetite for



computing power to run inference - the process by which AI models generate responses. Cerebras could disclose parts of its previously undisclosed arrangement with OpenAI as soon as Friday, the report said. Under the deal, OpenAI will

receive warrants for a minority stake in Cerebras, with its ownership potentially increasing as its spending rises. The information reported. It added that OpenAI has also agreed to provide Cerebras about \$1 billion to help fund the development of data centers that would run its AI products. The company's total spending over the next three years could reach \$30 billion, which may translate into warrants representing up to a 10% stake in Cerebras, the report added. Cerebras' reliance on deal, IPO plans The tie-up with OpenAI is central to Cerebras efforts to go public, with the AI chipmaker targeting a listing in the second quarter of this year. Sunnyvale, California-based Cerebras, last valued at \$2.3 billion, also plans to raise \$3 billion in an offering next month at a valuation of about \$35 billion. The information reported on Thursday. Founded in 2015, the company is known for its wafer-scale engine chips and competes with products from Nvidia and other AI chipmakers. OpenAI CEO Sam Altman is an early investor in Cerebras.

Indians get easier access to Canada, US as Air India-WestJet unlock over 30 routes

New Delhi, Apr 17: Canada and much of North America are now more accessible to Indian travellers, with Air India on Friday joining hands with WestJet to offer seamless, single-ticket access to over 30 destinations across Canada and the United States. The tie-up significantly expands travel options beyond Toronto and Vancouver, reducing the need for multiple bookings and long, complicated transits. The agreement allows passengers to book combined itineraries on Air India and WestJet flights under one ticket, with coordinated baggage handling and smoother transfers, cutting transit hassles and improving the end-to-end journey for long-haul flyers. With the partnership in place, Air India passengers flying into Toronto and Vancouver can now connect onward to 17 Canadian cities,



including Calgary, Edmonton, Montreal, Winnipeg, Halifax, Ottawa, Regina, Saskatoon, Kelowna and St. John's. The network further extends to 14 US cities such as San Francisco, Los Angeles, Atlanta, Detroit, Orlando, Phoenix, Tampa, Nashville, Las Vegas, San Diego, Fort Lauderdale, Palm Springs, Santa Ana and Fort Myers. The expanded network comes amid rising travel demand between India and Canada, driven by strong diaspora links, student mobility and growing trade ties,

with airlines stepping up competition in the lucrative North America market. Air India said select destinations, including Halifax, Calgary and St. John's, will also be accessible via its European gateway, Heathrow Airport, Gatwick Airport, Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport and Amsterdam Airport Schiphol, offering additional routing flexibility for travellers. Nipun Aggarwal, Chief Commercial Officer at Air India, said Canada remains a key market for the airline, citing strong people-to-people connections and increasing trade between the two countries. He said the partnership will make travel across North America more accessible and convenient, with single-ticket itineraries, coordinated baggage handling and a wider choice of destinations.

Markets close higher, Nifty gain 156 pts, Sensex up by 504 pts, FMCG leads with 2.65% gain

Mumbai, Apr 17: The domestic stock markets recovered from a weak start on Friday and closed higher, supported by improving geopolitical sentiment and a return of foreign institutional investor (FII) inflows. The NSE Nifty 50 index ended at 24,353.55, gaining 156.80 points or 0.65 per cent, while the BSE Sensex closed at 78,493.54, up by 504.86 points or 0.65 per cent. Market experts said the positive momentum was driven by easing tensions in West Asia and a reversal in FII flows into net buying territory. Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments Limited, "The domestic market closed the day higher, sup-



ported by improving prospects of a Middle East resolution and a reversal in FII flows into net buying. A ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon helped keep crude below USD 100 per barrel, easing pressure on import-dependent economies." He added that the rupee strengthened during the session, aided by Reserve Bank of India measures and softening geopolitical tensions. Sectorally, all indices on the NSE ended in positive territory. Nifty FMCG led the gains with a sharp rise of 2.65 per cent, supported by price hikes, strong business updates and valuation comfort. Nifty Media surged 1.39 per cent, while Nifty Metal gained 1.06 per cent. Nifty PSU Bank rose by 0.70 per cent, and Nifty Realty index jumped more than 1 per cent. Nifty Auto also edged.

India's current account deficit in FY27 may rise to 2% of GDP even if oil stays at USD 82-87 per barrel: Crisil

New Delhi, Apr 17: India's current account deficit (CAD) is likely to touch 2 per cent of GDP under higher oil price scenarios, according to a report by Crisil. The report stated that in its base case scenario, assuming exports benefit from US tariff relaxations and crude oil prices average between USD 75-80 per barrel, the CAD is expected to widen to 1.5 per cent of GDP in fiscal 2027, compared to a projected 0.8 per cent in fiscal 2026. However, in an alternate scenario where crude oil prices stay at USD 82-87 per barrel, which the report noted appears plausible given current global conditions, the CAD could increase to 2.0 per cent of GDP. It added that a healthy services trade surplus is expected to limit the extent of the widening deficit. It stated, "If oil price were to rise to USD 82-87/bbl, which is our alternate case and looks plausible now, then the CAD could rise to 2.0 per cent of



GDP". The report highlighted that the ongoing West Asia conflict and its duration and scale remain critical factors to monitor, as they could significantly impact global trade and commodity prices. Elevated uncertainties and subdued global growth, particularly in the case of supply shocks, may weigh on exports despite some expected support from reduced US tariffs. On the trade front, India's goods exports contracted 7.4 per cent year-on-year to USD 38.9 billion in March, compared to an average growth of 0.3 per cent in the three months ended February.

Stock markets trade higher in early trade

Mumbai, Apr 17: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty were trading in positive territory in early trade on Friday, supported by optimism around easing geopolitical tensions and fresh foreign fund inflows. A temporary ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon has added to markets' optimism, with expectations that this could pave the way for renewed US-Iran negotiations, an expert said. The 30-share BSE Sensex climbed 177.52 points to 78,166.20 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty advanced 37.4 points to 24,234.15. From the 30-Sensex firms, TCI, Adani Ports, Maruti, Trent, Power Grid and Hindustan Unilever were among the major winners. HCL Tech, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finance and ICICI Bank were among the laggards. Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 1.25 per cent lower at USD 98.17 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 lower. US markets ended marginally higher on Thursday. "The resilience of the mother market US and positive news relating

to ceasefire between Israel and Lebanon bode well for the markets," V.K. Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments Limited, said. Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) bought equities worth Rs 382.26 crore on Thursday, according to exchange data. "While US indices continue to scale record highs, supported by optimism around easing geopolitical tensions, Asian markets have opened lower, reflecting a more cautious interpretation of the same developments," Hariprasad K. Research Analyst and Founder, Livelong Wealth, said. Wall Street



CM Omar Abdullah meets delegations assures time-bound redressal of public issues



JAMMU, APRIL 17: Several legislators, delegations and individuals today called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, raising several issues concerning them for redressal. Former minister and legislator Abdul Majid Wani, and former legislator Chaman Lal from Ramban, highlighted key concerns pertaining to their respec-

ive areas. A delegation from the Indian Institute of Architects, J&K Chapter, led by its Chairman Vikas Dubey, apprised the Chief Minister of issues arising from recent amendments to the Unified Building By-Laws. Meanwhile, a delegation led by President, Jammu University Teachers Association

(JUTA), Prof. Ravinder Singh, presented matters concerning the teaching fraternity. Moreover, several individuals met the Chief Minister to seek resolution of their grievances. The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to all the delegations and individuals, assuring that all genuine issues would be addressed on priority.

JPVCL organizes "Sunshine Snacks: A Picnic Basket Competition" at Jhajjar Kotli

JAMMU: The Jammu Pariyatan Vikas Cooperative Limited organizes in Sunshine Snacks-A Picnic Basket Competition on April 17, 2026. The event was aimed to inculcate the concept of picnics among the school students. The event also focused on creating travel-friendly, sustainable, and creative food such as sandwiches, salads and snacks, while show casing high quality presentation and the themed concepts. A large number of students from various schools including K C Public School, Jammu Sanskriti School, Bhariya Shiksha Kendra Higher Secondary School, Model Academy,



Indent Public School participated in the event with great enthusiasm. The Chief Guest on the occasion was Sh. Riyaz Ahmad (JKAS), General Manager, JKTC. He appreciated the students for depicting their talent and creativity in preparing the picnic basket and also highlighted that more such events should be organized in the

serene environments of nature. Guest of Honour on the occasion was Advocate Sh. VK Magoo, Former Assistant Solicitor general of India and Former Chairman, JK Housing Corporation. Sh. Magoo appreciated the organizers for organizing such an innovative event, especially at the backdrop of the nature.

Bhalla slams governance gaps, flags rising public distress across J&K at Talab Tillo Meet



Jammu, April 17: Bhalla slams governance gaps, flags rising public distress across J&K at Talab Tillo Meet. Raises unemployment, inflation, civic neglect, power-water crisis and welfare delays; calls for urgent people-centric reforms, while Yogesh Sawhney stresses grassroots accountability. **Jammu, Apr 16:** JKPC Working President Raman Bhalla, accompanied by former Minister Yogesh Sawhney, today addressed an impressive public meeting at Sushel Nagar, Ward 32, Block Talab Tillo, highlighting a wide spectrum of pressing public issues confronting the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The meeting, organised by King Kumar (AEE Red), witnessed participation from prominent citizens, retired officials, social activists, and local residents, reflecting growing public concern over governance and developmental challenges in the Union Territory. Addressing the gathering, Bhalla launched a sharp critique of the prevailing situation, stating that rising unemployment has emerged as the biggest crisis for the youth. He said thousands of educated

young people are struggling without meaningful job opportunities, leading to frustration, economic instability, and increasing migration. Bhalla also pointed towards inflation and rising prices of essential commodities, which, he said, have severely impacted household budgets, particularly for middle- and lower-income families already grappling with limited income sources. Bhalla further highlighted serious deficiencies in basic civic infrastructure, including erratic power supply, inadequate drinking water, poor road conditions, and weak sanitation systems in many parts of Jammu. He noted that frequent power cuts and water shortages are disrupting daily life, affecting students, small businesses, and domestic households alike. He stressed that despite repeated assurances, these core issues remain unresolved, reflecting administrative inefficiency and lack of accountability. Raising concerns over corruption and governance deficits, Bhalla alleged that delays in implementation of welfare schemes and lack of transparency have deprived deserving benefi-

ciaries. He specifically mentioned the plight of daily wagers, Anganwadi workers, and contractual employees who continue to face job insecurity and low wages. He also flagged irregularities in pension disbursement to elderly citizens, widows, and specially-abled persons, stating that such lapses hit the most vulnerable sections hardest and erode trust in public institutions. Touching upon the growing menace of drug abuse and crime, Bhalla termed it a serious social challenge threatening the future of the youth. He called for a comprehensive strategy involving strict enforcement, awareness campaigns, and community participation to curb the spread of drugs. He also reiterated the demand for restoration of statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, asserting that democratic empowerment and accountable governance are essential to effectively address the aspirations and grievances of the people. In his address, former Minister Yogesh Sawhney emphasized the need for strengthening grassroots-level governance and ensuring that public representatives remain accessible to the people. He stressed that local issues such as sanitation, drainage, and basic civic amenities require immediate attention and continuous monitoring. Sawhney called for collective efforts to ensure responsive administration and urged authorities to prioritise people-centric policies for sustainable and inclusive development.

Security Wing Conducts Specialised Training for Police Personnel in Samba & Doda

Jammu, April 17: A two-day training module in every district of Jammu Province is aimed at enhancing alertness, preparedness, and professional competence among police personnel. The current two-day session commenced at District Police Lines Samba and District Police Lines Doda today. The aim of this training module is to sensitise every police personnel about their role and responsibilities as part of the Police, and to strengthen the operational efficiency and responsiveness of personnel deployed on security duties from District Police during VVIP/VIP movement and other important events/occasions. Focused training sessions were conducted on VIP



security arrangements and the effective handling of security gadgets. These sessions have been designed to familiarise participants

with standard operating procedures, emerging security challenges, and the proper use of modern equipment in real-time scenarios. The programme witnessed maximum participation from police personnel, including Gazetted Officers (GOs) and Non-Gazetted Officers (NGOs), reflecting a broad-based approach towards capacity building across different ranks. Sh. Rakesh Kumar, JKPS, Staff Officer to IGP Security J&K, and Sh. Khalid Amin, SSP Security J&K, addressed the participants and gave detailed and comprehensive briefings. The officers emphasised the importance of such training programmes in the present security environment and highlighted the need for continuous skill upgradation to effectively tackle evolving threats and challenges.

DC Doda launches 'AASHA' Digital Platform to mainstream Out-of-School Children

DODA, APRIL 17: In a significant step towards strengthening inclusive education, the District administration, Doda, on Friday launched a comprehensive digital initiative-AASHA (Action to Assure Schooling and Holistic Access)-aimed at identifying, tracking and mainstreaming Out-of-School Children (OoSC) across the district. The move has been taken under the Centrally Sponsored Scheme Samagra Shiksha. The web-based platform, accessible at www.aasha.ceododa.in, was formally launched by Deputy Commissioner Krishan Lal at DC Office



in the presence of Chief Planning Officer Manesh Kumar Mathas, Chief Education Officer Bhusan Kumar Pathak and other key officials associated with the initiative. Developed under the aegis of the Chief Education Officer, AASHA marks a

transition from conventional paper-based surveys to a dynamic, technology-driven system. The platform is designed to generate real-time, household-level educational data, enabling scientific identification of children who are either never enrolled or have dropped out and facilitating their enrollment and sustained retention in schools. The initiative follows directives from Project Director Samagra Shiksha J&K Bhawani Rakwal and Director School Education Jammu Naseem Javid Chowdhary, who emphasized the need for updated and accurate OoSC data

through field-driven mechanisms. The planning and field framework developed with key contributions from K. D. Shah (Auditor, Samagra Shiksha Doda) and Majid Anjum (Programmer Samagra Shiksha Doda). The technical development of the platform was undertaken in-house by Saqib Ahmed (Incharge IT, CEO Office Doda) and Rafaqat Rasool (Vocational Trainer IT, GHS Nichlatihara), who built it as a Progressive Web Application (PWA) featuring offline survey capability, real-time data capture and user-friendly dashboards.

Div Com Kashmir reviews progress of 60 MLD Noorbagh STP, other Key Projects

SRINAGAR, APRIL 17: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, today conducted a comprehensive review of the progress on the 60 MLD Sewage Treatment Plant (STP) at Noorbagh, along with other major ongoing projects being executed by the Urban Environmental Engineering Department (UEED) in Kashmir. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Akshay Labroo; Chief Engineer, KPCC, Superintending Engineer, UEED, Executive Engineer, R&B; representatives from NBCC; and other concerned officials. At the outset, the Superintending Engineer, UEED, delivered a detailed presentation covering key aspects of the projects, including electricity supply, leakage issues, pending household connections, relocation of shops along the 90-feet road, and demoli-



tion of unsafe structures at Alamgirbazar. He also shared details on the preparation of a Detailed Project Report (DPR) for newly developed habitations in Zone-III of Greater Srinagar, incorporating advanced systems such as tertiary treatment and SCADA for the 60 MLD STP. The meeting also reviewed

progress on other proposed STPs, including a 30 MLD facility aimed at mitigating pollution in Dal Lake, a 14 MLD STP at Alluchibagh, and a 6 MLD STP to address pollution in Doodganag. During the review, the Divisional Commissioner directed that all issues related to electricity supply and leakages at the

Noorbagh STP be resolved by May 31 to ensure the facility becomes fully operational. He further emphasized expediting the connection of all pending households to the STP network. Regarding the relocation of shops, officials informed that funds have already been released by UEED and the process is expected to be completed by August this year. It was also noted that UEED is in the process of preparing a fresh in-house DPR for newly developed habitations in Zone-III of Greater Srinagar, incorporating tertiary treatment, SCADA, and Online Continuous Effluent Monitoring Systems (OCEMS). With respect to the proposed 30 MLD STP, the chair was informed that all pending issues have been resolved, and both survey and design work have been completed, while site development is currently under progress.

JU Launches 100-Day Anti-Drug Drive; VC calls drug abuse a National threat

Jammu, April 17: In line with the vision of the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor and Chancellor, University of Jammu, Shri Manoj Sinha, to build a drug-free Jammu & Kashmir through a collective societal response, the University of Jammu today launched the 100-day Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBBA) with a pledge ceremony administered by the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Umesh Rai, marking the beginning of a sustained institutional and community-driven effort. Addressing the gathering, Prof. Umesh Rai emphasized that drug abuse can no longer be viewed merely as a social concern, but has assumed the dimensions of a serious national challenge. He observed that the menace is deeply intertwined with larger security concerns, with



deliberate attempts being made to push youth towards addiction, thereby weakening the social and national fabric. He cautioned that when the youth of a nation are affected, it directly impacts the country's future, making the issue one of both security and sovereignty. Highlighting the role of educational institutions, the Vice-Chancellor stated that universities carry a crucial responsibility in ensuring the meaningful engagement and positive direction of youth. He noted that alongside academic pursuits, institutions

must actively work towards spreading awareness within campuses and across society. In this regard, the University of Jammu has committed itself fully to the campaign, focusing on both student engagement and community outreach. Prof. Rai underscored that the fight against drug abuse cannot be left to the government alone. He stressed that it is a collective responsibility, involving students, faculty, employees, administrators, and society at large. He called for extending the campaign beyond the University campus to its

offsite campuses and surrounding regions, including Bhadervah, Poonch, Reasi, Kathua, Udhampur, Kishtwar, and Rammarg, to ensure wider awareness and impact. The Vice-Chancellor further highlighted the growing seriousness of the drug menace in Jammu and Kashmir and called for heightened awareness and vigilance at all levels. He urged all stakeholders to remain alert in their surroundings and actively contribute towards building a drug-free society. Referring to the continuous efforts being undertaken at the highest levels, he acknowledged the proactive role of the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor and Chancellor in addressing the issue and mobilising society against the drug menace. The launch of the campaign at the University of Jammu reflects a strong commitment to transforming the initiative into a people's movement, with active participation from students, faculty, and the wider community, aimed at safeguarding the future of youth and ensuring a healthier, drug-free Jammu and Kashmir. Among others present on the occasion included Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, faculty members, officers, staff, students, and scholars.



SASCI reforms aims at capital growth and fiscal efficiency: Chief Secy

Emphasizes on timely utilization of capex funds across departments



JAMMU, APRIL 17: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo convened a high-level meeting of the Finance Department, attended by the Administrative Secretaries, to review the progress of departmental work plans and the status of reforms under the Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment (SASCI). During the meeting, the Chief Secretary assessed expenditure trends and underscored the importance of timely and efficient utilization of allocated resources. He emphasized the need to prioritize capital expenditure (Capex) from the very beginning of the financial year, cautioning against the tendency of last-minute

spending rushes that often compromise efficiency and outcomes. Highlighting the importance of proactive planning, the Chief Secretary directed departments to ensure prompt uploading of works on the BEAMS portal to facilitate timely tendering and execution. He further stressed the need for equitable distribution of projects across districts, aligned with on-ground requirements to ensure balanced development across all regions. Reiterating the strategic importance of SASCI reforms, the Chief Secretary urged Administrative Secretaries to accord them top priority, noting their potential to bring substantial economic benefits to the Union

Territory through incentive-based funding amounting to hundreds of crores. He called for their strict implementation in both letter and spirit to ensure tangible outcomes. Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shaileendra Kumar, emphasized accountability and adherence to timelines, urging all departments to finalize and upload their action plans on the BEAMS portal by April 21, 2026. He noted that while 100 per cent budget allocation has been made, further financial releases including the second installment of Capex funds will be contingent upon fulfillment of key reform conditions and demonstrable progress. The meeting also highlighted key reforms man-

dated under SASCI guidelines, including the adoption of end-to-end digital tendering and contract management systems under Component II. Departments such as Power Development Department (PDD), Jal Shakti, Housing & Urban Development Department (HKUDD), and Youth Services & Sports (YSS) were directed to onboard the PWD-OMAS platform at the earliest to enhance transparency, monitoring, and accountability. Progress in critical sectoral reforms was also reviewed, including mining sector reforms, operationalization of the Right of Way (ROW) Rules 2024, rollout of AgriStack in the Agriculture Department, and livestock sector reforms. It was emphasized that significant advancements in these areas are crucial for unlocking subsequent funding tranches. To streamline financial management, all departments were directed to establish separate Single Nodal Agency (SNA) accounts for efficient release and monitoring of SASCI funds.

Satish Sharma emphasizes robust enforcement mechanism in Legal Metrology, zero tolerance for consumer exploitation

JAMMU, APRIL 17: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Transport, Youth Services & Sports and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting of the Legal Metrology Department to assess its functioning and strengthen enforcement mechanisms aimed at protecting the consumer interests. The meeting was attended by Controller Legal Metrology and other senior officers of the department. They briefed the Minister on the current status of enforcement drives, manpower deployment, inspection mechanisms, and key challenges being faced in ensuring compliance



across markets. Emphasizing the critical role of the Legal Metrology Department in safeguarding the consumer rights, the Minister directed the officials to intensify regular market inspections and ensure strict adherence to the prescribed standards. He stressed that enforcement must be visible, consistent and effective to deter violations and build consumer confidence. Sharma laid special emphasis on inspection of

petrol pumps, directing the department to undertake frequent and surprise checks to prevent any malpractices in measurement and delivery. He said that even minor discrepancies in fuel dispensing directly impact the consumers and must be dealt with firmly. He instructed that strict penal action be taken against the erring outlets found violating norms. The Minister further directed the officials to widen the scope of inspections to

cover shops, retail outlets and other commercial establishments. He called for strict monitoring of the use of standardized weights and measures, proper stamping and verification of equipment and mandatory display of price lists and other consumer-related information to ensure transparency and accountability. Highlighting the need for a proactive approach, Sharma asked the department to strengthen its field presence and adopt a technology-driven monitoring system to ensure efficiency and accountability. He also stressed the importance of regular awareness campaigns to educate the consumers about their rights and encourage them to report violations.

Fresh batch completes Desktop Publishing training at RSETI

KISHTWAR, APRIL 17: A group of unemployed youth on Friday completed Desktop Publishing (DTP) training course conducted by RSETI Kishtwar on its campus. The training programme was conducted over a specified duration, during which trainees were imparted both theoretical knowledge and practical exposure. The course curriculum included training in different DTP software such as MS Office, CorelDRAW, Photoshop



and PageMaker, along with modules on typing skills, document formatting, graphic designing, printing

techniques and basic computer fundamentals. In addition, sessions on entrepreneurship development,

digital literacy, communication skills and financial inclusion were also conducted to prepare the trainees for real-world challenges. Special emphasis was laid on hands-on practice, enabling trainees to design visiting cards, brochures, pamphlets, banners and other publishing materials. The participants gained knowledge about setting up small DTP units, managing clients and understanding market demand.

National conference on Indian Knowledge Systems concludes at SKUAST-Jammu

Speakers advocate blending traditional knowledge with modern science for Viksit Bharat 2047



JAMMU, APRIL 17: The three day National Conference on "Integrating Indian Knowledge Systems with Modern Science for Viksit Bharat", organized by Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Jammu (SKUAST-Jammu), concluded today with a valedictory function held at Baba Jitro Auditorium, Main Campus, Chamba. The valedictory function was attended by Professor B. R. Kamboj, Vice Chancellor, Chaudhary Charan Singh Haryana Agricultural

University (CCSHAU), Hisar, as the chief guest and Babilal Rakwal, Commissioner Secretary, Science and Technology as the guest of honour. Professor B. N. Tripathi, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-Jammu lauded the successful organization of the conference. He remarked that the participation of diverse disciplines and multiple generations has been one of the major achievements of the conference. He expressed satisfaction over the enthusiastic involvement of a large number of students.

He emphasized that with the Government of India's strong focus on Indian Knowledge Systems (IKS), SKUAST-Jammu is committed to actively contribute and take meaningful initiatives in this direction. Addressing the gathering, Professor B. R. Kamboj highlighted the need for scientific validation, documentation and wider dissemination of traditional knowledge for national development. He underscored that India's traditional knowledge systems hold immense potential in ensuring sustainability and resilience and their integration with modern science is vital for realizing the goal of Viksit Bharat by 2047. Commissioner Secretary, in her address, appreciated the initiative taken by SKUAST-Jammu and said that India is a land of profound wisdom from Ayurveda to Astronomy rooted in centuries of knowledge and innovation. The need of the hour is not only to preserve this rich legacy but to integrate it with the modern science, paving the way for a truly Viksit Bharat.

GCoE Srinagar intensifies NMBA 2026 drive organize awareness session, mass pledge ceremony

SRINAGAR, APRIL 17: Government College of Education (GCoE), IASE Srinagar is actively participating in the ongoing Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyaan (NMBA) 2026, and today the institute organized two significant activities under the banner aimed at promoting substance abuse prevention and mental well-being among students and staff. The College Wellbeing and Anti-Substance Cell (CWASC), in collabora-

tion with the Nodal Principal Kashmir Division Colleges organized an awareness and lecture session in the Conference Hall of the institution, focusing on the HED NMBA Policy 2026, outlining a comprehensive roadmap for developing substance-free and mentally healthy campuses. Principal, Dr. Seema Naz graced the occasion as Patron. The programme was coordinated by Prof. Lateef Ahmad Shah and moderated by

Prof. Mohd Ishaq Dar, who highlighted the administrative framework and monitoring mechanisms of CWASC. In his technical lecture, Prof. Lateef Ahmad Shah elaborated on key policy components, including the Mentor-Mentee System, Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training, and the Pyramidal Sports Model to ensure holistic student engagement. The session concluded with an interactive discussion focusing on

post-rehabilitation reintegration strategies, including academic flexibility through SWAYAM and bridge courses. In continuation of the initiative, a Mass Pledge-taking Ceremony was organized by the Department of Languages in collaboration with CWASC. The pledge taking ceremony aimed to instill a sense of responsibility among participants towards building a drug-free society.



STOP...!

MOSQUITO BREEDING

PREVENT MALARIA, DENGUE, CHIKUNGUNYA AND STAY HEALTHY

- Do not allow water to stagnate in and around your surroundings.
- Keep water tanks and other water containers tightly covered with lids.
- Get your Blood tested from Govt. Hospital/Health Worker in case of Fever with chills, rigors and headache.
- Empty water coolers once in a week.

- Discard/destroy Junk items like old tyres etc.
- Empty air coolers, drums, flower pots and birds bath weekly.
- Use Mosquito repellent creams and Bed nets while sleeping.
- Wear full body clothes to prevent mosquito bites.
- Improve basic sanitation.

In case of positive result get free treatment from the nearest Health Institution

STATE MALARIOLOGIST/STATE PROGRAMME OFFICER,
NATIONAL VECTOR BORNE DISEASES CONTROL PROGRAMME (NVBDCP) J&K
DIRECTORATE OF HEALTH SERVICES JAMMU

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All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent courts and forums in Jammu City

