

# North in News

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## Youth must be equal partners in building Viksit Bharat 2047: Mansukh Mandaviya

**SRINAGAR, APR 24:** Union minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Friday said youth must be equal partners and not just beneficiaries in building Viksit Bharat 2047. The minister was speaking at the three-day Chintan Shivir of ministers of Youth Affairs and Sports from states and Union Territories (UTs) that commenced at the SKICC here. The Shivir is being led by Mandaviya, who is the Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports; and Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports, Raksha Nikhil Khadse. The first day, themed "Samvaad Se Samadhaan", focused on strengthening youth engagement frameworks through M Y Bharat, with emphasis on pol-



icy alignment, institutional convergence and outcome-oriented programme delivery. In his keynote address, Mandaviya highlighted the importance of inclusive and participatory governance. "The

vision of this Chintan Shivir is to ensure individual involvement by bringing every youth voice into the decision-making process," he said. He said India has the world's most powerful demographic dividend, and to realise the vision of Viksit Bharat 2047, it is essential that youth are actively involved in shaping policies that will ultimately benefit them. Underlining the need for collaborative nation-building, he said, "We must make youth equal partners in achieving the goals of 2047, not just beneficiaries of schemes. Proper nurturing of youth can be achieved through district youth officers (DYOs), who can effectively

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## LG Manoj Sinha launches 'drug free J&K campaign' in Reasi



**JAMMU, APRIL 24:** The Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha today launched 'Drug-Free J&K Campaign' in Reasi, urging

communities, institutions, and individuals alike to unite in the fight against drug abuse, a crisis he warned is eroding the very

foundations of society from within. The Lieutenant Governor appealed for a broad based people's movement while highlighting that for the past 12 days, a collective force has risen across the Union Territory against drugs and people are resolutely committed to the objective to make this land free from narcotics. Highlighting the achievement of the campaign in the past 12 days, the Lieutenant Governor said that in Jammu division, between 11 April and 22 April, large number of cases were registered and several drug smugglers

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## Major political shake-up: 7 AAP Rajya Sabha MPs break away, announce merger with BJP



**NEW DELHI, APRIL 24:** In a major political development that reshapes the balance in Parliament, seven Rajya Sabha Members of Parliament from the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) have resigned from the party and announced their decision to merge with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), inflicting a massive setback on AAP's presence in the Upper

House. Addressing a joint press conference, Raghav Chadha, along with Sandeep Pathak and Ashok Mittal, said that more than two-thirds of AAP's Rajya Sabha MPs have decided to invoke constitutional provisions to formalise their merger with the BJP. Rajya Sabha members, who left AAP and have announced to merge with BJP includes Raghav Chadha, Sandeep Pathak, Ashok Mittal, Rajender Gupta, Harbhajan Singh, Swati Maliwal and Vikramjit Singh Sahney. "We have decided that we, the two-thirds members belonging to the AAP in the Rajya Sabha, exercise the provisions of the Constitution of India and merge ourselves with the BJP," Chadha said. Chadha, who played a key role in the move, expressed deep dissatisfaction with the party's current

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## Modi Says Phase-1 Polling Signals 'Wave Of Change', BJP's Victory In Bengal

**KOLKATA, APR 24:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday claimed that the "wave of change" in West Bengal has become evident in the first phase of polling and asserted that the support shown in "favour of the BJP" sounded the conch shell of its victory in the assembly elections. Addressing a rally at Dum Dum Lok Sabha constituency in North 24 Parganas, Modi alleged

that the ruling TMC had "crushed the temple of democracy" in Bengal through "dictatorship", but said that the people of the state began to "reconstruct" it through their mandate. "The wave of change that had been visible in Bengal for a long time — yesterday's first phase of voting has put its seal on it. The support shown yesterday in favour of the BJP has sounded the conch shell of its victory,"

(Contd on Pg 2)

## CM Omar Says BJP Delaying Statehood As 'Punishment'

**SRINAGAR, APR 24:** A day after Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma launched a sharp attack on the Omar Abdullah Government, the Chief Minister hit back accusing the BJP of admitting that statehood for J&K was being delayed as "punishment" because people voted for the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference. The latest exchange was triggered after Sharma on Friday accused the Omar Abdullah-led government of "non-performance, corruption and misplaced priorities," and being "busy in marathons, skiing and 5-star dinners." Sharma also asserted that the demand for restoration of statehood should not be linked to any individual or political family, in an apparent reference to the Abdullahs. "Statehood will come at its own time, but it cannot be



sharper than the Omar Abdullah government of "non-performance, corruption and misplaced priorities," and being "busy in marathons, skiing and 5-star dinners." Sharma also asserted that the demand for restoration of statehood should not be linked to any individual or political family, in an apparent reference to the Abdullahs. "Statehood will come at its own time, but it cannot be

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### BRIEF NEWS

**Crackdown on Drug peddlers Under Nasha Mukta Abhiyan Demolished**

**JAMMU, APR 24:** In a strong action against the drug menace, District Administration, Jammu with help from Jammu Police demolished three properties linked to notorious drug peddlers at Simbal, Malikpur and Gujjar Bolol Khad in Jammu as part of the ongoing Nasha Mukta Abhiyan. The demolished structures were identified as illegal by the police, or acquired through proceeds generated from narcotics trafficking. The action was carried out amid tight security arrangements to prevent any disturbance during the operation. The demolition was aimed at dismantling not only the narcotics supply chain but

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**14 drug peddlers arrested in Kashmir**

**SRINAGAR, APR 24:** Police on Friday said 14 drug peddlers have been arrested in various parts of Kashmir with contraband substances as part of a 100-day campaign to make Jammu and Kashmir drug-free. According to a police spokesperson, the arrests were made in Ganderbal, Anantnag, Budgam, Kupwara and Baramulla districts. In continuation of the ongoing 100-day 'Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan', police have arrested 14 drug peddlers and recovered contraband substances from their possession, the spokesperson said. In Ganderbal, during naka checking, a police party intercepted a vehicle with two persons on

(Contd on Pg 2)

## J&K records over 4.52 lakh artisan registrations, pushes skill expansion with NIFT collaboration

**JAMMU, APR 24:** Jammu and Kashmir has recorded registration of over 4.52 lakh artisans, alongside expansion of training and capacity-building programmes in collaboration with the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) in the Union Territory, officials said. This was revealed at a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo to review the progress and future roadmap for large-scale promotion and strengthening of the handicrafts and

(Contd on Pg 2)

## High-Level Railway Team Inspects Ravi Bridge On Kathua-Madhopur Section Of Jammu Division



**JAMMU, APR 24:** A high-level team of the Indian Railways on Friday conducted a comprehensive safety and technical inspection of rail bridges over the Ravi river on the Kathua-Madhopur section of the Jammu division, officials said. The inspection was led by divisional railway manager Vivek Kumar, commissioner of railway safety

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## ACB unearths major land scam in Jammu

**24 FIRs lodged against revenue officials, land grabbers**

**JAMMU, APRIL 24:** The Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has unearthed major land-related irregularities here, registering 24 FIRs against revenue officials, land grabbers, conduits and beneficiaries involved in alleged fraudulent usurpation of prime custodian land parcels, officials said on Friday. According to the ACB, thousands of kanals of custodian land in areas including Asarwan, Mshirwala, Bahawal and R S Pura were illegally grabbed by land mafia in connivance with attorney holders and officials of the custodian and revenue departments. The irregularities came to light after inputs were received that large tracts of land had been fraudulently grabbed through tampering of revenue records, before being sold to unsuspecting buyers, officials said. Accordingly, 24 FIRs have been registered by the ACB and a thorough investigation has been launched, they said. A verification conducted by the ACB revealed that over 1,000 kanals of custodian land were shown allotted to displaced persons of PoK (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir) on the basis of fake or forged orders, even though many beneficiaries were not entitled to such allotments, the ACB said. Officials said several displaced persons from PoK territories had already been allotted land, but their relatives, ineligible for additional allotments, managed to secure mutations in their favour through fraudulent means. This was allegedly done in connivance with patwaris, girdawars,

(Contd on Pg 2)

## India becoming 'Vishwaguru' is certain to happen, don't doubt country's future: Bhagwat

**NAGPUR, APR 24:** RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Friday said India will certainly become a 'Vishwaguru' and nobody should harbour any doubts about the country's future. Earlier, people doubted if Ram temple will ever be built, but it came into being. Similarly, India becoming a 'vishwaguru' (teacher to the world) is certain to happen, he said. Bhagwat was speaking after laying the foundation stone of Bharat Durga Mandir here.



The vision of India becoming a vishwaguru would be realised through consistent efforts and collective discipline, he said, expressing confidence that such a transformation could be witnessed in the present generation. Doubts about India's future should be abandoned, he said. "Don't doubt India's future. (Contd on Pg 2)

## Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and Ladakh L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena inaugurate Sound and Light Show at Leh Palace

Sound and Light Show will boost heritage tourism in Ladakh

**LEH, APRIL 24:** In a major boost to the promotion of cultural and heritage tourism in Ladakh, a mesmerising Sound and Light Show was inaugurated yesterday, at the historic Leh Palace by the Union Minister of Tourism and Culture, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, and the Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena. The project, implemented by the India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) under the Ministry of Tourism, has been executed at a cost of 78.57 crore, reflecting the Government of India's commitment to strengthening tourism infrastructure in heritage destinations like Ladakh. Leh Palace,



one of Ladakh's most iconic monuments, was built in the 17th century by King Senge Namgyal and served as the residence of the Namgyal dynasty and the administrative and ceremonial centre of the region. Over the centuries, it has stood as a witness to Ladakh's political, cultural, and spiritual evolution, making it an invaluable heritage asset. The newly inaugurated

Sound and Light Show presents Ladakh's rich cultural, historical, and architectural legacy through modern and engaging techniques, making heritage more accessible to visitors. The Show is a testament to the integration of such a contemporary facility within an ASI-protected monument, highlighting that heritage conservation and enhanced visitor experience can go hand in hand.

Highlighting the significance of the initiative, Gajendra Singh Shekhawat stated that Ladakh, particularly Leh, holds immense tourism potential and is entering a new phase of transformation under the leadership of Vinai Kumar Saxena. He noted that at a time when the country is witnessing rapid development, Ladakh is fortunate to have leadership

(Contd on Pg 2)

## Mamata winning polls in Bengal, Congress in Kerala, DMK in TN: Farooq

**SRINAGAR, APR 24:** National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah claimed on Friday that opposition parties are winning Assembly polls in the three key states of West Bengal, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. "I tell you, and the rest, god knows, Mamata Banerjee is winning in Bengal, Congress is winning in Kerala and (MK) Stalin's party (DMK) is winning in Tamil Nadu. This is God's blessing," Abdullah told reporters at Harzabal when asked about the ongoing elections. Responding to a question on the conflict in the Middle East, the NC chief said peace is essential and expressed hope that the war would end as

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## FROM PAGE ONE

## Youth must...

channelise ideas emerging from the grassroots, the minister added. He said youth clubs can act as the foundation of youth engagement. Calling for robust policy-making processes, Mandaviva emphasised that stakeholder consultation is essential for effective policy formulation and transparency must ensure that input directly translates into output without leakages. Addressing the event, Khadse noted that the Chintan Shivir provides a platform for meaningful dialogue and action. "This Chintan Shivir offers a platform for fruitful discussions to identify key issues and evolve actionable strategies for the youth of the country," she said. She emphasised participatory governance, saying, it is imperative that youth are actively involved in the decision-making process at every level. Highlighting the importance of grassroots inputs, she added, "Discussions must flow from the ground level through DYOs to the national level, ensuring that policies reflect real needs and aspirations."

## LG Manoj...

were arrested. He said narcotics valued at nearly Rs. 3 crore have been seized and about Rs. one crore worth of movable and immovable properties were attached.

"Properties of drug smugglers have been demolished. 187 driving licenses and four vehicle registrations have also been cancelled. Financial investigations have been initiated against 48 drug peddlers. Drug and chemist shops have been inspected, and 15 drug store licenses have been cancelled. Drug users have been referred to de-addiction and rehabilitation centres and Counselling has also been extended to drug users," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor also observed that 1,947 women committees have been established across districts in the Jammu division since the beginning of the campaign on 11th April and with the support of mothers and sisters, this cancer in society will be cured.

"We must build a historic movement, one that rises from homes, schools, mohallas, and communities; a movement that begins with open, honest dialogue in towns and villages. Mothers and sisters are the moral bedrock of our society and with their help we can win this battle," the Lieutenant Governor said. Speaking on the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor said that over two dozen drug traffickers have already been identified and they will be tracked down and held accountable. He said in the Jammu division, thousands of peddlers remain under surveillance, and each one will be relentlessly pursued until they are apprehended and brought into custody.

"Security checks have been stepped up around schools, colleges, and other vulnerable areas. I want to make it absolutely clear that those who engage in the grave crime of poisoning the future of our youth through drug trafficking will face the harshest consequences under the law," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor also drew attention of police and all enforcement agencies to the fact that drug traffickers and terrorists operate hand in hand and they should be treated as allies in crime.

"Our response should be decisive, thorough, and unyielding. Every route drug smuggler exploit should be watched, every financial chain should be dismantled, and every asset stripped away until their networks are completely destroyed," the Lieutenant Governor observed. The Lieutenant Governor said that for over a decade, Jammu Kashmir has carried the heavy silence surrounding the menace of drug abuse and this historic people's movement was launched to shatter that silence.

"With collective strength we must raise society's voice against the scourge of narcotics. Drugs are a wound in the heart of our society. To heal this wound, we require a people's movement that mobilises the full strength of society to eradicate drugs at their roots. The 'Nasha Mukht J&K' campaign also serves to remind us that among the strongest pillars of society are the rule of law, constitutional values, the ethic of duty, and a spirit of Jan Bhagidari," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor asked the NGOs, social workers and spiritual leaders to join the campaign in large number in cities and villages. "Social organisations, spiritual leaders, and educators are the frontline guardians of this mission. I firmly believe that through their leadership, hope can be rekindled and society renewed. The full strength of the government and the community stands beside them," the Lieutenant Governor said.

## Major...

functioning. "The AAP, which I nurtured with my blood and sweat and gave 15 years of my youth to, has deviated from its principles, values and core morals. Now this party does not work in the interest of the nation but for its personal benefits," he said. He further added that he had been distancing himself from party activities for some time. "I did not want to be a part of their crimes. I was not eligible for their friendship because I was not a part of their crime. For the past few years, I felt that I am the right man in the wrong party," he remarked. According to Chadha, AAP currently has 10 MPs in the Rajya Sabha, and more than two-thirds have supported the merger. He confirmed that the MPs have signed the necessary documents, which were submitted to the Rajya Sabha Chairman earlier in the day. Apart from Chhabra, Pathak, and Mittal, two MPs backing the merger include Harbajan Singh, Rajinder Gupta, Vikram Sahney, and Swati Mishra. Chadha emphasised that the group had two options, either to quit politics altogether or to continue public service through what he described as "positive politics." Choosing the latter, the MPs decided to align with the BJP. The development marks a significant shift in the political landscape, particularly in the Rajya Sabha, where AAP has held a notable presence in recent years.

## Modi Says...

he said. Nearly 92 per cent of the 3.60 crore electors turned up to vote in the first phase of the West Bengal assembly polls on Thursday.

"In Bengal, where the TMC had crushed the temple of democracy with its dictatorship, people have started reconstructing the temple of democracy. Now, in the second phase, you have to unfurl the victory flag over this temple," the Prime Minister said.

He claimed that the TMC was "extremely rattled" after the first phase of polling and alleged that the ruling party had mobilised its "goons" through the night.

The Prime Minister also alleged that after the poll results on May 4, "TMC's goons" will have no place to hide.

"The first phase of polling had marked the end of the TMC's 'maha jungle raj'," he claimed. Stepping up his attack on the ruling party over women's safety, Modi described the TMC as an "anti-women party" and said the BJP believed in a "women-led development model".

Referring to women candidates fielded by the BJP, Modi said the party had given representation to those who had suffered injustice.

"This mother helped her daughter become a doctor. But that daughter was taken away from her by the TMC. We have made that mother a candidate," Modi said while referring to the party's Panhati candidate, the mother of the RG Kar rape-murder victim.

"The BJP has also given an opportunity to the victim of Sandeshkhali to lead. When the women of Bengal ask for justice, the TMC tells them not to step out of their homes," Modi alleged.

## CM Omar...

On Friday, Omar said the BJP — the people of J&K are to be punished and denied statehood because they voted for @JKNC. So much for their tall promises & claims." Omar said on X.

In a sharp jibe at Sharma, Omar also remarked that the Assembly functioned "more productively" in his absence, taking a swipe at the BJP leader who had recently returned from Assam.

"Welcome back from Assam Mr LoP. The assembly was quiet, and far more productive, without you," Omar added.

On Friday evening, NC spokesperson and MLA Tanvir Sadiq also took a swipe at Sharma, saying he was "about to file a missing report" for the party's Leader of Opposition.

LoP Sharma on Friday said promises made by Omar Abdullah Government to the people — such as free LPG cylinders, 200 units of electricity, and employment for youth — remain unfulfilled. He questioned the Government's focus, alleging that governance has taken a backseat while leaders remain visible only in marathons, skiing events and high-profile engagements.

The BJP leader further alleged an administrative breakdown, claiming there is no effective public outreach, departmental review, or visible presence of ministers on the ground. He also accused the administration of rampant corruption, alleging that common citizens were forced to pay bribes for routine work at various Government offices.

## J&amp;K records...

and handloom sectors, highlighting a series of initiatives aimed at revitalising and modernising the traditional crafts ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir.

He said the department is focusing on expanding training and capacity-building programmes in collaboration with NIFT, including its Budgam centre, to integrate modern technology with traditional craftsmanship. "Short-term courses and diploma programmes ranging from 15 days to one year are being offered to artisans and weavers," he added.

The Chief Secretary, who reviewed the sector's performance, stressed the need to further expand such training programmes in collaboration with NIFT to enhance skills and improve market competitiveness of local crafts. Singh further said that multiple project proposals have been submitted to Government of India for approval to strengthen the handicrafts sector across districts.

Director Handicrafts and Handloom, Kashmir, Mussarat Islam highlighted key initiatives, including the establishment of a craft village at Sonpah in Budgam, setting up of common facility centres (CFCs) for wool processing, yarn dyeing and delairing in Srinagar, and upgradation of IICIT Srinagar and laboratories.

He also outlined efforts to enhance product quality and curb counterfeit products.

Director Handicrafts and Handloom, Jammu, Mohammad Nazir Sheikh said several projects are under consideration by Ministry of Textiles, including raw material depot for Pashmina and wheat straw clusters, a bamboo cluster at Samba, a calico printing cluster at Jammu, and development of an Urban Haat at Samba.

He added that multiple CFCs in Kathua and Samba districts have already been completed. He said the department has taken financial inclusion initiatives, including the Credit Card Scheme for Artisans and Weavers, under which more than 2,400 cases have been sanctioned, providing credit facilities up to Rs 2 lakh with interest subvention.

"Under the Karkhandar Scheme, 46 karkhanas have been established with government assistance amounting to Rs 185.79 lakh," he added.

On Geographical Indication (GI) certification, he said 970 new authorised GI users were registered during 2025-26, taking the total to nearly 4,700 across various crafts, while 80,545 products have been QR-labelled.

Officials said Jammu and Kashmir has achieved the distinction as the only Union Territory in the country to secure GI tags across its entire range of traditional crafts. Taking a comprehensive review of departmental initiatives, the Chief Secretary emphasised the immediate oper-

ationalisation of non-functional training centres across districts to ensure uninterrupted skill development and capacity building of artisans and craftsmen.

He directed that these centres be aligned with the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) to ensure wider recognition of training certifications.

Stressing formalisation and financial inclusion, he instructed the department to enhance artisan registrations on the Udyam portal and facilitate their linkage with the RBI's Unified Lending Interface (ULI) to improve access to affordable credit.

He further advised exploring the introduction of a dedicated term loan product for the sector, on the analogy of the agriculture sector, to enable capital infusion and business expansion.

Reviewing the progress on GI tagging, he directed optimal use of the QR-based management system for tracking and tracing GI products and emphasised its full operationalisation through integration with the Government of India's MeghRaj cloud platform.

## ACB unearths...

nab tehsildars and tehsildars, either without any valid government or Provisional Rehabilitation Office (PRO) orders or on the basis of forged documents, they said. The ACB further found that no such allotment orders were issued by the PRO, and the accused subsequently sold or transferred the land through attorney holders and contractors, causing substantial losses to the government exchequer.

During the course of the probe, a prima facie nexus between land grabbers, attorney holders and revenue officials was established in the illegal alienation of custodian land, they said. "In one such instance, about 20 kanals and 9 marlas of land were fraudulently transferred." Following the findings, the ACB registered three additional FIRs at the ACB Central J-K police station for in-depth investigation under relevant sections of the Jammu and Kashmir Prevention of Corruption Act, along with charges of criminal conspiracy, cheating, forgery and fraud. Those named in the FIRs include erstwhile patwaris, former tehsildars and a then nab tehsildar, besides others. The investigation into the case is ongoing, and further arrests and revelations are expected, officials added.

## India becoming...

Live with courage and self-reliance and practise these values in daily life. India will be strong and will guide the world," he said.

"There should be no confusion whether it will happen or not. What is destined will happen," he said, citing the Ramayana movement as an example of perseverance leading to eventual success.

"If we act according to our resolve step by step, India will become strong, virtuous and a global guide," he added. Bhagwat said that to truly understand India, people must first understand Bharat deeply and then begin to live it in their everyday lives.

"To worship Bharat Mata, we must become Bharat ourselves," he said, adding that the country must be understood from its own civilisational values rather than through a colonial or Western lens developed over 150 years.

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief urged citizens to shed "layers of Western thinking" and reconnect with Indian traditions in thought and conduct.

This transformation would begin with small but meaningful changes in daily life such as language, clothing, food habits and cultural practices, he said.

"India must be known, accepted and lived in daily life," he said, stressing that only through such a process of self-education can the vision of a strong and confident India be achieved.

The idea of worshipping Bharat Mata is not limited to rituals, but requires individuals to transform themselves into Bharat in their own lives, he said.

## High-Level...

The primary objective was to assess ongoing repair work on rail bridge number 17, which had sustained damage due to heavy rainfall in 2025, they said. During the visit, officials carried out an in-depth analysis of key structural and safety parameters, including the condition of pillars and foundations of the bridge. Given the strategic importance of the route connecting Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir, particular emphasis was laid on evaluating its load-bearing capacity and long-term stability, they said. The team also reviewed track geometry, the condition of sleepers on and around the bridge, and the functioning of modern signalling systems to ensure safe train operations. The commissioner of railway safety inspected equipment and emergency response mechanisms available at the site and directed engineers to remain prepared for the upcoming monsoon season and other weather-related challenges.

## Gajendra...

committed to environmental conservation, tourism promotion, and heritage preservation in line with the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi.

He described the inauguration of the Sound and Light Show at Leh Palace as a moment of pride, emphasising that the initiative goes beyond tourism infrastructure and represents a meaningful step towards bringing Ladakh's rich history, including that of the Nangyal dynasty, to life. He added that the immersive multimedia experience would connect both domestic and international tourists with the region's culture and heritage, effectively bridging the past and the future.

The Union Minister further remarked that Ladakh is not merely a tourist destination but a land of centuries-old civilisation, where spirituality, culture, art, and natural beauty coexist. He lauded the efforts of the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in preserving and revitalising heritage, noting that conservation also involves celebrating civilisational legacy for future generations. Lieutenant Governor Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena stated that

the project marks an important step towards promoting sustainable cultural and heritage tourism in Ladakh. He emphasised that the initiative will help visitors better understand and appreciate the region's rich history and cultural legacy.

He further noted that the Government of India, under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, has accorded high priority to the development of Ladakh since it became a Union Territory, with equal focus on infrastructure development and preservation of cultural heritage.

The Lieutenant Governor underscored that the Sound and Light Show will be a major value-add to Ladakh's tourism ecosystem by enriching the visitor experience and fostering a deeper connection with the region's culture and history. He added that it will also promote night-time tourism, thereby creating new opportunities for local guides, performers, hospitality providers, transport operators, and small businesses, contributing to employment generation and local economic growth.

Reterning the Administration's vision, the Lieutenant Governor emphasised that Ladakh's natural beauty is complemented by its vibrant culture and heritage, and that sustained efforts are being made to position Ladakh as one of the most sought-after tourist destinations in the country and the world, while ensuring a world-class experience for visitors.

## Mamata...

soon as possible. "If peace does not return to the Middle East, tragedies for this world are major and everyone — every country, every leader — must try and see that this war comes to an end immediately. I hope that the US president has realised that Israel was not right in pushing him towards war. I hope to god that he will move quickly and China and Russia will also see to it that this war comes to an end as quickly as possible," he said. On the Centre's Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister said people's support is imperative to win the war against drugs.

"Till parents and people do not support the fight, the government cannot end the drug menace. The important thing is the people's support and if they support, it will, god willing, end the menace," he added.

## Crackdown...

also the financial infrastructure supporting such criminal networks. Senior police officers stated that Jammu Police remains committed to a zero-tolerance policy against drug trafficking and warned that strict legal action would continue against those involved in narcotics trade, including attachment and demolition of properties acquired through illegal means. The public has been urged to cooperate with police by sharing information related to drug-related activities so that the campaign against narcotics can be strengthened further across the district.

## 14 drug...

board, who were identified as Bilal Ahmad Bhat of Batwina and Mudashir Ahmad Hajeem of Arampora, he said.

During a search, 100 bottles of cocaine phosphate, specific combinations of which are banned in India, were recovered from their possession. The two have been arrested and the vehicle used in the commission of the crime has also been seized, he said.

In Anantnag, acting on a tip-off, a police team raided the residence of Mohammad Younis Dar at Semthan and recovered 246 grams of charas. He has been arrested, the spokesperson said.

At the Ashajipora bypass in Anantnag, a naka party intercepted a vehicle with two persons onboard and recovered contraband substances from them. The accused were identified as Fardin Khan alias Sameer Khan of Qazi Mohallah, and Numan Riyaz Khan of Lazalib, the spokesperson said.

During a naka checking at Donipawa, Nisar Ahmad Sheerqo of Sheerpora was apprehended with a substance resembling poppy straw, he said.

In another operation, police apprehended Adnan Ishaq Mir of Ashajipora at Barbal Chae and recovered approximately 2 grams of a heroin-like substance from his possession, he added. Acting on credible information about illegal narcotic substances intended for sale to local youths in a house in the Choudhary Bagh Subden area in Budgam, a police party conducted a search and recovered 2.713 kg of charas-like substance, the official said.

The accused, who was identified as Hilal Ahmad Sheikh, was apprehended on the spot, he said. In Kupwara, a police team intercepted a vehicle driven by Shafiq Ahmad Dar of Tikker at a checkpoint at Bumhama Muqam crossing and recovered a "substantial quantity" of heroin-like substance from his possession, he added.

In Baramulla, police apprehended four people during routine naka checking at Wussan crossing, the spokesman said.

They were identified as Khalid Ahmed Khan of Katipora Tangmarg, Tanveer Ahmad Sofi of Sheikhpura Khreli, Bilal Ahmad Bhat of Goutlipora Tangmarg and Hritiyaz Ahmad Magray of Michpura Tangmarg. During a search, syringes with needles, silver foil and other narcotic paraphernalia were recovered from them. All four of them were shifted to the hospital for medical examination and they tested positive for the consumption of opioids, likely heroin, subject to confirmation through a forensic analysis, the spokesperson said. In the Sopore area of Baramulla, a police team intercepted and apprehended Zaid Bashir Bhat of Upper Ashpeer Sopore during naka checking at Baage-e-Sundri crossing, he said. During a search, psychotropic substances, including capsules and tablets, were recovered from him.

Cases under relevant sections of law have been registered at respective police stations and investigations have been launched in all these incidents, the spokesperson said. In Anantnag, police registered 16 FIRs and destroyed illegal poppy cultivation spread over approximately 150 marla (1 marla is equal to 272.25 sq ft).

# Denial of Statehood Hitting J&K's Development Prospects: Javed Rana

All the promises made by NC Manifesto will be fulfilled: Rattan Lal Gupta

**JAMMU, APR 24:** Senior Jammu and Kashmir National Conference leader and Hon'ble Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest and Tribal Affairs, Javed Rana, today said that the long-promised restoration of statehood is not merely a constitutional obligation but the key to restoring effective governance and accelerating development in Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing a massive gathering of party functionaries and workers in Doda during the second leg of his five-day Chenab Valley visit. The meeting was presided over by Shadab Suharwardy District President Doda Urban. Others who were present Rattan Lal Gupta Provincial President J&K National Conference



Jammu, Abdul Gani Teli Chairman OBC Cell, Harshvardhan Singh President NCSU, Naveed Hashmi Zonal President Chenab Valley Zone YNC, Asim Hashmi former DDC Member, Farooq Ahmad (Gazi) District Secretary Doda Urban, Sarshad Nattoo former BDC

lighted the pro-people initiatives taken by the Omar Abdullah-led government to undo the developmental setbacks of the previous decade under non-NC regimes. He said the Jammu region is back on the path of growth, with focused investments in education, infrastructure, employment generation, healthcare, and welfare of backward and economically weaker sections. He added that the government is committed to inclusive governance and will fulfill every promise made in its manifesto. However, he noted that the delay in restoration of statehood has had a debilitating impact on developmental outreach, given the region's geographical and linguistic diversity and its unique challenges, which cannot be effectively addressed under the present Union Territory setup. Echoing these views, Rattan Lal Gupta said the government has faced multiple challenges since assuming office, including depleted finances, natural calamities, and the Pahalgam attack. He alleged that the previous BJP-PDP regimes had weakened governance and reduced public participation, issues that are now being reversed. Gupta said the present government has made governance more accessible and people-centric, introducing welfare measures such as free travel for women, 200 units of free electricity, additional ration support, enhanced social welfare pensions, and employment initiatives.

# Legislators, deputations call on CM Omar Abdullah, highlight constituency issues



**JAMMU, APR 24:** Several legislators and deputations today called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah here and apprised him of a range of issues concerning their respective constituencies, seeking timely intervention and resolution. MLA Ramnagar Sunil Bharadwaj, MLA Habbakadal Shamim Firdous, MLA Budhal Javid Iqbal, MLA Kokernag Zaffar Ali Khatana, MLA Thanamandi Muzaffar Iqbal Khan and former minister Yashpal Khandelwal were among those who met the Chief Minister. During the interactions, the representatives raised various development-related concerns, including

augmentation of basic infrastructure, improvement in road connectivity, strengthening of healthcare and educational facilities, and addressing public service delivery issues in their areas. They also highlighted constituency-specific demands and sought focused attention to ensure balanced and inclusive development. The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to the visiting legislators and deputations and assured them that all genuine concerns would be examined on priority. He reiterated the government's commitment to responsive governance and equitable development across all regions.

# Welcoming Strengthening of Legal Aid Outreach in J&K Calls for Priority to Needy and Further Judicial Reforms

**JAMMU, APRIL 24:** Darshan Rana, President, BSP Jammu & Kashmir UT, has welcomed the initiative of the Hon'ble High Court in flagging off Multi Utility Vehicles to expand legal aid outreach across Jammu & Kashmir. He stated that this step is a positive and much-needed move towards ensuring that justice reaches the doorsteps of the common people, especially those living in remote, rural, and underprivileged areas. He expressed hope that these vehicles will be effectively utilized to provide timely legal assistance and awareness, and that the benefits will reach the most needy and marginalized sections



of society first. While appreciating the effort, Darshan Rana emphasized that long-pendency of cases remains a serious concern and must be addressed with equal urgency. He stressed that access to legal aid must go hand in hand with speedy disposal of cases, so that justice is not delayed. He further welcomed the High Court's strict directions regarding adherence to office timings and discipline within the judiciary, stating that such measures are essential for improving efficiency and accountability in the system. However, he underlined that there is still a need for broader and deeper reforms in the judicial and legal services framework to ensure transparency, responsiveness, and timely justice delivery. Darshan Rana reiterated that true justice will only be achieved when the system becomes more accessible, efficient, and sensitive to the needs of the common people.

# JKPDP leader Narinder Sharma honours top achievers at Janta Model High School

Praises outstanding results, encourages students to pursue higher goals with dedication

**RS PURA, APRIL 24:** Senior leader of the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party (JKPDP), Narinder Sharma, today felicitated meritorious Class 10 students of Janta Model High School, Kothi Shah Doula, in the RS Pura constituency for their outstanding performance in board examinations. The felicitation ceremony was organised to recognise academic excellence and encourage students to pursue higher goals. Among those honoured were Sameeksha Bharadwaj, who secured an outstanding 98%, Neha



Kumari with 83%, and Tanveer Kour, who also scored 83%. The programme witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, teaching staff, and members of the local community, who applauded the achievements of the young scholars. Addressing the gathering, Narinder Sharma congratulated the students for their remarkable success and appreciated the consistent efforts of their teachers and

Tanveer for setting a benchmark of excellence. I also commend the school administration, especially the Principal, for nurturing such talent. I urge all students to remain committed to their goals and continue striving for success in life," Sharma said. Speaking on the occasion, Principal Jatinder Kour expressed pride in the achievements of the students and credited their success to disciplined efforts and quality guidance. "I feel extremely proud of our students who have brought laurels to the school. He also commended the role of the school leadership, particularly Principal Jatinder Kour, in maintaining high academic standards and a disciplined learning environment. He noted that such accomplishments are the result of collective dedication and serve as an inspiration for others. "Today is a proud moment for all of us. The outstanding performance of these students reflects not only their hard work but also the dedication of their teachers and the constant support of their parents. I congratulate Sameeksha, Neha, and

# Karan Bhagat appointed AICC SC Dept National Coordinator; vows to strengthen Congress at grassroots

Expresses gratitude to AICC leadership for reposing faith, pledges dedicated efforts for upcoming Panchayat and ULB polls

**JAMMU, APRIL 24:** In a significant organisational move, the Indian National Congress (AICC) has appointed Karan Bhagat from Jammu & Kashmir as one of the National Coordinators of its SC Department with immediate effect. The announcement was made through an official press release issued by AICC General Secretary K. C. Venugopal. The appointment is part of the party's broader effort to strengthen its outreach and organisational structure across the country, particularly among marginalized communities. Karan Bhagat's inclusion from



J&K UT is being seen as a recognition of his consistent grassroots work and commitment to party ideology. Reacting to his appointment, Karan Bhagat expressed heartfelt gratitude to the party high command for reposing faith in him. He termed the responsibility as both an honour and a challenge, assuring that he would work tirelessly to live up to the expectations of the leadership. "I sincerely thank the Congress high command for trusting me with this

important responsibility. I pledge that I will not leave any stone unturned in taking the party to the grassroots level and strengthening its base across Jammu & Kashmir. My focus will be on connecting with people at every level and addressing their concerns effectively," Bhagat said. He further emphasized the importance of organisational engagement, and active public participation, particularly in view of the forthcoming Panchayat and Urban Local Body (ULB) elections. Bhagat asserted that the Congress party would put up a strong performance by mobilising workers and reconnecting with

the masses. "With collective efforts and dedicated teamwork, we will ensure that the Congress emerges stronger in the upcoming Panchayat and ULB elections. I am committed to working closely with party workers and leadership to build a robust organisational structure at the grassroots," he added. Party leaders and workers from the RS Pura constituency and other parts of Jammu & Kashmir welcomed the appointment, expressing confidence that Bhagat's elevation would energize the cadre and further strengthen the party's presence in the region.

# MLA Bahu Ch. Vikram Launches Drainage Upgradation in Sanjay Nagar, Residents Express Gratitude

**JAMMU, APRIL 24:** Continuing his efforts to upgrade civic infrastructure, Hon'ble MLA Bahu Constituency Ch. Vikram Randhawa today commenced the upgradation of the drainage system in Sector-1, Sanjay Nagar, Ward No. 46. The initiative was carried out in the presence of Mandal President Sahil Mahajan along with his team including Narinder Koki, Bharat Bhushan, Jagjeet Singh, Subash Gupta, Subash Sharma, Puran Chand, Pardeep Sharma, Jatinder Sharma, Vicky, Raju, Sanjay Sharma and local residents. Officials from Jammu Municipal Corporation, including the concerned JE and Supervisor, were also



present on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, MLA Randhawa stated that such developmental works are being taken up to ensure proper drainage facilities and to resolve long-pending issues faced by the residents. He further reiterated his commitment to continue working for the welfare and overall development of the constituency. MLA Randhawa assured the public that such development works will continue and every effort will be made to ensure better infrastructure and living conditions for the people of the constituency. Local residents expressed their gratitude to MLA Randhawa for addressing a long-pending issue and initiating timely action. They appreciated his proactive approach towards resolving public concerns.

# Army Commander Northern Command Chairs Security Review Meeting at Nagrota

**NAGROTA, APR 24:** Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Northern Command, chaired a high-level security review and coordination meeting at Nagrota today. The meeting was attended by key stakeholders and representatives from all Joint Control Centres (JCCs), who provided comprehensive briefings on the prevailing security situation and ongoing operational dynamics. During the meeting, the Army Commander emphasized the critical importance of strengthening inter-agency synergy to effectively address evolving security challenges. He



underscored the need for enhanced coordination among all stakeholders, ensuring seamless integration of efforts across various security agencies. Lieutenant General Pratik Sharma highlighted the significance of real-time intelligence sharing as a cornerstone for proactive and effective operations. He stressed that timely dissemination of actionable intelligence and coordinated responses are vital for maintaining a robust security grid in the region. The Army Commander also called for the execution of seamless joint operations, reiterating that cohesive functioning among all agencies remains key to ensuring peace, stability, and security. He lauded the professionalism and dedication of all personnel involved and exhorted them to continue.

# Living Celebration of Compassion, Love and Co-existence – Manav Ekta Diwas

**JAMMU, APRIL 24:** When the divine consciousness of compassion, love and oneness awakens within the heart, humanity rises above narrow self-interests and becomes a powerful medium for the welfare of all creation. Illuminated by sublime values such as selfless service, kindness and benevolence, this sacred occasion became a symbol of that divine realization where the message "Let humanity love humanity and become a support to one another" was not confined to words alone, but came alive in hearts. In the holy presence of Satguru Mata Satjiskha Ji Maharaj and Nirankari Rajpita Ji, Manav Ekta Diwas was observed today in the loving memory of Baba Gurbachan Singh Ji, at Ground No.



8, Delhi. Simultaneously, the occasion was celebrated with devotion and dedication at thousands of Satyang Bhawans across the country. Today Blood Donation Camps were held at nearly 200 locations across India, through which approximately 40,000 units of blood were collected. In Jammu, the camp was held at Sant

Nirankari Satyang Bhawan Shastri Nagar. The Camp was inaugurated by Sh. Sher Singh JKAS ADC Jammu. While speaking on the occasion, he said that he has attended many blood donation camps organized by Sant Nirankari Mission and has always seen the Mission actively engaged in the service of humanity. He remarked that blood donation is not only a great donation, but also a gift of life, as it helps save the lives of needy patients in hospitals. He highly appreciated Sant Nirankari Mission for its dedicated and selfless humanitarian service. In this camp 210 Units of Blood donated by the devotees. Aji Singh Zonal Incharge Jammu said that in memory of Yugpravartak Baba Gurbachan Singh Ji, this day also marks the beginning of a year-long stream of service activities, under which blood donation camps will be organized at nearly 705 locations nationwide, further strengthening the spirit of compassion and unity. It is noteworthy that this sacred tradition of blood donation has continued uninterrupted for the past four decades.



## Jasrotia felicitates meritorious students of GMHSS Hatli; hails outstanding academic performance in 10th & 12th Results

Commends 97.92% overall pass percentage, celebrates toppers' achievements; girls outperform boys in Class 12 examinations

Kathua, Apr 24: BJP MLA from Jasrota constituency, Rajiv Jasrotia, today felicitated meritorious students of Classes 10th and 12th of Government Model Higher Secondary School, Hatli, during a special function organized to honour academic excellence and encourage young achievers. Chief Education Officer Kathua, Kewal Krishan, also attended the event, which was graced by prominent local representatives including Sarpanch Bhopinder Singh, Sarpanch Punjab Singh, Naib Sarpanch Dixit Sharma, Gandharb Singh, Lekh Raj and others. Speaking on to occasion, Rajiv Jasrotia congratulated the students for their outstanding academic performance and lauded the dedicated efforts of teachers and parents in shaping their success. He said that such impressive results reflect the hard work of students as well as the steady improvement in the quality of education being imparted in government schools of the region. Rajiv Jasrotia, while interacting



with the students, motivated them to continue striving for excellence and to remain focused on their goals. He also assured continued support for strengthening educational infrastructure and expanding opportunities for students in the constituency. The school delivered a remarkable performance in Higher Secondary Part-II (Annual Regular) 2026, with students excelling in both Science and Arts streams. In the merit list, Deepshikha emerged as the topper with 492 out of 500 marks (98.4%) in Science stream, securing 6th position. Jaambi Devi

secured 489 marks (97.8%) and achieved 9th position. Anjali Bhadwal and Arushi Rajput also performed exceptionally well, each scoring 483 marks (96.6%) in the Science stream. In the Arts stream, Lalita Devi secured 478 marks (95.6%), followed by Sunil Singh with 475 marks (95%). Narinder Singh and Riya Devi scored 473 marks (94.6%) each in Arts and Science streams respectively. Other notable achievers included Nitika Choudhary (94.4%), Kavita Rani (93.8%), Lal Singh (92.6%), and Harshika Rajput (92.4%). A total of 62 stu-

dents successfully cleared the Class 12th examination, reflecting strong academic outcomes. The institution achieved an outstanding overall pass percentage of 97.92%, with 145 students appearing in the examination and 143 successfully passing. Girls once again outperformed boys, recording a pass percentage of 98.38%, while boys achieved 97.5%. Out of the total candidates, 83 were boys and 62 were girls. Both Science and Arts streams demonstrated excellent results. Out of 145 students, 103 were from Science and 42 from Arts. The school maintained near-perfect success rates, reflecting academic discipline, consistency, and strong institutional support. The school achieved remarkable academic milestones in the examination results, reflecting the hard work of students and the dedication of teachers. A total of two students secured merit positions, while 66 students earned distinctions for their excellent performance.

## PTTI Vijaypur organized felicitation Function



Vijaypur, Apr 24: Principal Technical Training Institute Vijaypur (PTTI) Sh. Ranjit Singh Sambyal-IPS, organized a special felicitation function at the Institute. The event was held to honor and appreciate the wards of subordinate police personnel of the Institute for their outstanding performance in class 10th & 12th examinations. The students included Miss Disha D/O Sg. Conatable Sunil Kumar,

who scored 99.2% marks from J&K Board and Master Vandhan Veer Singh S/O Sg. Conatable Dinesh Singh, who scored 99.8% marks from CBSE in class 10th during the academic session 2025-26. Miss Muskan Slatina D/O Foll Sher Singh scored 92.2% marks in class 12th from J&K Board during the academic session 2025-26. On the occasion, Principal lauded all the students for their hard work and remarkable academic achievements, stressing the importance of quality education in shaping the future of the nation. The students were presented with certificate of appreciation and memento to encourage them to continue pursuing excellence in their higher studies. Among other staff present on the occasion were Sh. Satis Kumar-DySP(Indoor) and Khushwant Singh-DySP (Outdoor/Admn) of the Institute.

## Rana holds convention in Doda, assures swift redress of public grievances

Doda, Apr 24: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, on Friday convened a convention during which the people apprised him the issues concerning their respective areas. During the interactive session, the Minister engaged extensively with the general public, who raised a wide range of pressing issues and developmental concerns affecting different parts of the Chenab Valley. The participants highlighted the grievances such as lack of compensation for the flood-affected families, drinking water shortage in Doda town, delay in regularization and wage disbursement of daily wage workers, need for repair and desilting of irrigation khuls, delay in forest clearances for development projects and slow pace of implementation of water supply schemes under the Jal Jeevan Mission. The participants stressed that timely intervention in these areas is essential for

improving the quality of life in the district. Responding to the concerns, Rana assured that the government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is committed towards addressing the genuine public issues with urgency and accountability. He said that all the matters raised during the convention would be taken up for prompt and time-bound resolution in coordination with the concerned departments. It is pertinent to mention that the Minister is currently on an extensive tour of the Chenab Valley and, as part of the outreach, will hold public meetings, interact directly with the citizens and chair the district-level review meetings to monitor the developmental works and ensure effective implementation of key government schemes. The Minister further underscored the importance of responsive governance and said efforts are being made to bridge the developmental gaps across the regions and sub-regions of Jammu and Kashmir.

## Anganwadi Workers, Helpers backbone of grassroots child welfare, community development: Sakeena Ito

JAMMU, APRIL 24: Minister for Social Welfare, Education, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Ito today said that Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and Helpers are the backbone of grassroots child welfare and community development, adding that their role extends far beyond service delivery. The Minister was speaking at the concluding ceremony of 8th Poshan Pakhwada celebration held at Government Polytechnic College, Jammu. Mission Director ICDS, Sajad Hussain Ganie, Secretary in Social Welfare department, Bashir Ahmad Khan; Director Social Welfare Jammu, Ranjeet Singh;



Director Health Services Jammu, Dr. Abdul Hamid Zargar; Programme officers, CDOs, Supervisors and large number of Anganwadi workers and Helpers were also present on the occasion. Addressing the gathering, the Minister appreciated the dedication and tireless efforts of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers, describing them as the

backbone of grassroots child welfare and nutrition services. She said that their role extends far beyond service delivery, as they serve as the first point of contact for mothers, children and families in rural as well as urban areas. "Anganwadi Workers are the real change-makers at the grassroots. Their commitment towards early childhood care, nutrition, pre-school education and child welfare is laying the foundation for a healthier and empowered future generation," the Minister stated. She highlighted that ICDS sector is very big sector and more than 28,000 of our sisters work in this sector. "As far as the ICDS or social welfare sector is concerned, some other departments are connected to this sector like education, health and others. Our Anganwadi workers and Helpers perform duties in these departments during awareness programmes or other events, apart from their parent department," she said. The Minister stressed the need for collective efforts from all stakeholders, including families, communities, and government departments, to ensure that every child receives proper nutrition and every mother has access to essential healthcare and support. She underscored the importance of Poshan Pakhwada as a people-centric initiative focusing on combating malnutrition, improving health outcomes for women and children, and creating awareness about balanced nutrition and early childhood care. Giving background of ICDS sector, Sakeena Ito said that in the year 1996, the then Chief Minister Feroz Abdullah brought this project into Jammu and Kashmir and implemented it.

## NCC (SW) Cadet of GGM Science College Conferred Best Cadet Award 2025

Jammu, April 24: Cadet Suhani Koul of GGM Science College, Jammu, and 8 J&K Girls Battalion NCC, has been conferred the prestigious Best Cadet Award 2025 by the Cadets Welfare Society under NCC Group Headquarters, Jammu. She has actively participated in several NCC camps, including CATC J-22, EBSB Jammu, CATC S-17, ATC J-14, CATC J-11, and CATC J-1, showcasing remarkable dedication and enthusiasm throughout her training. She has been recognised for her exceptional discipline, commitment, and outstanding performance in various NCC activities. Her exemplary leadership qualities and consistent participation have distinguished her among her peers. The award, carrying



an cash prize of ₹4,500/-, was presented during a formal ceremony held at NCC Group Headquarters, Jammu. The achievement reflects her hard work as well as the high standards of training imparted by the institution. Principal Prof. (Dr.) Romesh Kumar Gupta lauded the cadet's achievement, stating, "Cadet Suhani Koul has brought laurels to GGM

Science College through her grit and perseverance. This honour reaffirms our commitment to nurturing disciplined, confident, and service-oriented youth who embody the true spirit of the NCC." Dr. Shafia Saleem, ANO, GGM Science College, said, "Suhani's journey in NCC has been marked by sincerity and a will to excel. From her first camp to this award, she has led by example. Her success will motivate many young girls to join NCC and serve the nation with pride." Her achievement serves as a source of inspiration for fellow cadets and students, reinforcing the values of discipline, commitment, and dedicated service to the nation.

## Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan

### Wall painting activity held at Government Degree College Majalata

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 24: Government Degree College Majalata organized a wall painting activity today under the aegis of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan. The initiative was held under the direction of Deputy Commissioner, Mingsha Shepa to spread awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and promote a drug-free society. The programme was conducted under the dynamic leadership of Prof. Dr. Shalini Sharma, Principal of the college. Addressing the participants, the College

Principal highlighted the crucial role of youth in eradicating substance abuse and encouraged students to act as ambassadors of positive change in society. The activity witnessed active participation from faculty members, including Dr. Chandar Mohan, Prof. Naresh Kumar, Dr. Dalip Kumar, Prof. Kamal Jeet and Dr. Sunil Singh, who guided and motivated the students throughout the event. Students from different streams participated enthusiastically and contributed to the creation of vibrant wall paintings

carrying impactful messages such as Say No to Drugs, Choose Life, Healthy Mind and Healthy Body. The event concluded with a collective pledge by students and staff reaffirming to uphold the vision of a Nasha Mukht Bharat and to actively spread awareness within their communities. Meanwhile, several other government departments and educational institutions also organized a series of activities under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan to reinforce the campaign's message across the district.

NORTHERN RAILWAY									
Notice Inviting Tender									
BIDDING/QUOTE/offer to be submitted on behalf of the President of India in the best interest of the tenderers for the work as per. Bidders will be able to submit their original/best bids up to closing time 15.05.2026 at 15:00 hrs. When all offers are received, the tenderer and any such amount after the award and not to be refunded.									
Tender No.	Name of work	App. Cost (Rs.)	Cost of Tender form (Rs.)	Date & time for submission of tender	Estimated Money (Rs.)	Completion period	Opening of tender	Website	Particulars
103A-TRD-2025-26	TRD work in low-voltage improvement in	3,04,24,122.50	NIL	Up to 15.05.2026 15:00 Hrs	10,85,000/-	Twelve (12) Months	15:05:2025	www.rail.nic.in	
TRD-JAT-2025-26	BAHL, GRAM, section & GNDK Station over Jammu division			15:00 Hrs			after 15:00 hrs	govin	

Note: \*Tenderer (s) may please note that offers received without Bid Security either in cash through e-payment gateway or as Bank Guarantee bond from a scheduled commercial Bank of India or as mentioned in tender documents (as per Annexure-1) valid for a period of 90 days beyond the bid validity period, will be considered as incomplete & voidable offer and henceforth corrected will have no effect on the Bidding. Ref: TRD/JAT-2025-26 Dated: 23.04.2026

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

## District Administration Kishtwar organizes mega awareness program under Nasha Mukht JK Abhiyan

KISHTWAR, APRIL 24: As part of the ongoing 10-day "Nasha Mukht JK Abhiyan," the District Administration Kishtwar today organized a Mega Awareness Program here at the Government Degree College Auditorium. The program witnessed the participation of more than 300 individuals including district officers, teachers, students and staff from different departments, reflecting strong community commitment towards eliminating drug abuse from the district. Managing Director JKPDCI Rahul Yadav, who is the District Mentor for Nasha Mukht JK Abhiyan, for Kishtwar, attended the program as the

Chief Guest. The program commenced with lighting of a ceremonial lamp by the Chief Guest. Addressing the gathering, the District Mentor Rahul Yadav appreciated the District Administration for effectively implementing the Nasha Mukht JK Abhiyan. He emphasized the crucial role of education in prevention efforts and stressed the importance of capacity building of teachers to strengthen long-term awareness and behavioural change among the youth. He also highlighted the need to address drug abuse with seriousness and sensitivity. He said suspected drug-related deaths should not be ignored due to social stigma, as it prevents proper understanding of



the issue. "Post-mortem is important to determine the actual cause of death and detect possible drug overdose, which

also helps in tracing the source and taking preventive action," he noted. He urged society to stay united, act responsibly and support efforts to build a drug-free Jammu and Kashmir. Earlier, in his welcome address, Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma informed the District Mentor and other participants about the awareness activities being conducted as part of the ongoing campaign. "District Kishtwar remains relatively less affected by the menace due to strong family bonds and a vigilant community system" he noted and added that schools and colleges are actively monitoring students, with prompt reporting of any suspicious signs to the adminis-

tration and police. However, he said extensive awareness drives have been conducted in the last 13 days, covering more than 760 schools, 136 panchayats and 11 municipal wards. "Activities are being carried out daily across the district with active participation of all stakeholders," he added, expressing confidence that coordinated efforts would lead to the elimination of the drug menace. The Deputy Commissioner also highlighted rehabilitation initiatives, stating that Kishtwar has taken lead in this area. "Under Mission YUVA, two de-addicted individuals have been successfully rehabilitated and provided financial assistance to support their reintegra-

tion into mainstream society," he informed. District Social Welfare Officer Tariq Parvez Qazi gave a PowerPoint presentation, highlighting the initiatives undertaken under the Abhiyan. It was also informed that National Panchayati Raj Day is being observed today across the district as per the notified schedule. The programme featured yoga demonstration, Nukkad Natak by school students and thematic dance performance by artist Tavishi Anand, all aimed at promoting a drug-free society. At the end, the District Mentor administered the "Nasha Mukht JK Pledge" to the participants, who collectively reaffirmed their commitment.



**Zubair reviews NMBA implementation in Bandipora; stresses on sustained 100-Day campaign strategy**

**BANDIPORA, APRIL 24:** Commissioner Secretary Floriculture, Parks and Gardens, Zubair Ahmad, today chaired a comprehensive review meeting at DC office complex here to assess the implementation of anti-drug initiatives across the district.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib; Senior Superintendent of Police Bandipora, Ajaz Ahmad Zargar; Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora; SDM Sumbal; and other senior officers of the district administration.

Speaking during the meeting, the Commissioner Secretary, who also serves as District Mentor for Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan (NMBA) for Bandipora district, stressed on the need to build public



confidence to encourage voluntary reporting, called for complete eradication of poppy cultivation, and directed sustained engagement of youth through structured programmes.

He emphasised on grass-root outreach programmes with people driven response and hoped that with consistent enforcement and sustained public engagement and awareness we would be able to eradicate the drug menace and substance abuse from the society. Appreciating the district administration's efforts, the Commissioner Secretary described the action plan as comprehensive and well-articulated, and lauded the proactive role of the Deputy Commissioner. He also emphasised on the importance of addressing stigma associated with addiction and treatment, underlining

that coordinated and collective efforts of all stakeholders would be key to achieving lasting impact. During the meeting, Deputy Commissioner presented a detailed report outlining the district's strategy, progress achieved so far and the roadmap ahead. It was informed during the meeting that the Lieutenant Governor had earlier launched a 100-day campaign under the Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan, following which the District Administration Bandipora rolled out a district-level campaign backed by a structured action plan. The Deputy Commissioner highlighted the administration's outcome-focused approach and emphasised that the initiative went beyond the stipulated period and become a permanent feature of the district's functioning. She noted that gaps in inter-departmental coordination had been identified in Member and that concerted efforts had since been made to strengthen coordination, particularly with law enforcement. She elaborated that the district strategy rests on sustained awareness campaigns, the Maa Se Gufagu series engaging frontline workers and self-help groups, outreach through Friday sermons in coordination with religious leaders, proactive media engagement, and consistent enforcement measures. She also pointed out the emerging trend of women being involved both as peddlers and users, underscoring the need for targeted interventions. Progress reports from multiple departments.

**Budgam strengthens Anti-Drug Campaign under 100-Day Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan**

**BUDGAM, APRIL 24:** As part of the ongoing 100-day intensive Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, District Budgam today carried forward a series of awareness and preventive activities across multiple sectors, reaffirming its commitment towards building a drug-free society. A plantation drive was organized at ASYM District Hospital Budgam under the campaign, symbolizing collective responsibility towards promoting a healthy environment and a drug-free future. Health officials, staff members, and participants actively joined the initiative. An awareness session was also held at GDC Budgam, where students and faculty participated in sensitization programmes highlighting the harmful effects of substance abuse and the importance of adopting healthy lifestyle practices. As part of enforcement measures, the Excise Department Budgam conducted a survey at Hajibal Kothipora in Tehsil B.K. Pora to check illicit cultivation of narcotic crops such as poppy and cannabis. No illegal cultivation was found during the inspection. Community outreach was strengthened

through a special Friday sermon at Jamia Masjid Chattergam, where the Imam highlighted the dangers of drug abuse and urged farmers to refrain from cultivating illicit narcotic crops. Awareness posters on drug abuse and provisions of the NDPS Act were also distributed and displayed at prominent locations. Under health sector initiatives, awareness programmes were conducted across Medical Block Magam and other medical blocks of the district, involving medical officers, paramedical staff, and experts. Sessions focused on the physical, psychological, and social consequences of addiction, early identification, counseling, and referral services. IEC material was widely distributed to encourage community participation and promote preventive behaviour. The coordinated efforts of health departments, educational institutions, enforcement agencies, and community stakeholders reflect sustained commitment towards achieving the goals of the 100-day Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan. The District Administration Budgam reiterated its resolve to continue awareness drives and community engagement initiatives.

**DC Pulwama chairs DLC meeting for forest demarcation and boundary pillar installation**

**PULWAMA, APRIL 24:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Bashant Qayoom, today chaired the maiden meeting of the District Level Committee (DLC) for demarcation of forest land, installation of boundary pillars, and measures aimed at preservation, protection and making Forest encroachment free in the district.

During the meeting, various issues regarding forest land, status of installation of boundary pillars & encroachments removal procedures and action plan were discussed. The DC reviewed the progress of demarcation works and installation of boundary pillars across forest areas in the district and took stock of ongoing



efforts aimed at safeguarding forest land. Emphasizing the importance of preserving forest resources, the DC called for close inter-departmental coordination among Revenue, Forest, and Wildlife departments to ensure smooth and effective implementation of the process on the ground.

Officers of revenue department were directed to ensure complete coordination and cooperation for completion of exercise. Among others, the meeting was attended by Divisional Forest Officer Awantipora; Tehsildars of Rajpora, Tral and Arpal, and officials from Forest and Wildlife Departments.

**District Ganderbal holds Cyclothon to champion Fitness and Drug-Free Living among Youth**

**GANDERBAL, APRIL 24:** In a spirited effort to instil healthy habits among young people and reinforce the message of a drug-free society, the District Administration Ganderbal today organised a Cyclothon as part of the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan- a 100-Day Campaign being observed across Jammu & Kashmir.

Held with considerable enthusiasm, the Cyclothon was flagged-off from Clock Tower Duderhama Ganderbal witnessing participation from Chief Education Officer Ganderbal, Principal Government College of Physical Education Gadoora, District Youth Services and Sports Officer besides students from across the district in a col-



lective display of energy, discipline and social awareness. Students drawn from 15 schools across Ganderbal participated in the Cyclothon, reflecting a strong sense of commitment towards physical fitness and social responsibility. The event culminated at Government College of Physical Education Gadoora with Haris Hameed of Qamria Model Higher Secondary School, Ganderbal bagging the first position, while Mohammad Faizan of Sultania English Medium School, Sahoora Ganderbal and Hanzi Intiyaz of Islamiya Hanifi Model School, Haran Ganderbal secured the second and third positions respectively. The officers of District Administration present on the occasion appreciated the active participation of students and commended

the efforts of the organising team. Emphasising the broader purpose of such events, they noted that initiatives of this nature play a vital role in channelling the energy of young people towards constructive pursuits, encouraging them to embrace a healthy lifestyle and steer clear of substance abuse. Nasha Mukht Pledge was also taken on the occasion, reaffirming the participants' commitment towards building a drug-free society. Concluding on a purposeful note, the event sent out a strong and unambiguous message that fitness, discipline, and a drug-free way of life are not just ideals but a shared responsibility of every citizen, especially the youth who represent the future of society.

**Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan:**

**DYSS Baramulla engages thousands in Multi-Zonal Sports Revolution**

**BARAMULLA, APRIL 24:** Department of Youth Services and Sports (DYSS) Baramulla engaged thousands of students across 11 educational zones of the district in a vibrant series of inter-school zonal level sports competitions for both boys and girls.

The competitions, organized at respective zonal venues, witnessed enthusiastic participation from students of various government and private institutions, thereby fostering a spirit of sportsmanship and healthy competition among the youth. In Zone Wagaura, an inter-school zonal level Chess competition for Under-14 and Under-17 boys was conducted at HS Watergam, witnessing the participation of 64 students from different schools. Similarly, Zone Nehalpora organized a Chess competition for Under-14 boys and girls at BMS Waripora, where 30



students actively took part. Zone Singpora Pattan conducted inter-school zonal level Volleyball competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 boys under the banner of Nasha Mukht Abhiyan J&K, promoting both sports and social awareness. In another significant event, Zone Dangiwacha hosted inter-school zonal level Badminton competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 girls, attracting participation from 70 students. Zone Rohama organized inter-school zonal level competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 girls at HS Tragopora under the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan J&K, where 87 students showcased their sporting skills. Additionally, Zone Pattan conducted a Badminton competition for Under-17 girls at HSS Pattan, with 38 participants demonstrating commendable talent. Zone Singpora Kalan conducted inter-school zonal level competitions for Under-17 boys and girls

at BHS Singpora Kalan, while Zone Dangepora organized Under-14 Badminton competitions at HSS Dangepora, witnessing a remarkable participation of 100 students. Zone Tangmar conducted inter-school zonal level Badminton competitions for Under-17 boys, with 40 students participating, alongside organizing Kabaddi and Cricket matches under the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan J&K banner. Meanwhile, Zone Uri conducted awareness programmes for both boys and girls under the campaign, emphasizing the importance of a drug-free and healthy lifestyle.

The Department continues to utilize sports as a powerful medium to channel the energy of youth towards constructive activities while simultaneously spreading awareness about social issues like drug abuse.

**Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan:**

**Mega Yoga event held at Anantnag, Participants Pledge to promote Healthy, Drug Free Society**

**ANANTNAG, APRIL 24:** In connection with the ongoing Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan, the Department of AYUSH Anantnag today organized a Mega Yoga event at Shaheed Himayun Muzamil Memorial Government Boys Degree College, Khanabal.

The event was conducted with the objective of promoting a healthy lifestyle and spreading awareness regarding the ill effects of drug abuse among the youth. The programme witnessed active participation from officials of various departments including Youth Services & Sports, Information,

Education besides faculty and students of the College.

In his address, District AYUSH Officer, Dr. Abdul Rehman Rather emphasized the critical role of yoga and the AYUSH system in overall well-being, urging the youth to denounce substance abuse and adopt healthy and productive practices for a brighter future. He expressed his appreciation for the coordinated efforts of all participating departments in promoting the message for a fit and drug free society.

By highlighting the importance of physical fitness and mental well-

being, the yoga session served as a powerful demonstration of how meditation and outdoor activities can act as an effective tool in combating substance abuse and encouraging a disciplined way of life.

Throughout the session, the students and participants engaged in yoga asanas and awareness activities, demonstrating a firm commitment to the message of "Say No to Drugs, Yes to Life."

Participants pledged to disseminate the message of the campaign and contribute positively towards building a healthy and drug free society.

**DDC Budgam reviews progress on key projects in district**

**Instructs timely preparation of DPRs of balance & additional components**

**BUDGAM, APRIL 24:** District Development Commissioner (DDC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan today chaired a review meeting at the New Conference Hall, Budgam to assess the progress of major infrastructure and healthcare projects in the district.

The meeting focused on several projects including the construction of the 125-bedded District Hospital and the 100-bedded Critical Care Hospital at Reshipora, status of the Chadoora Bridge, progress on the Magam By-Pass, and establishment of a laboratory for Sub-District Hospital Khanshib along with an additional block.

During the meeting, the DC conducted a detailed review of the physical and financial progress of the project components already allotted and reviewed the status of the DPRs for the additional and balance critical components including oxygen plants, Electric and Water Supply Infra,

STP/ETP etc.

Reviewing the status of Chadoora Bridge, the DC sought updates on the DPR of the restoration of the bridge with technical assistance from NIT Srinagar.

The status of construction of Additional block and advanced lab at Khanshib was also reviewed, the bottlenecks and issues were resolved. Daily progress reporting was directed for all the projects.

The meeting was attended by senior officers including Superintending Engineers of PWD (R&B) and Hydraulic Circle Budgam, Chief Medical Officer Budgam, Medical Superintendent District Hospital Budgam, Sub-Divisional Magistrate Chadoora, Tehsildar Magam, Executive Engineers from various departments including R&B, KPDC, Jal Shakti, Mechanical Engineering, consultants and executing agencies.

**One-Day Awareness Programme on Road Safety, NMBA held at Kupwara**

**KUPWARA, APRIL 24:** A comprehensive one-day awareness programme on Road Safety and Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) was today organized at the Auditorium of BHSS Kupwara, witnessing enthusiastic participation from officers, officials, students, and members of the general public. The programme was graced by Additional District Development Commissioner Kupwara (ADDC), Mufti Fareed. Among others present were ASP Kupwara, Chief Education Officer (CEO) Kupwara, Chief Planning Officer (CPO), DEPO, Principal BHSS Kupwara. The program was graced by Union Kupwara, members of the Sumo Owners Association, students, and general public.

At the outset, Principal BHSS Kupwara, Reyaz Ahmad Kirmani,



highlighted the importance of collective awareness and responsible citizenship in ensuring safer roads and a healthier society.

During the programme, Motor Vehicle Inspector, Karan Kumar, delivered a detailed presentation on road safety measures, emphasizing traffic rules, safe driving practices, and adherence to regulations to prevent accidents.

President, All Transport Union

Kupwara, Mir Showkat, also spoke on the occasion and stressed the role of transporters in ensuring road safety and maintaining disciplined driving practices.

Experts from Traffic Police, provided valuable insights on traffic regulations, safety protocols, and the need for public cooperation in maintaining road discipline.

Chief Prosecuting Officer, Kupwara, Mohsin Khan, elaborated on various legal provisions related to road safety, highlighting the legal consequences of violations and the importance of abiding by the law.

ASP Kupwara, Shahzada Kabir, addressed the gathering and discussed enforcement mechanisms, safety measures, and the collective responsibility of society in reducing road accidents.



## North in News

## EDITORIAL

## Drive against Dugs can only yield results if done professionally

A drive against drugs can bring great results but only if done professionally. Because addiction is not simply a law and order problem that disappears with raids and arrests, it is a complex public health, social, and economic challenge that demands coordinated strategy, trained manpower, scientific methods, and sustained follow through. Experience from across India, including Jammu and Kashmir where the youth are especially vulnerable due to geographic location, unemployment, and peer pressure, shows that random crackdowns without planning often create headlines for a week but leave the supply chains intact and push users further underground. Whereas a professional approach treats the issue like a long term campaign that targets suppliers, shields victims, and changes the environment that breeds demand. The first requirement of professionalism is accurate data because you cannot fight what you do not measure, so the drive must begin with mapping hotspots, types of substances in circulation, age profiles of users, sources of inflow, and methods of distribution. This intelligence should come from health departments, schools, NGOs, police stations, and de-addiction centers working together rather than relying on one agency alone. Once the map is clear the second requirement is to differentiate between the trafficker, the peddler, and the user, because putting a teenage first time user behind bars creates a criminal record that blocks future education and employment and often pushes him deeper into addiction. While letting a major supplier go due to weak evidence or procedural lapses encourages the network to expand. And a professional drive therefore trains police to follow standard operating procedures for search, seizure, and documentation so that cases stand in court, and it equips prosecutors with forensic support and legal knowledge to secure convictions that act as real deterrents.

At the same time it builds strong referral pathways so that users caught with small quantities are diverted to counseling, rehabilitation, and skill programs instead of jails. Another requirement is inter-agency coordination because drugs move across state and international borders, and local police cannot break the chain alone, so a professional drive creates joint task forces with narcotics control units, customs, postal department, transport authorities, and cyber cells, and it uses technology like GPS tracking, mobile data analysis, and financial investigation to follow the money from street sales to kingpins. Without this professional backbone a drive against drugs becomes a slogan that fades, but with it the drive becomes a movement that saves lives, families, and the future of the next generation.

RAJNI SHARMA, EDITOR

DEVENDRA SAKSENA

The Government introduced three Bills in a special session of the Lok Sabha convened on 16 April 2026:

(i) the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill 2026,

(ii) the Delimitation Bill 2026, and

(iii) the Union Territories Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2026.

The first two Bills aimed to increase the size of Lok Sabha to 850 (from the existing 543), sought to enable delimitation based on the 2011 census, and provided for reservation for women based on this delimitation. The Union Territories Laws Bill contained similar provisions for the Union Territories of Puducherry, Delhi, and Jammu & Kashmir.

With voting scheduled in a week's time in opposition-ruled West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, opposition parties questioned the timing of the special session. The Government projected the Bills as having the main aim of empowerment of women, by granting them 33 per cent reservation in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, but reservation for women had already been enshrined by the Constitution (106th Amendment) Act 2023. The 131st Amendment Bill merely lifted the pre-condition of increase in women's seats being dependent on the ongoing census, instead making it dependent on the 2011 Census.

It also emerged that despite the Government's avowed intention of empowering women, the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, or the Women's Reservation Act 2023, had not been notified till now; a notification was issued in the midst of the Parliamentary debate, on 16 April. The opposition rightly saw the 2026 Bill, as an attempt to amend a non-operational Act. The three Bills, taken together, carried forward the principle of Lok Sabha seats being allocated in proportion to population as determined by the 2011 census, removed the freeze on the number of MPs in the Lok Sabha, and also paved the way for constitution of a Delimitation Commission.

Determination of seats in the Lok Sabha, strictly on the basis

of population was not acceptable to Opposition MPs from the South, because the population of southern States had grown much more slowly in comparison to northern States, and the South would have lost Lok Sabha seats, had population been made the sole criterion for determination of seats. The PM and Home Minister assured members that the Government proposed to increase representation of all States by a flat fifty per cent, thus preserving the inter-se proportion of seats for all States. However, this argument did not cut much ice with the Opposition, who preferred to rely on the printed word, rather than assurances.

After a long and contentious debate, the first Bill failed to garner the required two-third majority in either House, and the Parliamentary Affairs Minister, withdrew the other two. There is another school of thought which believes that the Bills were purposely brought in, with an intention to fail (Defeat by design? Why the govt pushed a bill it knew would fail, Vibha Sharma, the Statesman, 19 April 2026). According to Ms. Sharma: "The reality is that even a 'doomed' bill can serve purposes beyond becoming law - such as setting the agenda, shaping public discourse, drawing attention to key issues, and normalising policy ideas over time."

This analysis appears correct: had the Government been honest in its intentions, then it would not have scheduled the special Parliamentary session in the midst of elections, when opposition parties could reasonably be expected to take contrarian grandstanding views. Also, lacking numbers in both Houses, the ruling party could have sought consensus, by discussing provisions of the Bills with Opposition parties. The fact that PM Modi roundly castigated all opposition parties in his address to the nation on 18 April 2026 reinforces the conclusion that the three Bills were moved with a hidden agenda: should they make the cut and become law, the Government could portray itself as the champion of women and should the Bills fail, the Opposition could be painted as anti-women.

In both cases, women could

be counted upon to vote, overwhelmingly, for the ruling party. Beyond what is already in the public discourse, two germane issues appear to have escaped general attention. Firstly, a fifty per cent increase in the number of MPs, followed by a fifty per cent increase in the number of MLAs, would put an unconscionable burden on the exchequer, what with the rising pay, perks, and lifelong pensions for parliamentarians. Sadly, not all our MPs are people of sterling character, according to a study by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), 46 per cent of current Lok Sabha MPs have criminal cases registered against them, of whom 31 per cent face serious criminal charges like murder, kidnapping, or crimes against women.

Thus, proceeding on a negative note, more MPs could mean more such people in positions of power. Increase in the number of MPs could also mean that the daily chaos in Parliament would multiply manifold, and the Speaker would have an even tougher time to regulate proceedings. Surely, if the aim of the now defunct Bills was more debate and deliberation in Parliament, the Speaker, and more mature members, could counsel hon'ble MPs not to resort to walk outs and disruptions at the drop of a hat.

Also, Parliament could be in session for more days - not the 60 odd days in a year but 150 days, like its British counterpart. Significantly, none of the three Bills talked about increasing the number of MPs in the Rajya Sabha; the Bills, if passed, would have created a huge imbalance between the two Houses of Parliament; Lok Sabha with a strength of 850 would have totally dwarfed the 245-member Rajya Sabha. During joint sessions of Parliament, held in cases where a Bill is passed by one House but rejected by the other, the voice of the Rajya Sabha would have been reduced to a whisper - an undesirable outcome on all counts, because the Rajya Sabha is a representative of States and Union Territories, and has the Constitutional duty and power, to protect the rights of States against the Union Government.

The entire exercise could be

seen as a fight for women's votes: the Government has assiduously cultivated women for votes, be they slogans like Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, or schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana that provided subsidised cooking gas to households, and schemes like Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Mudra Yojana, which have benefited women peripherally. However, the reality is that so far, reservation in political posts has not benefited women; the Constitutional provision for one-third reservation for women in local bodies - enhanced to fifty per cent by some State Governments - has given birth to the disgusting institution of Pradhan Patis, husbands who officiate for their Pradhan wives. On the other hand, the number of women in the Lok Sabha has progressively increased from 5 per cent to the current 14 per cent - without any reservation.

There have been women leaders like Indira Gandhi, Vijayalakshmi Pandit, and Sushma Swaraj as also the current crop of firebrand MPs, like Smriti Irani, Supriya Sule, and Mohua Moitra - all having been elected without the benefit of reservation. Contrary to intentions, reservation of seats for women may result in wives and daughters acting as proxies for their male relatives, creating God forbid, an institution of MP-Pati. One can safely say that the three Bills brought by the Government were doomed from the beginning, because they bundled the issues of women's reservation and delimitation - no political party had any issue with the former, which cannot be said about the latter.

A more honest approach would have been to separate the two issues; women's reservation would have sailed through, and delimitation could have been postponed to a more opportune time. Finally, one should not trust politicians blindly. As Erik Pevernagie, the Belgian painter and writer, had said: "Many politicians promise green, green grass by blending niceties with delusion and by using alluring confidence tricks. They voice attractive tales and tell things people like to hear. But the post-factual grassland often appears to be parched and barren."

## Mapping change in India's villages

TUHIN A. SINHA

On 24 April 2026, India completes five years of the SVAMITVA (Survey of Villages and Mapping with Improved Technology in Village Areas) Scheme - an initiative that has quietly but decisively transformed the foundations of rural governance. What began in 2020 as a drone-based mapping exercise has evolved into one of the most far-reaching structural reforms in independent India, addressing a problem that persisted for decades: the absence of clear, legal ownership of residential property in rural areas.

For generations, millions of Indians lived in homes that were theirs in practice but not in law. These properties existed outside formal documentation, leaving rural households without legally recognized assets. This gap was not merely administrative - it constrained access to credit, fuelled disputes, and limited economic mobility. SVAMITVA has fundamentally altered this reality. By leveraging drone surveys and geospatial mapping, the scheme has brought clarity, legality, and dignity to rural

property ownership. Over 3.28 lakh villages have been surveyed, and more than 3 crore property cards have been prepared across nearly two lakh villages as of early 2026.

In effect, India has mapped almost its entire rural habitation area with a level of precision that would have been inconceivable just a decade ago. This is the formal recognition of one of India's largest unrecorded asset bases. The most immediate impact of SVAMITVA has been in financial inclusion. With legally recognized property cards, rural households can now use their homes as collateral to access institutional credit - an opportunity that was historically unavailable to many. Early assessments indicate a marked rise in rural credit flows following the rollout of SVAMITVA, signalling a structural shift in the rural economy. What was once "dead capital" has now been converted into bankable assets.

This transformation carries particular significance for women, who are often co-owners of these properties and are now better positioned to access

formal financial systems and assert economic agency. SVAMITVA is not merely a land records programme - it is a template for technology-driven governance. Drone-based surveys provide high-resolution, accurate data, while GIS-enabled platforms ensure that records are transparent, accessible, and tamper-resistant. This shift from paper-based ambiguity to digital precision is already reducing property disputes, long a source of friction in rural India. At the same time, Gram Panchayats are gaining the ability to assess property taxes more effectively, strengthening local governance and financial autonomy.

The scheme is also enabling scientific village-level planning, with reliable geospatial data forming the backbone of decision-making. SVAMITVA is part of a broader push by the Modi government to integrate drone technology into governance and development. Initiatives such as the Drone Rules liberalisation, the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for drones, and the "Drone Didi" programme aimed at empowering rural women are

collectively building a new technological ecosystem. Drones are now being deployed for agricultural spraying, infrastructure monitoring, disaster management, and land surveys - marking a shift toward real-time, data-driven governance.

SVAMITVA, in this context, is the flagship that demonstrates how cutting-edge technology can directly improve everyday lives in rural India. The success of SVAMITVA is most visible in states that have embraced it with administrative clarity and political will. Uttar Pradesh stands out for its scale, having completed surveys in over 90,000 villages and generated more than one crore property records, while also moving towards providing legal sanctity to these documents. Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have achieved near-complete coverage, showcasing the power of efficient implementation. States such as Har yana, Uttarakhand, Goa, and Tripura have reached saturation, effectively completing the rollout of the scheme.

**Satish Sharma Meets Union Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya in Srinagar; Pushes for Strengthening Sports Ecosystem in J&K**



SRINAGAR, APRIL 24: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma today held a detailed meeting with Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, on the sidelines of the upcoming Chintan Shivir being hosted in Jammu and Kashmir. Earlier, the Minister warmly welcomed the visiting dignitaries and extended his appreciation for their presence in Jammu and Kashmir for the important deliberations aimed at strengthening the sports landscape across the country. During the meeting,

enhancing collaboration between the Union Ministry and the Jammu and Kashmir Government in organizing national-level sporting events in Jammu and Kashmir, which would not only provide exposure to local talent but also position the region as a prominent sporting destination. Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya appreciated the proactive initiatives being undertaken by the Jammu and Kashmir Government and lauded the focused approach towards youth engagement and sports development. He assured full support and cooperation from the Government of India in strengthening the sports ecosystem in the region, particularly in underserved and border areas. Satish Sharma reiterated the commitment of the Government towards harnessing the energy and potential of youth through sports, innovation, and inclusive development. He expressed confidence that the outcomes of the upcoming Chintan Shivir would pave the way for new strategies and collaborative efforts to further accelerate sports development in Jammu and Kashmir.

**Javid Dar attends North Zone Agriculture Ministers' Conference in Lucknow; Highlights J&K's Agricultural Transformation**



LUCKNOW, APRIL 24: Minister for Agriculture, Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar today attended the North Zone Agriculture Ministers' Conference held in Lucknow. The conference was chaired by Union Minister for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, Shivraj Singh Chouhan and was attended by Agriculture Ministers from various North Zone states. During the conference, the Javid Dar presented the remarkable progress and transformation achieved in

the agriculture and horticulture sectors of Jammu and Kashmir. He highlighted key initiatives undertaken by the government to boost productivity, enhance farmer income and promote sustainable agricultural practices across the Union Territory. Javid Dar emphasized the need for strengthening market linkages to ensure better price realization for farmers. He also underlined the importance of adopting sustainable and climate-resilient farming practices to secure long-term growth in the sector. The Minister further shared policy suggestions aimed at farmer empowerment, including improved access to modern technology, infrastructure development and enhanced support mechanisms for growers and farming communities. The conference served as a significant platform for deliberations on region-specific challenges and collaborative strategies to further strengthen the agriculture sector across.

**Civil Defence Mock Drill held in Doda to strengthen emergency preparedness, raise public awareness**

DODA, APRIL 24: A comprehensive Civil Defence Mock Drill featuring an Air Raid Simulation and Blackout Exercise was successfully conducted today across Doda Township to assess preparedness and enhance public awareness regarding emergency response mechanisms. The exercise was carried out under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Krishan Lal and was attended by ADC Anil Kumar Thakur, ASP Headquarters, Tehsil Doda, Dr. Subuh Ahmed Shah, SHO and representatives from various line departments. The drill commenced with the sounding of a siren from the local Clock Tower, marking the onset of a simulated air raid situation. Coordinated mock operations were executed

at multiple locations including Government Boys HSS Doda, Bus Stand, Bharath Road Y Junction, Nagri area, GMC, DPL, Helipad and other vital road stretches. The exercise focused on testing real-time response, inter-agency coordination and communication systems under emergency conditions. During the drill, crucial emergency response measures such as search and rescue operations, evacuation of civilians, first aid and medical response, fire control, traffic management and crowd regulation were demonstrated effectively. A complete blackout exercise was also observed across the district from 8:00 PM to 8:05 PM, with active cooperation from the public highlighting awareness and community participation in disaster preparedness initiatives. Personnel from NCC, NDRF, Fire and Emergency Services, Health Department, Police and Municipal authorities actively participated in the exercise, showcasing prompt response and operational efficiency. The District Administration reiterated that such mock drills play a vital role in identifying gaps, improving coordination among stakeholders and equipping both officials and the public with the knowledge and confidence to respond effectively during real emergencies. Continued awareness campaigns, capacity-building programmes and community involvement were also emphasized to further strengthen disaster resilience in the district.

**UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR**  
**OFFICE THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) PROJECT DIVISION NO. 1ST, JAMMU**

**SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
**Short e-NIT No. 09 of 2026-2027 Dated 23-04-2026**

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

S. No	Name of Work	Name of Division	Advertised Est. (Rs. in lac)	Co st of document (in Rs.)	Earnest Money (in Rs.)	Time Allowed for completion	Time and date of opening of tender	Class of Contractor
1	Development of various Lawns/ newly identified areas by way of earth filling, plantation, turfing etc. including supply of equipment's at Mohale High Court Jammu and allied landscape works for the financial year 2025-27	PWD (R&B) Project Division No.1st, Jammu	09.56	600	02% of the advertised cost	Upto 31 <sup>st</sup> march 2027	1500 Hrs on or after 28-04-2026	A, B, C & D Class

Position of AAA : Accorded  
Position of Technical Sanction: Accorded

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

S. No	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	23-04-2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 23-04-2026 to 28-04-2026 upto 1600 Hrs.
3	Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting	25-04-2026 at 1400 Hrs. in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Project Division No. 1st Jammu
4	Bid submission Start Date	23-04-2026
5	Bid Submission End Date	28-04-2026 upto 1600 Hrs.
6	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	29-04-2026 on or after 1000 Hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Project Division No. 1st Jammu
7	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of e-challan through Treasury indicating Treasury Voucher No. & date, e-NIT No. and name of work duly crediting to MII 0099 (Revenue) favouring Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Project Division No. 1st Jammu and upload the same to treasury challan / receipt, Earnest money/ Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR/FG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Project Division No. 1st Jammu. The CDR/FDR/FG shall be valid for 45 Days beyond the bid validity period. The original instruments in respect of cost of documents, EMD and relevant documents of LI be submitted to the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Project Division No. 1st Jammu at the time of allotment.
- The electronic bidding system would not allow any late submission of bids after due date and time as per server time. Bidders may modify their bids by uploading their request for modification before the deadline for submission of bids. For this, the bidder needs not to make any additional payment towards the cost of tender document. For bid modification and consequential re-submission, the bidder is not required to withdraw his bid submitted earlier. The last modified bid submitted by the bidder within the bid submission time shall be considered as the bid. For this purpose, modification/withdrawal by other means will not be accepted. In online system of bid submission, the modification and consequential-submission of bids is allowed any number of times. The bidders may withdraw his bid by uploading their request before the deadline for submission of bids; however, if the bid is withdrawn, the re-submission of the bid is not allowed. No bid shall be modified or withdrawn after the deadline of submission of bids.
- The date and time of opening of Financial-Bids shall be notified on Web Site [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financial-bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Project Division No. 1st Jammu. The date for same shall be intimated separately.
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.
- The earnest money shall be forfeited, if-
  - Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
  - Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period after issue of letter of acceptance.
  - Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement on same day of allotment of work/ contract as per Chief Engineer PW (R&B) Department Jammu's Circular No. CEJ/G/12660-87 dated 07-10-2021.
- Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.**
- Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) to acquaint bid submission process.
- To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get "Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)" as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.
- The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned above.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents mentioned in NIT and SBD with technical bid online.

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

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

No :- EE/R&B/PD-1/255-62  
Dated :- 23-04-2026

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
PWD (R&B) Project Div. No. 1st  
Jammu

**DIP/J-1072/26**

**VC J&K Higher Education Council Commends Centre for IT Enabled Services & Emerging Technologies JU**

Jammu, April 24: The Centre for IT Enabled Services & Emerging Technologies (CITES&ET) at the University of Jammu today had the honour of hosting Prof. Dinesh Singh, Vice Chairman of the Jammu & Kashmir Higher Education Council, on his first visit to the Centre. He was accompanied by Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu, Prof. Balaraj Panigrahi, Dean of Colleges, University of Delhi and Prof. V. B. Singh of the School of Computer and Systems Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University. The dignitaries were warmly received by Dr. Guneet Singh Sudan, Director, Centre for IT Enabled Services & Emerging Technologies (CITES&ET), along with faculty and staff members. The visit commenced with an interactive session in which Dr. Sudan articulated the Centre's vision, mandate, and strategic roadmap. He highlighted key initiatives already undertaken, as well as those in the

pipeline, aimed at positioning the Centre as a leading hub for research, innovation, start-ups, and capacity building in the IT domain. Elaborating on major developments, he underscored the comprehensive revamp of the University's network infrastructure, e-Governance and outlined ongoing efforts to forge collaborations with premier academic institutions and leading corporate entities, thereby enhancing exposure of stakeholders to cutting-edge technological advancements. Dr. Sudan further informed the dignitaries about the establishment of an Advisory Committee comprising representatives from the State and Central Governments, eminent academicians, and industry leaders, including CEOs from the corporate sector. He emphasized that the Committee has been constituted to provide strategic guidance and expert insights, ensuring that the Centre's initiatives remain forward-looking, impactful, and aligned

with the broader objective of positioning the institution on the global academic and innovation landscape. A comprehensive presentation on the Centre's six key verticals: Internet & Networking, E-Governance, Web and Software Development, Capacity Building and Training, Incubation & Research, Start-up & Innovation was delivered by Er. Jaswinder Kour, Service & Development Engineer. The presentation detailed the Centre's achievements for the years 2025/26 in each of the verticals, along with upcoming initiatives. Prof. Dinesh Singh appreciated the significant strides the Centre has made in strengthening the University's digital ecosystem. He emphasized that the Centre, through its diverse verticals, holds immense potential to lead advanced skill development in emerging areas such as artificial intelligence. He commended the ongoing efforts and underscored the importance of such initiatives.



## R Ashwin Calls Out Hardik Pandya's Blunder Against CSK That Cost MI The Match

New Delhi, Apr 24: With the Mumbai Indians winning only two of their first seven matches in the IPL 2026 campaign, Hardik Pandya has become a lightning rod for critics. The all-rounder is not only lacking runs with the bat but has also seen his captaincy credentials brought into question. Ravichandran Ashwin, the veteran Indian spinner, found it difficult to digest Pandya's decision to invite Chennai Super Kings (CSK) to bat first in Thursday's fixture. Ashwin pointed out that Pandya failed to learn from mistakes made against the Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB), despite both matches being held on the same pitch.



In a video on his YouTube channel, Ashwin reminded viewers of the MI vs RCB game at the Wankhede Stadium. Under similar conditions, Mumbai never looked comfortable while chasing a target of 241. Against CSK, however, the collapse was even more pronounced as they were bowled out for just 104. "I am slightly underwhelmed. Hardik Pandya won the toss and handed

to the end of the order, which allowed them to post a huge score." Chennai doesn't have quite that much power, and Mumbai actually bowled slightly better today. Allah Ghazanfar and Ashwini Kumar performed well, and, of course, we can't forget Bumrah. That is why they conceded 208, but Mumbai still couldn't chase it down." Multiple Tactical Flaws By Hardik For Ashwin, it was a tactical error to invite CSK to bat first, especially considering the precedent set by the RCB game. He asserted that opponents should almost always be made to bat second against high-scoring sides like the Super Kings or Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH). "The pitch for that game

## Mumbai Indians Accused Of Misusing Concussion Rule, Coach Responds

New Delhi, Apr 24:

Five-time champions Mumbai Indians (MI) are at the centre of a huge storm in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, after being accused of misusing the concussion substitute rule to replace injured all-rounder Mitchell Santner in the middle of Thursday's match against the Chennai Super Kings (CSK). The New Zealander hurt his shoulder while taking a catch of CSK batter Karik Sharma off the bowling of Jasprit Bumrah. The spin-bowling all-rounder got up clutching his shoulder and had to be taken off. Soon, MI made a formal request to replace him with Shardul Thakor, and it was accepted. The substitution triggered a massive controversy, with questions being raised not just over the alleged misuse of the concussion substitute rule but also whether Shardul could



be considered a like-for-like replacement for Santner. Under IPL playing conditions, a concussion substitute is only allowed if a player has suffered a head or neck injury. The extent of the injury must be verified with a medical diagnosis before being approved by the match referee. In Santner's case, the injury appeared to be to his shoulder, while the substitute request was made on the basis of neurological symptoms. He was even spotted icing his shoulder while sitting in Mumbai Indians dressing room later in the match. According to the ICC Rules, a 'concussion substitution' may be made: - Immediately after a concussion occurs or is suspected; - After an on-field assessment and/or an off-field assessment; - Or at any other time when a concussion occurs or is suspected, including when a player has previously been assessed and has returned to the field of play. Mahela Jayawardene, the MI coach, couldn't escape questions on the concussion substitution controversy.

## New Zealand Great Suzie Bates To End International Career After T20 World Cup

Wellington, Apr 24:

New Zealand will bid farewell to one of its cricketing greats when all-rounder Suzie Bates calls time on her international career at the end of the White Ferns' T20 World Cup campaign in England. The record-breaking 38-year-old confirmed on Friday she will retire after 20 years at the highest level. If Bates has her way, she'll bow out with back-to-back T20 World Cup titles, having celebrated a long-awaited maiden championship in the United Arab Emirates two years ago. "When I look back on the past 20-plus years, I can't quite believe how quickly



the time has gone," she said in a New Zealand Cricket statement. "I'm immensely proud to have won the fern so many times, and I've been filled with enormous purpose and joy in striving each day to be a better person, teammate, cricketer, and athlete for this team." "Words can't truly express my gratitude to all my teammates and

## KKR Coach, Who Let Shreyas Iyer Leave, Breaks Silence On Decision: "Didn't Work For Us"

New Delhi, Apr 24:

Chandrakant Pandit, one of the most decorated coaches in Indian domestic cricket, is no longer part of the Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) squad. However, under his guidance, the franchise secured the IPL 2024 title. To the surprise of many, the Knight Riders released skipper Shreyas Iyer after that season; the middle-order batter was subsequently picked up in the auction by Punjab Kings (PBKS). Since joining his new franchise, Iyer has led Punjab to the final of the 2025 season, and his team remains unbeaten in the first six games of the 2026 campaign. Pandit, who was KKR's head coach when the decision to release Iyer was made, recently reflected on the debatable move that has since hindered the franchise.



"Unfortunately, we missed him," Pandit told RevSportz on Iyer, who joined PBKS for Rs 26.75 crore in the auction. "Shreyas is a wonderful player who won the trophy for KKR as captain, and I admire the way he handled the team. But sometimes, certain circumstances and broader strategies force you to

let such players go. Obviously, as a coach at KKR, I felt bad about that. It wasn't a purposeful omission, but things simply didn't work out for us. It isn't only Shreyas; I feel the same about Phil Salt and others. I would really like to show my appreciation for the owners, Mr Shah Rukh Khan, Mr Jay

Mehta, and Juhi Chawla, and CEO Venky Mysore. They were all very supportive." Pandit also addressed the discussions regarding Shreyas' inability to secure a permanent spot in India's T20I team. The former KKR coach believes the intense competition for places in the national side often leads to such difficult decisions. "Shreyas has been part of the Indian team and has delivered strong performances. Unfortunately, he was left out, but situations like this are not uncommon. When building a team, there is always the challenge of balancing experience with the need to groom new talent. With the depth of talent available, it becomes difficult to provide opportunities to every deserving player."

## Sanju Samson's Post-Match Remark Proves He Is True Successor To 'Captain' Dhoni

New Delhi, Apr 24:

In his first season at the Chennai Super Kings (CSK), Sanju Samson is proving that he is the true successor to Captain Cool MS Dhoni. With another Indian Premier League (IPL) century to his name, this time at the Wankhede Stadium against Mumbai Indians, Samson proved yet again why he is so highly rated on the T20 circuit. However, the performance he produced on Thursday wasn't just about his exploits with the bat, but the way he showed exemplary maturity to dig deep and pace his innings according to the situation. Ruturaj Gaikwad, the CSK captain, hasn't yet got going this season. Against Mumbai Indians, he got off to a start but was dismissed without converting it into a big



score yet again. As Chennai needed a 'leader' to step up, it was Samson who stood out, rather than the captain, Ruturaj. After the game, Samson explained his approach, asserting how important it was for him to take responsibility and play according to the situation as CSK kept losing wickets at the other end. "We actually kept on

losing wickets here and there. Whenever we wanted to go big, I think we were losing a few wickets. So, I thought it's very important for a settled batsman to stay until the end. That's what I tried, and that's what happened today. The game tells you what to do. You don't have to come with a preconceived mindset, and you don't have to premeditate, telling yourself this is how I play or this is what I want to do. "With the experience I have, the team definitely comes first. You can say 'this is the way I play' and that you might get out or you might not, but with the experience and the responsibility shown in me, it is my duty to understand the match situation and what the team demands, putting that first and then planning my game around it," Samson said at the post-match presentation ceremony. Further explaining the mindset behind his approach, Samson said he would have tried to take a more attacking approach earlier in the game, but the regular fall of wickets forced him to change his tactics. In the end, the wicketkeeper-batter remained,

## "Bond Is Unbreakable": Vinod Kambli Celebrates Sachin Tendulkar's Birthday In Unique Style

New Delhi, Apr 24:

Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar turned 53 on Friday, and his childhood friend Vinod Kambli celebrated the occasion in a unique style. The two players shone with their performances in school cricket and also played for India together. On Sachin's birthday, Kambli appeared in an advertisement in which he was sitting with kids at Shivaji Park - the iconic ground in Dadar, Mumbai, where he and Sachin trained under coach Ramakant Achrekar. "Aye partner, aaj celebration toli banta hai, Happy Birthday, partner (Hey friend, we need to celebrate today),"



Kambli said in a video. Talking about Tendulkar, Kambli said, "This is a special day for me. I remember my partner Sachin Tendulkar every 24th April. We share incredible memories from our early days, celebrating birthdays and dominating the maidans together. That bond is unbreakable." Kambli and Tendulkar were two of Indian cricket's greatest talents, rising through the ranks during the late 1980s and early 1990s. However, only one of them - Tendulkar - went on to have a legendary career spanning 24 years.

## "Balance Between Patience And Intent Stood Out": Suresh Raina's Big Praise For Sanju



Mumbai, Apr 24: Chennai Super Kings (CSK) registered a mammoth 103-run victory against Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026, powered by Sanju Samson's century and Akeal Hosen's four-fer. Samson hit his second

century of the IPL 2026 when he made an unbeaten 101 off 54 balls, with the help of 10 fours and sixes, which helped CSK set a big target of 208 runs for MI at the Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai on Thursday. Speaking on JioHotstar's "Google Search AI Mode Match Centre Live", former CSK batter Suresh Raina praised Sanju Samson's knock. "Sanju Samson was brilliant because he built his innings smartly. He took his time early, played with a straight bat, and respected the good deliveries, especially against someone like Jasprit Bumrah. At the same time, he was quick to capitalise on anything loose, using the pace and placing the ball really well. That balance between patience and intent stood out. When you look at his recent scores, a century at the start of the tournament, 48, and now another hundred, it clearly shows he's in outstanding form," said Raina.

## Hardik Pandya On Reason Behind Mumbai Indians Biggest Ever IPL Defeat To Chennai Super Kings

Mumbai, Apr 24:

Chennai Super Kings put up an all-round show on Thursday to hand Mumbai Indians a 103-run defeat in their IPL 2026 game at Wankhede Stadium. This turned out to be the biggest loss for MI in IPL history in terms of runs. Sanju Samson scored an unbeaten century as CSK posted 207 for 6 after being invited to bat first. The side kept losing wickets at regular intervals, but Samson's solid knock (101 not out off 54 balls) ensured a big total. In pursuit of the target, MI were bundled out for 104 in 19 overs, suffering their biggest defeat in terms of runs. MI captain Hardik Pandya felt that the team's poor start in the Powerplay cost them dearly. Mumbai were reduced to 11 for 3 in 2.3 overs. Danish Malewar fell for a first-ball duck. Naman Dhir scored a three-ball zero, while Quinton de Kock was dismissed for 7.



Tilak Varma and Suryakumar Yadav showed some resilience with a 73-run partnership, but once it was broken, CSK dominated the contest. "I think that in the powerplay, losing that early wicket is always going to be tricky. You are always chasing the game and we could not cope after that," said Hardik Pandya.

They batted well, they scored 207. It was the same track, it is the same soil. We should have just batted well." Allah Ghazanfar was the pick of the bowlers for MI with figures of 2 for 25, while CSK spinner Akeal Hosen stood out with a four-wicket haul (4 for 17) in the second innings. "I think even our spinners bowled pretty well. It's just that Sanju played an outstanding knock. At the same point of time, their batters kept coming and kind of chipping in and got them to a decent total. I think more than a decent total on that track. For us to chase this down, we needed to have a good powerplay and the momentum had to be with us, but that could not happen," said Hardik. MI now need to win six of their remaining seven matches to make a comfortable entry into the playoffs. They face Sunrisers Hyderabad in their next game on April 29.



# Pawan Khera out of wind as Gauhati HC denies bail, Himanta plays silent, BJP strikes hard

New Delhi, Apr 24: Hours after the Gauhati High Court rejected Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera's anticipatory bail plea, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Friday held his fire on the case, citing election protocol. However, another BJP leader, Shehzad Poonawalla, fired a volley of questions at Rahul Gandhi, demanding to know who supplied Khera with what the court has prima facie found to be false documents.

The court's order, which has made pointed observations about an "innocent lady being dragged into controversy", has handed the BJP a significant political moment, even as Khera's whereabouts remain unclear and Congress has stayed conspicuously silent.

Sarma invokes MCC, says Assam Police will handle the rest. Chief Minister Sarma, whose wife Riniki Bhuyan Sharma filed the



original FIR after Khera's April 5 press conference in Guwahati, was careful not to overlap his hand.

Shehzad Poonawalla goes after Rahul Gandhi: "Who gave Khera these documents?"

BJP leader Shehzad Poonawalla was less restrained. Citing the court's findings from the order copy accessed by journalists, he laid out three key observations the

HC had made: that Khera had not proved beyond doubt that Riniki Bhuyan Sharma held passports of three foreign countries or had opened a company in the US; that he had dragged "an innocent lady into controversy for political mileage"; and that custodial interrogation was necessary.

From there, Poonawalla turned the screws on the Congress leadership

directly. "Who gave Khera these documents? Was there a foreign agent? Why did Rahul Gandhi back such things? Should Congress not sack a person who makes such forgeries?" he asked in a post on X, also questioning where Khera was and calling him "bheegi billi." What the Gauhati HC actually ruled Justice Parthivjyoti Sankha dismissing the bail application, held that the case "cannot be termed as a case of defamation simpliciter" and that there are sufficient materials to indicate a prima facie offence under Section 339 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita. The court found that the documents Khera relied upon at his Guwahati press conference, where he made allegations about Riniki Bhuyan Sharma holding foreign passports and running an overseas company, appear based on the investigation so far, to be false.

# Registrations of over 12,000 Waqf properties rejected in Uttar Pradesh

Lucknow, Apr 24: A major revelation has come to light in the digitization of Waqf properties in Uttar Pradesh.

An audit of records of nearly 1,00,000 Waqf properties uploaded on the "Uneed" portal has revealed that over 12,000 registrations have been rejected. According to officials, this action was primarily due to data entry errors and incomplete documents. Sources indicate that the highest number of registrations rejected in Lucknow (1,114), followed by Bijnor (1,003) and Saharanpur (990), according to the "rejected list." Other districts include Barabanki (577) and Amroha (85), while Baghpat (60) and Bareilly (17) have reported relatively fewer cases. A board member stated



that the affected properties range from small mosque lands to large graveyards, covering over 300 acres in some districts. Sources indicate that the audit report indicates that graveyards have the highest number of rejections, followed by mosques, Madrasas, Idgahs, Imambaras, Dargahs, and some residential and income-generating properties have also been affected.

In this regard, Waqf Board sources stated that the registration process for

Waqf institutions is ongoing on the Uneed portal, with the deadline set for June 6, 2026. They stated that rejected registrations must now be re-uploaded with correct information and sufficient documentation by June 5, 2026. In Uttar Pradesh, there are over 1.26 lakh Waqf institutions under the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Waqf Board.

This entire process is being carried out through the Central Government's Uneed portal, which was launched in June 2025 with the aim of creating digital records of Waqf properties and bringing transparency in their management. Registration on this portal has been made mandatory under the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025, which came into effect on April 5.

# Telangana: Police arrest BRS leader Manne Krishank for trespass, attack on TPCC leader over social media post

New Delhi, Apr 24: Telangana police have arrested Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) leader Manne Krishank under charges of trespassing into TPCC leader Gundamalla Rajendra Kumar's residence and attacking him over a social media post. On Thursday, BRS Party Social Media Co-Ordinator Krishank was arrested after a First Information Report (FIR) was registered against him by Telangana Pradesh Social Media Committee (TPCC) Social Media Co-Ordinator Gundamalla Rajendra Kumar for attacking him. Earlier on March 26, BRS leader and former Chairman of the Telangana State



Development Corporation (TSMDC) Manne Krishank had sustained severe leg injuries while burning an effigy during a dharna held against the Congress government at Picket. Party working President KT Rama Rao (KTR) did a courtesy visit and met Krishank, who received treatment at his residence in Picket, and

inquired about his health condition. During the visit, KTR interacted with Krishank's family members and wished him a speedy recovery. He specially congratulated Krishank on the success of the 'One Lakh Signatures Collection' campaign, which was undertaken to demand the merger of the Cantonment into the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC). Appreciating the initiative, Krishank has shown toward public issues, KTR advised him to take complete rest for a few more days to let his injury heal. Former Minister Malla Reddy, former Deputy Speaker Padma Rao Goud,

# Bihar CM Samrat Choudhary plays on irony credits Lalu Prasad Yadav for his elevation

New Delhi, Apr 24: Bihar Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary on Friday said that Lalu Prasad Yadav's actions against him during his political career were responsible for his elevation to the chief ministerial post, even as the NDA government headed into a floor test with a comfortable majority in the 243-member state assembly. The floor test was necessitated after Choudhary took oath following Nitish Kumar's resignation from the chief ministerial post to move to the Rajya Sabha as an MP. The NDA holds 202 seats in the House against a combined opposition tally of 35. Choudhary comfortably



won the trust vote on Friday, reaffirming NDA's unity and completing the political transition in the state. Addressing the Vidhan Sabha in remarks carried on Bihar Vidhan Sabha TV, Choudhary drew on three decades of Bihar's political

churn to make his point - but not before Leader of Opposition Tejashwi Yadav landed the first blow. Tejashwi thanked Choudhary for completing the transition from an "elected Chief Minister" to a "selected Chief Minister," and said he was

delighted that "a graduate of Lalu Prasad Yadav's pathshala" had taken the top spot. "A government needs stability for development work. But Bihar is a unique state, where this is the fifth government formed in five years," Tejashwi said. Choudhary's response was direct. "The power is not anyone's inheritance," he said. "The CM's post is the blessing of 14 crore Biharis. I have the blessing of Nitish Kumar, PM Modi, Nitin Namb, Chirag Paswan, Upendra Kushwaha, Jitan Ram Manjhi." He then turned the tables on the Yadav family's political legacy. "Lalu Yadav put me in jail. If Nitish Kumar hadn't been there, would Lalu Yadav have been the Chief Minister? Nitish Kumar needs stability for development work. But Bihar is a unique state, where this is the fifth government formed in five years," Tejashwi said.

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# Funds, incentives strengthen panchayat system in Jharkhand

Ranchi, Apr 24: The Jharkhand government on Friday reiterated its focus on decentralised governance and rural development as Chief Minister Hemant Soren and Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Dipika Pandey Raj addressed a Panchayat Incentive Awards ceremony and Mukhya conference in Ranchi. The event, held at the Harivansh Tana Bhagat Indoor Stadium, saw incentives being distributed to performing gram panchayats, gram sabhas, panchayat samitis and zilla parishads for their contribution to rural governance. Addressing representatives, Hemant Soren said village development remains central to the state's progress and called for stronger coordination between elected representatives and officials to ensure effective delivery of welfare schemes. He also urged panchayats to prioritise water conservation measures and explore solar power generation to boost rural incomes. Dipika Pandey Singh highlighted the role of mukhyas as the key link in the three-tier Panchayati



Raj system, saying they are crucial in implementing government schemes at the grassroots. She said panchayats are receiving increased financial support, with Rs 412 crore in tied funds and Rs 555 crore in untied funds already released under the 15th Finance

Commission, and additional allocations expected soon. Around Rs 600 crore is also likely to be provided through the State Finance Commission. She added that panchayat buildings are now receiving monthly operational support of Rs 15,000, while digital systems are being introduced to improve service delivery. The state also formalised an arrangement to extend Aadhaar-related services at the panchayat level, enabling residents to access facilities closer to home. The Mukhyamantri Panchayat Pratishthan Puraskar, introduced to promote performance-based governance, aims to recognise effective and transparent functioning of local bodies. Senior ministers, legislators and panchayat representatives were present at the event.

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# What is Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma's 'Coke Politics' that went viral in West Bengal?

New Delhi, Apr 24: In the middle of a campaign-style rally, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma was seen casually opening a can of Coca-Cola. Nothing unusual at first glance, until the video hit social media and the timing, setting, and caption turned it into a talking point. As India faces an aluminium crunch affecting canned drinks, Sarma's moment of refreshment quickly got labelled online as "Coke politics". A cola break that didn't look like a shortage at all. The viral video, shared from Sarma's official X account, shows him at a public gathering in West Bengal, holding and drinking from a Coca-Cola can. Around him, several people are also seen with similar canned beverages. At a time when reports of canned beverage shortages are circulating in parts of India, the visuals suggested a very different scene on the ground, at least where the rally was happening. The contrast between reported scarcity and visible availability gave the clip its viral push. Why canned drinks are suddenly harder to find



The bigger story behind the buzz is not just political theatre but a supply chain problem. India has been dealing with a shortage of aluminium, which is a key raw material used to make beverage cans. This has especially hurt in segment of drinks that depend heavily on cans such as diet sodas and low-sugar variants. Unlike regular soft drinks that can be packaged in plastic bottles or glass, these products rely more on aluminium packaging. This makes them more vulnerable when supplies tighten. As a result, shelves in some areas have reportedly seen uneven availability, with canned drinks becoming harder to source compared to bottled ones. Global supply shocks and rising demand add pressure

# Congress' CM chatter rattles UDF camp, supporters ahead of Kerala verdict



New Delhi, Apr 24: Even before the counting begins, Kerala's familiar electoral suspense has given way to a more predictable drama, one within the Indian National Congress. Polling concluded on April 9, with results due only on May 4. The Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF), buoyed by expectations of returning to power after a decade, finds itself grappling with a resurfacing ailment: leadership jockeying.

The unusual break in Kerala's long-standing pattern of alternating governments, when the CPI(M)-led Left Front retained power in 2021, had already raised the stakes. Now, the prospect of a comeback appears to have intensified internal fault lines. Supporters of senior leaders Ramesh Chennithala, V.D. Sathesana, and K.C. Venugopal have begun projecting their respective choices for the Chief Minister's post in the public domain.

The premature contest has not only embarrassed the party but also drawn sharp criticism from within and outside. Veteran media critic M.N. Karassery was unsparing, calling the public posturing "shameless" and warning that such open displays of ambition risk eroding voter patience. The unease is now spilling into alliance ranks. P. Abdul Hameed, Malappuram district general secretary of the Indian Union Muslim League and an MLA, has come down heavily on the Congress party, cautioning that such discussions should never have been allowed to surface. He said the ongoing debate over the Chief Minister's post is disappointing to those who voted for the UDF and risks demoralising grassroots workers who have endured a difficult decade in the opposition.

# India prepares for intensifying heatwave; Delhi likely to hit 44 degrees

New Delhi, Apr 24: Large parts of India are already experiencing intense summer conditions, with the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasting a mix of severe heat and scattered rainfall activity in the coming days. According to the latest weather update, heatwave conditions are expected to persist across several northern, central, and eastern states, including Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, and even parts of Kerala. The IMD has cautioned that these conditions are likely to intensify over the next few days. Meanwhile, coastal and southern regions such as Konkan, Tamil Nadu,



Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, and Gujarat are expected to face hot and humid weather. Warm night conditions are also likely in isolated areas of Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, and Odisha till April

25, offering little relief from the daytime heat. In the national capital, New Delhi, temperatures are projected to rise by 2-3 degrees Celsius over the next couple of days, with

may witness light to moderate rain or snowfall along with lightning and gusty winds reaching 30-50 kmph. In the northeastern region, fairly widespread rainfall with thunderstorms is anticipated. Eastern states such as West Bengal, Jharkhand, and Odisha are likely to experience showers with gusty winds. Similarly, southern states, including Telangana, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala, are likely to experience moderate rainfall and thunderstorm activity. The weather office has also advised fishermen to avoid venturing into the Bay of Bengal, particularly along the coasts of Odisha and West Bengal, on April 26 and 27 due to the likelihood of rough weather and strong storms.

# Markets Slip In Early Trade As IT, Pharma Stocks Come Under Pressure

New Delhi, Apr 24: The domestic equity markets saw negative performance in early hours on Friday amid elevated geopolitical tensions and the Q4 earnings season. Sensex was trading at 77,263, down 0.51 per cent or 400 points, while Nifty was down 0.41 per cent, or 100 points, in early trade. Amid panic selling in IT, financial and pharma stocks. However, support was seen in FMCG and chemical scrips. Cipla, Infosys, Dr Reddy's Laboratories, Sun Pharma, TCS and ICICI Bank were among the top leaders. On the sectoral front, several indices in the red zone, with the Nifty IT index falling 1.57 per cent. The Nifty Private Bank index declined 0.31 per cent, while the Nifty Pharma



index was down 0.27 per cent. Analysts said that given the prevailing global uncertainties and elevated volatility, a cautious and selective investment strategy is recommended. They advised investors to

accumulate fundamentally strong stocks during market corrections. "Fresh long positions should ideally be initiated only after the Nifty decisively breaks above and sustains the 24,500 level, which would signal improving sentiment and the possibility of a more sustained bullish trend," analysts noted. Market sentiment remains fragile and highly news-driven, with near-term direction likely to be influenced by geopolitical

developments and movements in crude oil prices, they added. Brent crude jumped nearly 2 per cent to \$107 per barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) rose around 2 per cent to \$97.6 from the previous close. In Asian markets, the Nikkei was trading 0.43 per cent higher at 59,394, the Hang Seng declined 0.37 per cent to 25,819, and the KOSPI was down 0.40 per cent to 6,450.15. On the institutional front, foreign institutional investors (FIIs) extended their selling streak for the fourth consecutive session on Thursday and offloaded equities worth Rs 3,254 crore. On the other hand, domestic institutional investors (DIIs) purchased equities worth Rs 941 crore.

# Sensex, Nifty Trade Lower As Oil Spike Hits Sentiment

New Delhi, Apr 24: Indian equity benchmarks ended lower on Friday as a surge in crude oil prices rattled investor sentiment amid rising geopolitical tensions linked to stalled US-Iran talks and disruption at the Strait of Hormuz. The Sensex dropped 982.71 points, or 1.27 per cent, to close at 76,681.29, while the Nifty declined 275.10 points, or 1.14 per cent, to settle at 23,897.95. The sell-off was largely driven by weakness in information technology stocks, which bore the brunt of the decline. Shares of Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, and Tech Mahindra emerged as the top losers on the Nifty IT index, dragging the sector down by around 5 per cent. Broader markets also mirrored the weak trend, with the Nifty MidCap and Nifty SmallCap indices falling 0.96 per cent and



0.87 per cent, respectively. Among sectors, apart from IT, the Nifty Pharma and Nifty Media indices also ended in the red, adding to the overall market weakness. However, the Nifty Metal index showed relative resilience, posting the smallest decline among sectoral indices. Investor sentiment was dampened by a sharp rise in global

crude oil prices. Brent crude surged above the \$100 per barrel mark, with the April futures contract trading 2.07 per cent higher at \$107.25 per barrel. The spike in oil prices comes amid continued disruption in energy supplies due to the blockade at the Strait of Hormuz, a key global oil transit chokepoint.

# India Approves Rs 30 Billion For Maldives Under SAARC Currency Swap

New Delhi, Apr 24: India has approved withdrawal of Rs 30 billion for the Maldives under the SAARC Currency Swap Framework, the Indian High Commission in Male said on Thursday, reaffirming New Delhi's role as a key financial partner for its island neighbour. The drawdown comes on the same day that Maldives settled a \$400 million swap facility available in October 2024 under the US Dollar/Euro Swap Window of the bilateral agreement between the Reserve Bank of India and the Maldives Monetary Authority. The settlement reflects the Maldives government's commitment to meeting its financial obligations, the Maldives Foreign Ministry said. The Rs 30 billion facility has been under the INR Swap Window of the 'Framework on Currency Swap Arrangement for SAARC Countries, 2024-2027'. The agreement was signed between the RBI and the MMA during President Mohamed Muizzu's state visit to New Delhi in October 2024. According to the Maldives Foreign Ministry, the facility will support



the government's broader strategy to reinforce economic stability amid the evolving situation in West Asia. The INR Swap Window under the framework includes favourable terms aimed at improving accessibility and effectiveness for the recipient country. Since the inception of the SAARC Swap Framework in 2012, the RBI has extended aggregate swap support worth \$1.1 billion to the Maldives. The Indian High Commission noted that the currency swap arrangement has become an important element in ensuring financial stability for the Maldives, particularly during periods of external economic pressure.

# CSIR-NIIST To Celebrate National Technology Day With Techno-Fest Cum Customer Meet

New Delhi, Apr 24: The CSIR-National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (CSIR-NIIST), one of the country's premier research institutions, located in Thiruvananthapuram will host a Techno-Fest cum Customer Meet on May 11, to mark National Technology Day. The initiative is aimed at strengthening engagement with industry stakeholders and customers while providing a dynamic platform for knowledge exchange and collaboration. The event is expected to bring together representatives from industry, academia, and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), underscoring the institute's growing role in bridging research with real-world applications. According to Director Dr C. Anandharamakrishnan, the programme reflects the institute's con-



tinued focus on translating cutting-edge research into technologies that deliver tangible societal and industrial impact. "The Techno-Fest cum Customer Meet underscores our commitment to fostering stronger stakeholder engagement, promoting industry partnerships, and accelerating the deployment of sustainable and innovative solutions," he said. He

added that the initiative would contribute significantly to strengthening India's innovation ecosystem and advancing technological self-reliance. As part of the event, heads of various research divisions at CSIR-NIIST will present brief overviews of their expertise and ongoing projects, highlighting key technological advancements and capabilities.

Participants will also have the opportunity to interact directly with scientists, tour research facilities, and witness live demonstrations of advanced equipment and technologies developed at the institute. The programme is designed to encourage deeper collaboration, particularly with MSMEs, by opening avenues for technology transfer, commercialisation, and joint research initiatives. By facilitating direct engagement between innovators and end-users, the institute aims to create a more responsive and industry-aligned research environment. CSIR-NIIST has extended an open invitation to its customers and industry partners across the country to take part in the event, with expectations that the meeting will pave the way for new partnerships and meaningful collaborations in the technology sector.

# Crude Oil Prices Surge Up To 2 Per Cent Above \$100 Mark As Middle East Tensions Escalate

New Delhi, Apr 24: International crude oil prices surged on Friday, rising up to 2 per cent amid escalating tensions in the Middle East, even after a unilateral ceasefire announcement from the US. The global oil benchmark Brent crude advanced about 2 per cent to \$107 per barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) rose nearly 2 per cent to \$97.6 from the previous close. In the domestic market, crude on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX) was trading at Rs 9,077, down 1 per cent or nearly Rs 100. This week, Brent crude has jumped as much as 18.85 per cent to trade around the \$107 mark so far against the previous Friday's closing. Similarly, US WTI has witnessed a 17 per cent gain during the week. Commodity experts said that ongoing disruptions in the



Strait of Hormuz continue to fuel volatility, keeping the near-term bias cautiously bullish. For global oil commodities, it said immediate resistance is seen at \$99, and a sustained breakout could extend gains towards \$104.50, with further upside potential up to \$110, adding that on the downside, \$95 remains key support, while

\$90.80-\$88.50 acts as a stronger base. Though the overall bias remains cautiously bullish, contingent on geopolitical developments, the experts noted. Moreover, US President Donald Trump has reportedly stated that he would not use a nuclear weapon in the war against Iran. "Why would I use a nuclear weapon? We've totally, in

a very conventional way, decimated them without it," Trump told media at the White House. However, reports also claim that the US President has ordered the military to intensify action in the region, including operations targeting Iranian small boats near the Strait of Hormuz, further escalating tensions in the key shipping route. Separately, a report suggested that Israel and Lebanon have extended their ceasefire by three weeks. The Strait of Hormuz through which about 20 per cent of global oil trade passes remains a critical flashpoint as military activity and maritime disruptions raise concerns over supply stability. On the equities front, domestic front-line indices Sensex and Nifty traded up to 1 per cent lower in early trade amid selling pressure in IT and pharma stocks.

# Gold And Silver Prices Slip Nearly 1 Per Cent Amid Geopolitical Tensions

New Delhi, Apr 24: Gold and silver prices started the session on a weaker note on Friday, with both precious metals declining by nearly 1 per cent in early trade on the Multi Commodity Exchange (MCX). Gold futures for June 5 opened 0.39 per cent or Rs 594 lower at Rs 1,51,167 per 10 grams compared to the previous close of Rs 1,51,761. Later, the yellow metal touched an intra-day low of Rs 1,50,750, down 0.66 per cent or Rs 1,011. At the last count, it was trading at Rs 1,51,449, a decrease of Rs 312 or 0.21 per cent. During the session so far, gold has touched an intra-day high of Rs 1,51,457. On the other hand, silver futures for May 5 declined



as much as 0.95 per cent or Rs 2,313 to Rs 2,39,200, an intraday low. The white metal was trading at Rs 2,41,345, down Rs 168 or 0.07 per cent. It recorded an intraday high of Rs 2,41,382, down 0.05 per cent or Rs 131. In the international market, precious metals also witnessed selling pressure. COMEX gold was down nearly 1 per cent at \$4,684 per ounce, while

COMEX silver also slipped around 1 per cent to \$74.81 per ounce. According to commodity analysts, gold and silver prices are under pressure due to a stronger US dollar, rising bond yields, and uncertainty over geopolitical tensions in the Middle East. They further said that crude oil moving back above \$100 per barrel has raised inflation.

# India to import record 2.5 million metric tons of urea at double the price

New Delhi, Apr 24: In a record purchase, India is likely to import 2.5 million metric tons of urea in a single tender at nearly double the price paid two months ago amid the West Asia conflict, reports said. The record purchases, covering about a quarter of India's annual imports, are set to tighten global supply and push prices higher, which have already surged due to the Iran-US war. Sources said Indian Potash Ltd (IPL) has agreed to buy 1.5 million tons of urea at

USD 935 per ton for delivery on the west coast, and an additional 711 million tons at USD 959 per ton for delivery on the east coast. India, the world's biggest urea importer, issued the tender earlier this month to secure 2.5 million tons of the fertiliser, or nearly a quarter of its annual imports of about 10 million tons in 2025. A report by Reuters said the import tender received an order to supply 3.6 million tons of urea in the tender, with only a small portion priced at USD 935 a ton, while most bids clustered around USD 1,000 and climbed as high as USD 1,136. The price jump is stark compared with the previous tender issued by Rashtriya Chemicals and Fertilisers, where bids stood at just over USD 500 per tonne. India is the world's largest urea importer. It buys around 10 million tonnes annually. The latest procurement alone covers nearly a quarter of that requirement, potentially limiting availability for other buyers.

# UP CM Yogi Adityanath Highlights Agriculture Growth, Says Lab Has Been Taken To Land

Lucknow, Apr 24: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, along with Union Agriculture Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, attended a Regional Agriculture Conference on Friday, where he emphasised the role of technology, institutional reforms, and field-level engagement in transforming the farm sector. The Chief Minister noted that the focus has now shifted from mere policy formulation to implementation. Addressing the gathering here, the Chief Minister said, "The country comprises various agro-climatic zones. If seminars and workshops are organised across these distinct zones, tangible results inevitably follow. The laboratory has now been successfully taken to the



land-directly to the field." He added that India already has sufficient resources, but what is needed is decisive leadership to drive initiatives forward. "When such ini-

tiatives are spearheaded by the Government of India, the state governments follow suit. We must provide opportunities to our farmers; they are ready and capable of

delivering results," he said. Recalling the situation in 2017, he said there were 69 Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs), many of which were on the verge of closure. "Up until that time, my experience with the Krishi Vigyan Kendras had not been positive. Today, however, every single Krishi Vigyan Kendra across Uttar Pradesh has achieved something significant. Nowadays, these scientists sit down and engage directly with the farmers," he said. Highlighting agricultural progress in the state, he stated that Uttar Pradesh's agricultural growth rate has increased from 8 per cent to 18 per cent. "Since independence, the contribution of the agricultural sector to the economy has been on a steady decline.

## Panel Discussion on Cultural Branding through Digital Storytelling at Central University of Jammu

Jammu, 24 April 2026: The Department of Tourism and Travel Management, Central University of Jammu under the patronage of Prof. Sanjeev Jain, Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, successfully organized the university's weekly academic engagement, Thursday Mind Meet, in the form of a panel discussion. The Thursday Mind Meet serves as a vibrant academic platform for intellectual exchange, encouraging students and scholars to engage with contemporary themes and industry perspectives. The theme for today's session was "Cultural Branding Through Digital Storytelling." The panel featured an eminent speaker, Dr. Juhie Mohan, a popular Radio Jockey from Big FM 92.7, along with the panelists including Sumiran Maheshwari and Simranjeet Kaur (Research Scholars of the Department), and Sambarani and Parveen (students of MBA, Tourism and Travel



Management). The session was effectively moderated by Prof. Bharti Gupta. The discussion commenced with an insightful exploration of storytelling within the framework of cultural branding. Dr. Juhie Mohan, drawing from her rich experience in radio and media communication, elaborated on how storytelling serves as a powerful medium to humanize brands and connect audiences emotionally

with cultural narratives. She emphasized that digital storytelling is not merely about content dissemination but about crafting immersive experiences that resonate with audience identity and memory. Dr. Juhie highlighted that in the digital age, cultural branding thrives on authenticity, reliability, and emotional engagement. She noted that while digital platforms offer vast opportunities for narra-

tive construction, they also present the challenge of constructing and ruining the perception. According to her, "The strength of a story lies not just in how well it is told, but in how truthfully it reflects the essence of culture it represents." She further stressed that audiences today are discerning, and any disconnect between narrative and reality can weaken the benefits to be drawn from the perception and narrative building. The panelists also deliberated on the complexities of ensuring authenticity in digital storytelling. It was pointed out that authenticity is co-created involving storytellers, communities, and audiences, and therefore must be grounded in genuine cultural representation rather than superficial or commercialized portrayals. Ethical storytelling practices that respect cultural integrity while adapting to evolving digital formats were deliberated with real-world examples.

## SKBJSS met the DC Jammu and demanded that the indoor stadium be named after Baba Jitto

DC Jammu assured the delegation that necessary steps would be taken

Jammu Apr 24: A delegation of the Shaheed Kissan Baba Jitto Sangharsh Samiti met the Deputy Commissioner Jammu, Rakesh Minhas (IAS). The delegation included Partap Singh Jamwal (President SKBJSS), Arun Sharma (BDC Chairman), along with other members. The delegation presented their demand before the DC, stating that the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor (LG) has provided an indoor stadium at Jhiri, which has now been completed. The delegation expressed gratitude to the LG for this development. They further demanded that the indoor stadium be named after Baba Jitto Ji, so that future generations can learn about his history and follow his



ideals. They highlighted that Baba Jitto was a great saint and martyr, respected by all, yet there is no memorial or structure named after him to date. While the government has already named schools and parks after various martyrs and heroes, the delegation emphasized that there is no greater martyr or hero than Baba Jitto. The Deputy Commissioner Jammu listened to the matter seriously and assured the delegation that necessary steps would be taken to name the indoor stadium after Baba Jitto Ji. He also stated that he is always ready to contribute towards the welfare of society in every possible way.

## Jhanger Battalion Conducts Awareness Lecture under Nasha Mukta Campaign at Jhanger Nowsheera



Nowsheera 24 April 2026 As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukta Campaign, Jhanger Battalion organized an awareness lecture at Jhanger aimed at educating school students, teachers, and local residents about the harmful effects

of drug abuse and the importance of leading a healthy, substance-free life. The interactive session witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, faculty members, and members of the local community. The lecture

focused on the physical, psychological, and social consequences of substance abuse, while also highlighting preventive measures and the role of collective responsibility in building a drug-free society. Speakers emphasized the importance of early awareness and encouraged the youth to make informed choices, resist negative influences, and act as ambassadors of change within their communities. Teachers and community members were also urged to remain vigilant and supportive in guiding young individuals towards a positive and disciplined lifestyle.

## Javed Rana reviews development scenario in Doda Stresses accountability and grassroots impact

DODA, APRIL 24: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment, Javed Rana today chaired a high-level review meeting at the Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex, here, to evaluate the progress of key developmental initiatives across the district. Legislators Shakti Raj Parihar, Daleep Singh Parihar, Deputy Commissioner, Krishan Lal, Chief Engineer, I&FC Jammu Manoj Gupta, Chief Engineer PHE, Hanief Choudhary and all District level Officers participated in the meeting.



While reviewing the progress across key sectors, Javed Rana underscored the need for strict adherence to timelines, enhanced inter-departmental coordination to ensure that development effective-

ly reaches the grassroots with transparency and efficiency. The Minister reviewed the progress under AMRUT 2.0, CAPEX, irrigation, flood control and rural development works. He stressed

expediting these initiatives to boost agricultural production and strengthen irrigation infrastructure for farmers. While emphasizing the need for timely resolution of forest-related issues, the Minister called for strict verification processes before project execution and decisive action against obstructions affecting development works. He also called for strengthening monitoring process through the PARIVESH portal and promoting projects related to ecological conservation, check dams, and public recreation. Special attention was given to improv-

ing water supply and irrigation potential in Assar and adjoining areas to boost vegetable cultivation and local livelihoods. During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on tribal welfare initiatives, Forest Rights Act (FRA), development of tribal hostels, implementation of Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan, and provision of mobile medical services in remote areas. The Minister instructed concerned departments to prepare detailed project reports (DPRs) focusing on road connectivity, lift irrigation, power supply.

## Heena Mahajan's Grand Cultural Launch of Animated Dogri Poetry at EuroKids Talab Tillo with MD Ronit Kapoor, Arvind Gupta & Zorawar Singh Jamwal as Distinguished Guests

Jammu, April 24, 2026: In a historic first for the region, Jammu witnessed the grand launch of animated Dogri poetry written and composed by renowned poet Heena Mahajan. EuroKids Talab Tillo proudly became the first school to take an active initiative in presenting and supporting such a dynamic literary and creative milestone. The institution provided a vibrant platform to showcase Heena Mahajan's unique and imaginative collection of poems, creating an inspiring and culturally rich atmosphere within its campus. A vibrant celebration of language, culture, and childhood creativity unfolded as Heena Mahajan, popularly known by her pen name Jammu Di Chidi, hosted this special cultural event in collaboration with EuroKids Talab Tillo, with Managing Director Mr. Ronit



Kapoor as co-organizer. Gracing the occasion as Chief Guest, Arvind Gupta (MLA, West Jammu) congratulated Heena Mahajan for her remarkable initiative. He appreciated her strong sense of responsibility and noted that she is working ahead of her time to address the need for introducing the Dogri language to

young minds. He emphasized that such creative efforts enable children to absorb and appreciate their mother tongue from an early age in a joyful and engaging manner through animated poetry. Guest of Honour, Zorawar Singh Jamwal (Spokesperson, BJP & Chairman, Team Jammu, Duggar Baradari), also extended his heart-

felt congratulations to Heena Mahajan, who serves as an active Co-Convenor of Duggar Baradari, Team Jammu. He assured that such meaningful initiatives for children would be widely promoted across platforms and educational institutions to provide vibrant Dogri content. He praised all seven animated poems as distinct, beautifully crafted, and truly of an exceptional standard. The event was further graced by the esteemed presence and blessings of Ex-Corporator Neelam Nargotra. Among other distinguished attendees were Chairman Amit Kapoor, Vice Chairman Anita Kapoor, Mrs. Reeta Gupta (mother of Heena Mahajan), and Rooni Mahajan (sister of Heena Mahajan), whose presence added warmth and pride to the occasion.

## Baglamukhi Jayanti celebrated at Shree Raghunath Ji Temple

Ranvijay Singh performs Pooja of Maa Baglamuki, urges Devotees to Follow Divine Teachings for Peace and Prosperity

Jammu, Apr 24: J&K Dharmarth Trust today celebrated Baglamukhi Jayanti with great religious fervour and devotion at the historic Shree Raghunath Ji Temple. A large number of devotees thronged the temple to offer prayers and seek the blessings of Maa Baglamukhi on the auspicious occasion. On the occasion, Trustee of Dharmarth Trust, Shri Ranvijay Singh, performed the rituals and offered prayers, followed by the sacred Aarti at Karaneswar Temple. Speaking on the occasion, Shri Ranvijay Singh high-



lighted the spiritual significance of Baglamukhi Jayanti and said that Maa Baglamukhi symbolizes strength and protection from negative forces. He called upon devotees to imbibe the divine teachings of Mata Baglamukhi Ji in their lives and seek her blessings for peace,

prosperity, and well-being. Shri Ranvijay Singh said that the Trust, under the patronage of Dr. Karan Singh, Hon'ble Chairman Trustee, remains committed to the preservation, promotion and propagation of the rich spiritual and cultural heritage of Sanatan Dharma.

## SDM reviews academic activities, amenities at GGHS Salbala-Gool

RAMBAN, APRIL 24: Sub-Divisional Magistrate Gool Imtiaz today visited Government Girls High School Salbala to assess the functioning of the institution. SDM was accompanied by Naib Tehsildar Gundi Dham Shakeel-ul-Rehman Shaikh and other officers. The SDM conducted a comprehensive review of the academic environment, infrastructure and available facilities within the school premises. He inspected classrooms, sanitation facilities and other essential amenities to ensure that students are provided with a safe and conducive learning atmosphere. He directed school authorities to start class work in the new building. The SDM also interacted with students and staff, taking feedback regarding the quality of education,



availability of teaching resources and any challenges being faced by the institution. He encouraged students to remain focused on their studies and strive for excellence, emphasizing the importance of education in shaping a bright future. The SDM assured

full support for the overall growth and improvement of the school. He directed the concerned authorities to address any shortcomings on priority and ensure timely upgradation of infrastructure and facilities.

## Daylight robbery in the Name of 5G": Tony slams Telecom Giants, seeks TRAI crackdown & HC Intervention

Jammu, April 24: Senior Congress leader and former DDC Suchetgarh, Taranjit Singh Tony, on Friday mounted a scathing and aggressive attack on telecom operators, including BSNL, Airtel, Jio and others, accusing them of running what he termed a "well-organised loss of consumers" by charging for high-speed 5G services while delivering "miserable, outdated connectivity." In a strongly worded statement, Tony said the telecom situation in Jammu and Kashmir has deteriorated to an alarming level, with people facing relentless call drops, erratic signals, prolonged network outages, and internet speeds that "don't even qualify as stable 4G let alone 5G." He alleged that despite aggressive marketing and rising tariffs, the actual service delivery on the ground remains "deeply compromised and shockingly poor." "This is not mere negligence; this is blatant exploitation. Telecom companies are extracting



money from people under the false promise of 5G but what they are delivering is buffering, failed calls, and frustration. It is nothing short of daylight robbery." Tony said. Highlighting the plight of rural and border areas, he said entire villages continue to suffer from negligible or zero network coverage, leaving residents cut off from basic communication. "People are forced to climb rooftops or walk long distances just to catch a signal. Students are unable to attend

online classes, small businesses are struggling with digital payments, and in times of emergency, the lack of connectivity can prove life-threatening. This is a complete collapse of essential services," he added. Tony further alleged that telecom companies have deliberately ignored infrastructure expansion in rural belts while continuing to increase tariffs and push misleading advertisements about high-speed connectivity. "They are taking money for 5G but delivering

3G or unstable 4G speeds. Where is the infrastructure? Where is the accountability? This is a betrayal of public trust," he said. Taking a sharp dig at the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI), Tony accused the regulator of "total failure" and "criminal silence" over the issue. "TRAI has completely abdicated its responsibility. It is shocking that such blatant consumer exploitation is going unchecked. The authority must immediately intervene, conduct strict audits, and impose heavy penalties on telecom operators for misleading the public," he asserted. He also called upon the Jammu and Kashmir High Court to take suo motu cognizance of the matter, terming it a serious violation of consumer rights affecting millions of people. "When regulatory bodies fail, the judiciary must step in. The High Court should take notice of this widespread injustice and ensure accountability," he said.

# LG Manoj Sinha chairs J&K Higher Education Council meeting



**JAMMU, APRIL 24:** Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha today chaired a high-level meeting of Jammu Kashmir Higher Education Council, at Lok Bhavan. The Council, under the leadership of the Lieutenant Governor, deliberated on comprehensive strategies aimed at driving the holistic transformation of the education sector across the Union Territory.

The key agendas included implementation of the 'Design Your Degree' (DYD) program and the adoption of its official manual across universities, integration of IT and Artificial Intelligence into the curriculum, strategies to promote entrepreneur-

ship, knowledge-based skills and develop human capital for Viksit Bharat. The Lieutenant Governor directed for the effective, on-ground implementation of 'Design Your Degree', skill development, Artificial intelligence and other innovative programmes and initiatives across higher educational institutions. He also called for seamless synergy between Central and Union Territory educational institutions to drive a holistic transformation of the education sector.

"We must establish benchmarks aligned with both national and international standards, ensuring that Jammu Kashmir's education sector stands as a model of excellence in

the country," the Lieutenant Governor said. Prof. Dinesh Singh, Vice Chairman, JKHEC emphasized that the core mission must remain the realization of human potential, ensuring that higher education directly fosters societal service and enhances student productivity. The Council also deliberated on setting up a regular mechanism to ensure cooperation and collaboration between various institutions of Jammu & Kashmir for engendering of Joint Degree Programmes and a common technology-based platform for sharing of practices, ideas and programmes of various institutions; increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio

(GER), special initiatives such as 'The Riverine College' and the AI Competition, JKHEC budget utilization for 2025-26 and budget allocations for 2026-27. Vice Chancellors and members of the Council shared their insights on the way forward for the DYD program and further interventions in higher education with the implementation of NEP 2020. Prof. Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, Director of Colleges, J&K; Dr Seema Naz, Nodal Principal, Government College of Education; Dr Ravinder Kumar Tickoo, Principal, GCW Parade Jammu also attended the meeting. The meeting was attended by Prof. Dinesh Singh, Vice Chairman,

J&K Higher Education Council: Shalendra Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department; Dr Mandep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, Administrative Secretary; Skill Development; Ram Niwas Sharma, Commissioner Secretary; Higher Education Department; Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu; Prof. Nilofar Khan, VC Kashmir University; Prof. Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, VC SMVDU; Prof. BN Tripathi, VC SKUAST Jammu; Prof. A. Ravinder Nath, VC Central University of Kashmir; Prof. Sanjeev Jain, VC Central University of Jammu; Prof. Jaiwaid Iqbal, VC BGSBU; Prof. Mohammad Mobin, VC Cluster University Srinagar; Prof. Manoj Singh Gaur, Director IIT Jammu; Prof. Kavi Arya from IIT Bombay; Shobha Bagai, Director, Cluster Innovation Centre Delhi University and other members.

# Australian High Commissioner calls on CM Omar discusses cooperation in agriculture, allied sectors



**NEW DELHI, APRIL 24:** The Australian High Commissioner to India, Mr. Philip Green, today called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, and discussed avenues for enhanced cooperation in agriculture and allied sectors.

During the discussions,

The interaction also touched upon prospects for institutional linkages and technical cooperation to support ongoing developmental initiatives in Jammu and Kashmir, within the broader framework of India-Australia engagement. The engagement remained forward-looking, with a shared intent to deepen cooperation through appropriate channels. Mr. Orson Passi, Second Secretary, and Ms. Vandana Sethi, Political Lead, from the Australian High Commission were also present during the meeting.

# Six booked for disrupting public order in J-K

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 24 :** Six persons were booked under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA) in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district on Friday for allegedly disrupting public order. Sopore Police booked the six under the PSA for their involvement in recent law and order disturbances and acts of vandalism during a student protest in Sopore area of the north Kashmir district, a police spokesman said. He identified the persons as Umar Akbar Hajam, a resident of Seelu, Salman Ahmed Shala, a resident of Shalpora Sopore, Altaf Ahmed Sheikh, a resident of Panzpora Tarzoo, Mubashir Ahmed Gilkar, a resident of Naseerabad, Muzammil Mushtaq Changa, a resident of

Arampora, and Majid Firdous Dar, a resident of Chinkpora areas of Sopore. "All the individuals have been detained under PSA after obtaining proper detention warrants from the competent authority (District Magistrate) and have been lodged in District Jail Bhatnagar," the spokesman said. He said the six were actively involved in instigating unrest, indulging in vandalism and attempting to disturb peace during a recent protest by students. Their activities posed a serious threat to public order and safety, he added. The police said there is zero tolerance for any unlawful activity that threatens peace and stability in the area.

# Drug Controller J&K flags off Bike Rally to promote anti-drug campaign

**JAMMU, APRIL 24:** Drug Controller J&K Rajesh Kumar today flagged off a bike rally (Group ride) here from Church Lane - Residency Road to Sonmarg Kashmir. The rally has been organised by 'We Care Team led by President Kelvin Bhatti in collaboration with the Drug & Food Control Organization J&K as part of the 100 Day Nasha Mukti Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan. The primary objective of the rally is to raise awareness about the growing menace of drug abuse. A large number of volunteers are participating in the expedition with the aim to sensitize the public and promote a collective responsibility towards building a drug-free society. Addressing the gather-



ing, Rajesh Kumar emphasized that the fight against drug abuse is a "moral and social emergency." "The success of the Nasha Mukti Abhiyan depends on active public participation and ownership. The role of parents, teachers and religious leaders is crucial and cannot be undermined, as they serve as the first line of defence against drug addiction," he noted. He urged participants to act as role models in spreading awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse

among the masses and to share collective responsibility in combating this serious issue. He also informed that the department has intensified its crackdown on the illegal trade of habit-forming drugs being pushed into the Union Territory through unregulated channels. "Surprise checks are being carried across J&K wherein all drug sale establishments are being inspected to ensure strict compliance," he informed.

# Div Com reviews various Revenue Matters, Development Initiatives

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 24:** Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, today chaired a meeting to review a range of revenue-related matters, including migrant properties, construction of houses for terror victims, digitization of land records, Digital Crop Survey, and development of urban revenue-generating assets. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners, Additional Commissioner Central, and the Officer on Special Duty to the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir. While reviewing progress on the construction of houses for terror victims, the Divisional Commissioner directed Deputy Commissioners to ensure that all eligible beneficiaries possess the requisite land, with a minimum of five marlas, to facilitate timely assistance. Regarding the



update of Giridawari records of religious and heritage sites, he instructed the Deputy Commissioners to ensure that all structures of cultural and historical importance are properly documented and their records duly updated and certified. The Divisional Commissioner also

assessed the status of migrant properties, including the quantum of land, district-wise progress in removal of encroachments, and the disposal of grievances submitted by migrants. Reviewing progress under the SVAMITA Scheme and the Digital Crop Survey, he urged

Deputy Commissioners to intensify efforts to achieve timely implementation and broader coverage. Further, the Divisional Commissioner directed Deputy Commissioners to prepare Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) under the Urban Challenge Fund in consultation with Municipal Executive Officers to focus on the development of public utility and revenue-generating infrastructure in urban areas, including parking facilities, bus stands, and other convenience assets. Also, he called for ensuring active participation of public representatives and citizens in the ongoing Pad Yatra organized under the Nasha Mukti Campaign, aimed at promoting a drug-free society. The meeting concluded with directions to all concerned officers to ensure timely and effective implementation of the reviewed initiatives.

# Police deploy narcotic dog squad to crack down on drug trafficking

**SRINAGAR, APRIL 24 :** Police in Srinagar have deployed the narcotic dog squad across multiple city locations to crack down on drug trafficking, a police official said on Friday. During this special drive under the Nasha Mukti Bharat Abhiyan, trained sniffer dogs have been positioned at key checkpoints to detect concealed narcotics, identify and arrest drug peddlers, he said. The official said deploying highly trained canines enhances on-the-spot detection capabilities and strengthens ground-level enforcement. He said the proactive initiative is a vital component of the Srinagar police's strategy to dismantle narcotics supply networks and establish a strong deterrent against drug-related activities. The police also continued awareness campaigns to educate the public and reinforce the collective resolve towards a drug-free society.

# Rusted mortar shell found

**MENDHAR/JAMMU, APR 24 :** An old rusted mortar shell was found in a forward area in Mendhar sector of Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch on Friday, officials said. The mortar shell was noticed by villagers in an open field near Narol of Mendhar, they said. The officials said the Army's Bomb Disposal Squad was called in and later the mortar shell was safely destroyed in a controlled explosion.

## WORLD MALARIA DAY - 2026

25th, April

01

PREVENT MOSQUITO BREEDING

- Keep surroundings free of stagnant water
- Cover all water containers & frequently change the water
- Disposal of all useless items holding water such as tins/cans/tyres/bottles etc.

02

PREVENT MOSQUITO BITES

- Use mosquito net while sleeping
- Use protective clothing (covering full body)
- Use mosquito repellents (creams/liquid sprays/mats/coils)

03

PREVENT ENTRY OF MOSQUITOES

- Mosquito screen for doors/windows
- Clear weeds and tall grass around the houses
- Improve basic sanitation

04

FOR FREE TREATMENT AND MORE INFORMATION VISIT

Nearest Government Health Institution

ASHA

in your village

STATE MALARIOLOGIST / STATE PROGRAMME OFFICER, NVBDCP, J&K

DIRECTORATE OF HEALTH SERVICES, JAMMU

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