

North in News

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21 dead, several injured as bus falls into gorge in Udhampur, PM Modi announces ex gratia

JAMMU, APR 20 : At least 21 people have died and several others injured after a passenger bus skidded off the road and fell into a gorge on Monday in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir. Police officials here said that a bus ferrying passengers, on its way from Ramnagar towards Udhampur met with an accident and plunged into a gorge near Village Khagote. Senior police officials including Deputy Inspector General of J&K Police, Shiv Kumar



Shah Condoles Loss Of Life In Udhampur Road Accident

NEW DELHI, Apr 20: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday expressed condolences to the families of those killed in the Udhampur bus accident. In a message posted on X, Shah said the road accident in Udhampur is extremely tragic. "I express my

(Contd on Pg 2)

President Murmu Condoles Loss Of Lives In Bus Accident

NEW DELHI, Apr 20: President Droupadi Murmu on Monday condoled the loss of lives in a bus accident in Jammu and Kashmir and prayed for the swift recovery of the injured. 21 people were killed and more than 20 others injured when a passenger bus

(Contd on Pg 2)

CM Omar Announces Ex-Gratia Relief For Udhampur Road Accident Victims

JAMMU, Apr 20: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today announced immediate relief from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund for victims of the Udhampur road accident. An ex-gratia of Rs.2 lakh will be provided to the next of kin of each deceased, Rs.1 lakh to those seriously injured, and 725,000 to persons

(Contd on Pg 2)

Sharma, locals and Army troops rushed to the spot and launched the rescue operation. Officials said that 20 passengers have been confirmed dead. However, injured have been shifted to the Government Medical College and Hospital, Udhampur while one of the critical has been airlifted to the Government Medical College and Hospital, Jammu for an advanced those seriously injured, and 725,000 to persons sharp curve at the spot and the driver may have lost

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Life feels impossible without a partner: Widow of 'ponywallah' killed in Pahalgam terror attack



PAHALGAM, APR 20 : A year after 'ponywallah' Adil Hussain Shah died while trying to save tourists during the Pahalgam terrorist attack on April 22, 2025, life has been anything but easy for

his widow Gulnaz Akhtar. Soon after losing her husband, who was the sole breadwinner of his family, Gulnaz moved back to her parents' house and started working to sustain herself. "I was married to Adil for

six years. He was the sole earning member of the family and took full responsibility for our 4-5 member household. Since his death, life has been hard," said Gulnaz, her voice heavy with grief. She was still coming to terms with losing her daughter, who was still-born, when the news about Adil's death came. "I now live with my parents and work to sustain myself. A job will not bring him back and life feels impossible without a partner," she said. On her decision to move out of her in-laws' house, Gulnaz said, "Who

Cook, plumber, painter, stock trader: Unusual 'career path' of oldest Lashkar terrorist

SRINAGAR/NEW DELHI, APR 20: From a cook to plumber, and painter to electrician, Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist Abdullah alias Abu Hureira, who had been tasked with setting up bases outside Jammu and Kashmir, even took share trading as his profession to blend with the masses in other parts of the country in pursuit of his sinister agenda, officials said on Monday. Tracking his stay in various parts of the country, including Rajasthan,

(Contd on Pg 2)

CM Omar tours Rajouri's Nowshera, inaugurates key road, upgraded 100-bedded hospital; reviews Sungal Tunnel works

Aspirations of Pir Panjal region will continue to guide our policies and drive responsive governance on the ground: CM



NOWSHERA, APRIL 20: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today inaugurated the upgraded road from NH-144A Bridge to Nowshera town and the 100-bedded Sub-District Hospital during his extensive tour of the area. The visit of the Chief Minister, along with his Cabinet colleagues, marked a major push towards strengthening

connectivity and healthcare infrastructure in the region. The Chief Minister received a rousing welcome on his arrival, with people lining both sides of the road and showering flower petals, jostling to see the chief minister,

reflecting overwhelming public enthusiasm and support. The upgraded road project, executed by the PWD (R&B) Department at a cost of Rs.7.99 crore, is expected to significantly improve connectivity.

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BRIEF NEWS

J&K Govt Forms Inquiry Committee To Probe GMC Anantnag Incident

SRINAGAR, APR 20: The Government of Jammu and Kashmir has constituted an inquiry committee to conduct a detailed probe into the incident at Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag following reports of alleged negligence and lack of timely medical intervention. As per Government Order No. 354/JK (HME) of 2026, a three-member committee has been formed comprising Mission Director NHM as Chairperson, Director Health Services Kashmir as Member, and Medical Superintendent Children

(Contd on Pg 2)

11 arrested under anti-drug campaign of J&K Police

SRINAGAR, APR 20 : The Jammu and Kashmir Police on Monday arrested 11 alleged drug peddlers from different parts of the valley and recovered over seven kilograms of contraband, officials said. Continuing its sustained crackdown on drug trafficking under the ongoing 100-day Nasha Mukti Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, police have intensified its enforcement drive, arresting 11 drug peddlers and seizing substantial contraband and cash in separate operations across the valley, a police spokesperson said. The officer said that in Anantnag, police arrested three alleged drug peddlers in two separate operations. They recovered over 1.3 kgs of charas powder, he said.

(Contd on Pg 2)

Northwest, Central, Adjoining East India to Witness Heatwave Conditions For Next 4-5 Days

NEW DELHI, APR 20: Heatwave conditions are very likely to prevail over isolated pockets of northwest, central and adjoining parts of east India for the next four to five days, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Monday. It said isolated pockets of Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Punjab, East Rajasthan, Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, West Uttar Pradesh, West Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gangetic

West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha and scattered pockets of East Uttar Pradesh are expected to witness heatwave conditions on different dates between April 20 and April 25. "Hot and humid weather conditions are very likely to prevail in isolated pockets over Gangetic West Bengal during April 20-26, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal during April 20-22; Kerala and Mahe, Coastal Andhra Pradesh

(Contd on Pg 2)

Second round of talks in Pak uncertain as US-Iran tensions spike over seized cargo ship

ISLAMABAD/TEHRAN/WASHINGTON, APR 20: Uncertainty remains over whether Iran will attend a second round of US-Iran negotiations due in Islamabad, as tensions between the United States and Iran have sharply escalated after US forces seized an Iranian-flagged cargo vessel in the Gulf of Oman. Iran has signalled that it has no plans to send negotiators to Islamabad for a new round of talks with the United States, threatening Pakistan's plans for multiday negotiations between the warring nations less than 48 hours before a fragile ceasefire is set to expire. A spokesperson for Iran's foreign ministry, Esmail Baghaei, said no decision had been made. "As of now, we have no plans for the next round of negotiation," Baghaei said, adding that

Iran does not respond to "deadlines or ultimatums" when national interests are at stake. He also accused Washington of undermining diplomacy. "While claiming diplomacy and readiness for negotiations, the US is carrying out behaviours that do not in any way indicate seriousness in pursuing a diplomatic process," he said. Baghaei said on Monday Washington had "violated the ceasefire from the beginning of its implementation", citing the US naval blockade of the Strait of Hormuz since April 13, and the overnight capture of an Iranian container ship by the US military as breaches of the truce, as well as international law. According to US officials, the ship, identified as the *Touska*, was intercepted after allegedly

(Contd on Pg 2)

Shinde builds house for Pahalgam victim's family; father says he gave his life for humanity

PAHALGAM, APR 20 : The family of a victim of the Pahalgam terror attack on Monday highlighted the support extended by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, stating that he not only provided financial assistance but also built a house for them, fulfilling a promise made after the last year's tragedy. Syed Haider Shah, father of Adil Hussain Shah, a ponywallah who along with 25 tourists lost his life in the attack by a group of terrorists on April 22 last year, said they are also thankful to the J&K government for

providing a job to his widow and his younger brother. "We are very grateful to Shinde ji. After the incident, he sent his aides to our home with financial help and promised to build a house. He has built the house and given it to us, along with financial support," Shah told Videos. He said the outreach from Shinde has continued beyond initial assistance. "He called us to Srinagar for a meeting, and his team remains in touch even now. One of his aides told us, 'We are like your sons...I am also your Adil.'"

(Contd on Pg 2)

In cyber-crime cases, courts should assess bail pleas beyond individual complaints: CJJ



NEW DELHI, APR 20 : Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant on Monday said in cases of members of organised cyber-crime networks, courts may be required to assess bail pleas beyond individual complaints and "situate such allegations" within the broader architecture of organised criminal activity, bearing in

mind the scale, coordination and potential continuing impact of such networks. The CJI also suggested that fund transfers to foreign accounts may be briefly paused to allow verification of the account holder, thereby deterring cybercriminals in the country, and underlined that legitimate

(Contd on Pg 2)

ACB tightens noose on corruption: five Convicted In Pahalgam Embezzlement Case



JAMMU, APR 20: In a significant push against corruption, the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Monday secured conviction of five former storekeepers in a food grain misappropriation case in Pahalgam, while also filing a chargesheet against a former Block Development Officer (BDO) Kupwara and four others in a separate case involving alleged siphoning of government funds. In a statement issued, Court of Special Judge Anti-Corruption Court Anantnag Convicts 1. Abdul Khaliq Shah S/O Mohd Abdullah Shah R/O Ashmuqam the then Store Keeper Food supplies Sale Center Pahalgam and Larpora. (2) Gh Nabi Mir S/O Gh. Mohd Mir R/O Aishmuqam the then Store

keeper Food supplies Sale centre Larpora in a misappropriation case, statement reads. In a significant verdict reinforcing the commitment to combating corruption, the Hon'ble Special Judge Anti-Corruption Court Anantnag, Ms Masarat Roohi convicted aforementioned accused persons, in a misappropriation case registered under

FIR No. 09/1990 U/S 5(2) of J&K P.C. Act-2006 read with Sec. 409/IPC of P/S VOK (now ACB), it reads. The accused persons, then-serving in Food and Supplies Department Kashmir Pahalgam Circle as store keepers were found guilty under Sections U/S 5(2) of J&K P.C. Act-2006 read with Sec. 409/IPC, for misappropriation of Food grains/Empty Bags by these store keepers of Pahalgam Circle for the period w.e.f. 04/1989 to 11-09-1989, it reads. Following a complaint filed by Dy. Director Food and Supplies Department Srinagar vide No DFSK/Adm-SA-468 dated 02-11-1989 reporting therein about the embezzlement of Food

(Contd on Pg 2)

Women's college students protest seeking justice in case of student's death

JAMMU, APR 20 : In the wake of a student losing her life after falling off a moving bus last week, hundreds of female students from a government college for women staged a protest in Gandhi Nagar here on Monday, demanding justice. In a tragic incident, Anjali Choudhary, a fourth-semester student of GCW Gandhi Nagar, died after accidentally falling off a moving bus at Udhampur while on her way to Patnitop for a college picnic trip on Thursday. "The protesting students boycotted classes and sat on a dharna on a busy road, raising slogans and seeking action against those responsible for the alleged negligence in the

(Contd on Pg 2)

FROM PAGE ONE

21 dead...

control of while negotiating the curve," said a senior police officer. He said that the vehicle rolled down into the gorge after hitting the parapet. President Droupadi Murmu also expressed condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the tragedy and prayed for the speedy recovery of those who were injured. Meanwhile, PM Modi, in a post on X, expressed grief over the loss of lives in the accident. "Pained to hear about the loss of lives due to a bus accident in Udhampur, Jammu and Kashmir. I extend my heartfelt condolences to those who have lost their dear and dear ones. I pray for the speedy recovery of the injured," he posted. An ex gratia of Rs. 2 lakh from PMNRF would be given to the next of kin of each of those who lost their lives in the tragic mishap. The injured would be given Rs. 50,000, said PM Modi. Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh said that rescue and evacuation operations are underway with teams from Police, SDRF and district administration on site. "21 casualties so far and 61 injured. Injured have been shifted to Udhampur Hospital while the one more seriously injured is being airlifted to Government Medical College Jammu. My sincere condolences to the bereaved families. All possible assistance is being provided. My office is in constant touch," Dr Singh posted on X. Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha has also expressed his deep anguish and grief over the loss of lives in the tragic road accident in Rannagar, Udhampur. In a post on X, the Lieutenant Governor has said "Tragic road accident in Udhampur is heartbreaking. My deepest condolences to the bereaved families. May God grant them strength. Praying for speedy recovery of the injured. I have directed the district administration, Police, SDRF and Health Department to provide every possible assistance to those affected." Meanwhile Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has also expressed deep sorrow over the tragic road accident involving a passenger bus travelling from Rannagar to Udhampur. In a message of condolence, the Chief Minister extended his heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families and prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the accident. He assured that the government stands firmly with the victims and their families in this hour of grief, and that all necessary assistance is being extended to ensure proper medical care and support to the affected. The Chief Minister's Office is in constant touch with Government Medical College Udhampur, where the injured are receiving treatment and necessary medical care. Meanwhile, the district administration has been directed to expedite rescue operations. Instructions have also been issued to the Minister for Health and Medical Education and the Minister for Transport to ensure all required assistance. Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi said, "In this hour of grief, my condolences are with all the bereaved families who lost their loved ones. I pray for the speedy recovery of the injured."

Shah...

deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in this accident. The local administration is fully engaged with utmost promptness in relief and rescue operations. I pray for the speedy recovery of the injured" he said.

President...

rolled down a hill in Udhampur district this morning. The accident took place when the bus was negotiating a blind curve near Kaptori village in Ram Nagar area at around 10 am. "I am deeply saddened to learn about the deaths of several people in the bus accident that occurred in Udhampur district of Jammu and Kashmir. I express my condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in this tragedy. I pray for the swift recovery of the injured," Murmu said in a post on X in Hindi.

CM Omar...

who sustained minor injuries in the accident. The Chief Minister said that no amount of financial assistance can compensate for the irreparable loss of lives in the tragic incident, but the relief is being extended as an immediate measure to support the affected families. He reiterated that the government stands firmly with the victims and assured all possible assistance.

Life feels...

What I stay there well? When my husband is not there, what would I do staying there?" Recounting the day of the attack, she said it began like any other.

"In the morning, he offered namaz, had tea, ate and bid goodbye. By the evening, the news of his death reached our doorstep," she said.

"I take immense pride that Adil died saving tourists... I miss him deeply," she added.

Adil died while trying to snatch a weapon from one of the terrorists in a courageous attempt to protect the tourists he had ferried on horseback to the Baisaran meadow. He was the lone local among 26 people shot dead by Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists.

Three Pakistani terrorists involved in the attack were gunned down by security forces on the outskirts of Srinagar in July. Adil's brother Naushad Hussain Shah is overcome with grief every time he thinks of his brother, but it is also proud of his final act of bravery.

"Whenever I remember Adil, it becomes difficult, beyond endurance," he said.

He said losing a brother is deeply painful, but he finds some solace in the fact that he did good work.

Naushad said Adil could never tolerate any wrongdoing.

"He was soft-hearted, but could never stand anything wrong. If he saw any injustice, he would immediately oppose it. When Adil saw innocent, unarmed people being attacked, he stood up against it. That is when they (terrorists) killed him," he said.

On the morning of April 22, 2025, Naushad said he left home early, while Adil went out, braving bad weather, to buy medicines for their father.

"Our sister had asked him not to go because of the rain, but he insisted," Naushad said.

"The entire family depended on him. He was the eldest and the responsibility of the family rested on his shoulders. His word was final at home," Adil's brother said.

Adil had been working in Pahalagam since 2010. Initially, he would accompany his father during the annual Anantnath Yatra, ferrying pilgrims on horses in Chandanvir. In recent years, as tourism picked up, he worked there throughout the year, Naushad said.

He called the terrorist attack a "stain" on Pahalagam, a place known for its peaceful tourism.

"Such violence was unheard of here and it has brought hardship to locals," Naushad said.

Cook, plumber...

undertaking menial jobs in Rajasthan, Abdullah, who had infiltrated into Jammu and Kashmir from the north side in 2010, took up plumbing work as he had some basic knowledge about it from Pakistan.

After getting in touch with the contacts of Umer Harris, known with the alias 'Kharosh' in the counter-terrorism grid in Jammu and Kashmir, he managed to procure an Aadhar card followed by a Permanent Account Number (PAN) card so that he could receive digital payments from his customers, the officials said.

Hailing from Kasur village in Pakistan's Punjab province, Abdullah, who was well-versed in Punjabi dialect, decided to shift his base to Amritsar but the fear of getting caught by security agencies restrained him from doing so.

After doing other jobs like that of a painter and electrician in Rajasthan and Haryana, Abdullah decided to shift to Malerkotla village in Punjab where he could speak in his Punjabi dialect, the officials said.

The LeT terrorist opened a 'dhaba' (roadside eatery) for some time, during which he learned how to trade in stocks. The eatery did not generate much profit, so he decided to close it down, but by then he had gained significant experience in stock trading from YouTube, the officials said.

At the time of his arrest, he had a profit margin of over Rs 50,000 in his Demat account and he was also teaching others and giving them tips for investments, the officials said.

Abdullah was arrested by Jammu and Kashmir police earlier this month and is being questioned extensively about the possible cells created by him outside the union territory.

The arrest of Abdullah, along with another Pakistani national, Usman alias Khubab, was another major success for the Srinagar police that comes six months after the dismantling of a "white-collar" terror cell centred at Fardidabad's Al Falah University that is linked to the November 2025 Red Fort blast case.

During interrogation, Abdullah told his interrogators about his and Harris' (alias 'Kharosh') footprints across India, especially in Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab, which included a marriage ceremony solemnised by the escaped terrorists with the daughter of a terror sympathiser in Kashmir, the officials said.

The operation, which began on March 31 and was monitored by Director General of Police Nalin Prabhat, who camped in Srinagar, has unveiled the funding and financial pattern of the LeT office, he said.

The terrorists used forged documents and identities to create a network not just in Jammu and Kashmir, but in several other states, they added.

Three Srinagar residents, identified as Mohammad Nageeb Bhat, Adil Rashid Bhat, and Ghulam Mohammad Mir alias Manu, were among the five arrested. They are accused of providing shelter, food and logistical support to the terrorists. The elaborate network began to unravel on March 31 when the first of the three Srinagar residents, Nageeb Bhat, was arrested from Pandach along with a pistol and other incriminating material.

During his questioning, Bhat told the police that he was a part of the LeT and procured the arms and ammunition from another associate, Adil Rashid of Zakokra and also provided support to foreign terrorists, the officials said.

From Bhat, the police were led to Mir and Rashid Bhat, both active associates of LeT in Srinagar and during the investigation, following disclosures from those arrested, various hideouts were also busted in forested areas in and around Srinagar.

The two Pakistani terrorists are categorised as 'A+' grade militants, and the officials said they infiltrated India approximately 16 years ago and remained active across various districts of the Kashmir Valley, "commanding around 40 foreign terrorists" over the years, most of whom have since been neutralised, the officials said.

"Incriminating" material has been seized from several hideouts in various parts of Srinagar and other cities that include three AK-47 rifles, one AK-Krinkov rifle, pistols, hand grenades, electronic equipment and gadgets, the officials said.

The probe into the 'Al Falah module' in November 2025 by the Srinagar police had unravelled a network comprising highly educated professionals, mostly doctors, who had been radicalised to carry out terrorist activities.

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

CM Omar...

streamline traffic movement, and reduce travel time for commuters.

Later, the Chief Minister inaugurated the upgraded 100-bedded Sub-District Hospital, developed at an estimated cost of 718.18 crore. The facility is equipped with modern healthcare infrastructure aimed at enhancing patient care and expanding access to quality medical services for the people of Nowshera and adjoining areas.

He was accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary, Minister for Health and Medical Education Sakeena Itoo, and Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani.

During his visit, the Chief Minister took a detailed tour of the hospital and inspected key sections, including X-ray, ECG and ultrasound rooms, examination rooms, and the blood storage unit. He interacted with doctors, staff, and patients, enquiring about the availability and quality of healthcare services.

Addressing a massive public gathering, the Chief Minister emphasized that public office is a responsibility to serve the people and improve their quality of life.

"Positions of power are not meant for personal comfort but to bring relief to the people and make their lives easier. Our priority is to strengthen schools, hospitals, roads, and address unemployment and poverty," he said.

Amid an enthusiastic turnout, he highlighted key initiatives aimed at boosting connectivity, healthcare, and overall socio-economic growth in Rajouri and adjoining areas. Interacting warmly with the public, he assured that the voices and aspirations of the people of the Pir Panjal region would continue to guide policy decisions and drive responsive governance on the ground.

He reiterated the government's commitment to regularizing daily wagers and ensuring justice for Anganwadi and ASHA workers through improved and increased wages and stipends. He also highlighted various welfare initiatives, including the provision of free gas cylinders to the poorest households,

electricity support, and free bus travel for women. Referring to broader political commitments, the Chief Minister underscored the need to restore statehood to Jammu and Kashmir, stating that it was a promise made to the people and was being fulfilled.

Highlighting recent developmental achievements, he noted that projects like the Nowshera road and hospital, which had remained pending for years, were completed due to the focused efforts of the present government.

The Chief Minister expressed gratitude to the people for their warm reception and overwhelming support. "The love and affection shown by the people of Nowshera is deeply humbling. I assure you that we will continue to work tirelessly to address your concerns and build a prosperous Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Earlier, on his way to Nowshera, the Chief Minister inspected the ongoing works on the Sungal Tunnel project and reviewed progress at the site. He was briefed by officials on excavation, structural works, and associated road development.

He was informed by the Project Sampark of the Border Roads Organisation that the total length of the tunnel is 2.79 km across the Kaldhar Range, with a reduction in travel time of 40-45 minutes, and that it is scheduled to be completed by June 30 this year.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary said that key infrastructure projects in the region have been realized under the leadership of the Chief Minister, reaffirming the government's commitment to balanced and equitable development across Jammu and Kashmir.

Minister for Health and Medical Education Sakeena Itoo, while addressing the gathering, announced the establishment of a Government Degree College at Seri block of Nowshera. Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani and other leaders also addressed the gathering, highlighting the government's development agenda and commitment to public welfare.

Northwest...

and Yanam during April 20-24; coastal areas of Gujarat on April 24 and April 25," the IMD said. Also, warm night conditions are expected to prevail in isolated pockets over Haryana, Chandigarh, West Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha on April 20 and April 21, Chhattisgarh on April 20, and Odisha between April 20 and April 22. The IMD highlighted that moderate to intense thunderstorm activity can occur over different states of south, central, east and northwest India on Monday. There is also a possibility of hailstorms over different parts of the country.

Iran, however, condemned the incident as "armed piracy" and a violation of a ceasefire arrangement.

Its military headquarters, Khatam al-Anbiya, vowed retaliation, while Iranian media reported drone activity targeting US naval assets in the region, though no damage has been confirmed.

Baghia further reiterated that Iran would not accept removal of nuclear structures as part of any deal, a key sticking point in earlier talks held in Pakistan on 12 April that ended without agreement.

Despite Iran's hesitation, the United States has confirmed it will send a high-level delegation to Islamabad, led by Vice-President JD Vance, alongside Middle East envoy Steve Witkoff, and presidential adviser Jared Kushner. US officials say President Trump is pushing for renewed negotiations aimed at extending a fragile ceasefire due to expire this week.

However, Iranian state media has reported that officials may boycott the talks, citing continued US military pressure and the lack of a "black/red line" of Iranian ports.

The escalation has already rippled through global markets. Oil prices rose sharply following the seizure of the Iranian vessel and renewed fears of instability in the Strait of Hormuz - a critical passageway for global energy supplies.

Brent crude jumped nearly 5% as traders reacted to concerns over potential disruption.

China, a major importer of Iranian oil, expressed "concern" over the US action and urged both sides to return to diplomacy, warning against further destabilisation of maritime trade routes.

Shinde...

"That gives us strength," he said.

While the family also received government support including a job for the victim's wife and financial aid, Shah said no assistance can compensate for the loss.

"No matter what is given, that person will not come back. There is no peace," he said.

Recalling his son's sacrifice, Shah said it stood as an example of humanity above religious divisions.

"He did not care for his own life. He gave his life to save others. He did not see Hindu, Muslim or Sikh. He showed that humanity comes first - that the same blood runs through everyone's veins," the grieving father said.

Shah said he takes pride in the fact that Adil's actions brought humanity to the forefront, demonstrating through his sacrifice what true humanity stands for.

He described his son as the backbone of the family. "All responsibilities were on him, taking care of parents, brothers, everyone. But this was Allah's will."

Shah said the memories remain vivid even after a year.

"We remember him every moment. When we see his photos at home, we remember him even more," he said, adding that "this time of year he used to go to Pahalagam. Today, he is buried in the ground."

"His humour was very good. He used to keep laughing and playing. You wouldn't even feel that he was the elder brother," he said. He said the family takes pride that Adil did not care for his own life. "There were thousands of other labourers - too - horse riders, the ones who carry loads, and the hotel people - everyone saved their own lives by running away. But Adil gave his own life for the people he had gone with, and for others who were there too," the father said.

Shah said Adil's wife got a permanent job from the J&K government along with Rs 5 to 7 lakh while his younger brother has also been given a post in Waqf Board.

In cyber...

businesses may be spared from such action.

Delivering the 22nd D P Kohli Memorial lecture, an annual event to honour the founder director of the Central Bureau of

Investigation (CBI), on "Challenges of Cyber Crime-Role for Police and Judiciary", the CJI said cyber crimes are not just economic offences but "crimes against human dignity" that exploit systemic trust.

"Closely allied to this is the evolving dimension of bail jurisprudence in such cases. Where an accused is alleged to be part of an organised cyber-fraud network, often spanning multiple jurisdictions and involving numerous victims, the assessment cannot remain confined to the facts of an individual complaint.

"Courts may be required to situate such allegations within the broader architecture of organised criminal activity, bearing in mind the scale, coordination and potential continuing impact of such networks," he said.

The CJI said at the same time, it is important to reaffirm that the core principles of justice - fairness, natural justice and accountability - remain unchanged.

"The challenge is not to abandon these principles, but to apply them meaningfully in a transformed context," he said.

"In doing so, the judiciary does more than resolve disputes. It shapes the normative framework within which the digital society operates. It ensures that even in a world of algorithms and networks, the rule of law remains human at its core," he said.

ACB tightens...

Grains/Empty Bags to the tune of Rs 364235.84/- on the hands of aforementioned five accused persons, the aforementioned case was registered in P/S VOK (now ACB) on 07-06-1990.

After thorough investigation, chargesheet was filed on September 09, 2003, and the case proceeded for judicial determination. On April 20, 2026, the Hon'ble Court after appreciating the evidence produced, delivered the judgment and convicted all the five accused persons under Section 5(2) read with Sec. 409 IPC. The Hon'ble Court has listed the case for argument on quantum of punishment on 24/04/2026. This conviction marks another milestone in the Anti-Corruption Bureau's ongoing efforts to uphold integrity and accountability in public service.

In another case ACB Presents Charge-Sheet Against Then BDO Kupwara and Four Others in Misappropriation Case. The case originated from a complaint received through the ACB grievance portal on 19/07/2021 from one Fayaz Ahmad R/O Halmatpora, District Kupwara, alleging embezzlement of funds meant for execution of developmental works under the said schemes by officials of Block Kupwara.

Investigation conducted by ACB revealed that the accused public servants, namely Abdul Majeed Ganje (then BDO Kupwara), Bashir Ahmad Mir (then Junior Assistant), and Sajad Ahmad Dar (then MISO/GRS), in active connivance with private beneficiaries Khalid Hussain Pir and Gowher Yaqoob Khan, entered into a criminal conspiracy and fraudulently siphoned off Government funds by manipulating official records and fabricating electronic data.

It was established that the accused persons generated and authenticated fraudulent Fund Transfer Orders (FTOs), thereby facilitating diversion of funds into unauthorized bank accounts, including those of relatives and associates.

Statement further reads, the investigation further uncovered instances of double drawal, fraudulent payments against non-existent works, and illegal routing of labour payments through job card holders, followed by misappropriation of the same.

During the course of investigation, it also came to light that official records pertaining to the works under probe were deliberately destroyed or withheld, and crucial electronic evidence, including Digital Signature Certificates (DSCs), was not produced, indicating an attempt to screen the offence, it reads.

The accused persons, by abuse of their official positions, caused wrongful loss to the State exchequer to the tune of 24,86,170/- and corresponding unlawful gain to themselves and their associates.

Based on the evidence collected, offences punishable under Section 51(c) and 5(1)(d) read with Section 5(2) of the J&K Prevention of Corruption Act, Sanvat 2006, along with Sections 409, 420, 467, 468, 471, 201, and 120-B IPC, have been established, it reads.

Accordingly, upon finalisation of investigation, the chargesheet in Case FIR No. 11/2021 has been presented before the Hon'ble Court for judicial determination against three accused public servants and two private beneficiaries, statement reads.

Women's...

student's death. They demanded the suspension of the teachers in question, alleging that their negligence led to the incident. They also called upon the college authorities to address their concerns.

"We are seeking the presence of teachers here. They are not coming out to talk to us. We want the administration to act and provide justice. Those behind the negligence which resulted in Anjali's death must be held accountable. We want their suspension," an agitating student told reporters.

The protest led to the disruption of traffic on the highway for two hours before police intervened and restored movement.

J&K Govt ...

Hospital Bemia Srinagar as Member.

The committee has been tasked to examine all facts and circumstances leading to the incident, assess availability of adequate manpower at GMC Anantnag at the relevant time, and fix responsibility, if any, for lapses in preparedness, medical intervention and service delivery.

It will also recommend corrective measures to prevent recurrence of such incidents and submit a detailed report along with documentary evidence to the Administrative Department within one week from the date of issuance of the order.

The Principal GMC Anantnag and all concerned officers and officials have been directed to extend full cooperation and provide all necessary records and documents to the committee.

11 arrested...

In Pulwama, four people were arrested in two separate operations, and 7.5 grams of heroin-like substance along with Rs 1,500 cash, and 8.5 grams of brown sugar-like substance were recovered from their possession, according to the spokesperson.

He said that in Handwara, another alleged peddler was arrested during naka checking at Shalhal Crossing along with charas-like substance.

In Baramulla, two persons were arrested during routine naka checking at Wanigan Paayen, and police recovered 18 grams of charas and 70 tablets of Tapentadol from their possession,





Udhampur bus tragedy: Survivors recall cries of despair, hail Army's heroic act

RAMNAGAR, APR 20: Survivors of the deadly Udhampur bus tragedy recalled scenes of sheer panic and desperate cries for help, crediting the Army's swift and heroic rescue with saving numerous lives. At least 21 people were killed and 29 others injured on Monday when a packed private passenger bus plunged nearly 100 metres down a treacherous hillside in Udhampur, crushing an auto-rickshaw

before landing horrifically upside down on the road below. An Army convoy passing along the winding hilly stretch rushed to the spot and led the intense rescue operation after the driver of the private bus lost control while negotiating a sharp blind curve near the hilltop Kagort village in the Ramnagar area around 10 am. Amid piercing screams, mangled metal and entangled bodies, hope seemed to fade with

each passing moment, survivors said, recalling the harrowing accident on the Udhampur-Ramnagar road, about 40 km from the district headquarters. "Army personnel were the first to reach us, appearing like messiahs amid the chaos and confusion. They pulled us out of the wreckage. I had a miraculous escape - this feels nothing less than a second life for me," said Neetu Rami (32), wife of Sanjay Sharma,

from her hospital bed. Still shaken, she recalled the terrifying moments after the crash, saying there were cries for help all around as injured passengers lay trapped inside the mangled bus before rescuers arrived swiftly and began evacuating them. Having sustained injuries to her back, legs and face, she said she was on her way to her maternal home in Udhampur when the accident occurred. An Army soldier, who was

leading a convoy from Udhampur to Ramnagar, said they swung into action immediately after noticing the civilian vehicle rolling down the hill. "The vehicle fell from a height of nearly 100 metres. We immediately secured the area and launched the rescue operation, saving many precious lives including those of men and women with great difficulty," the soldier said. Army personnel were soon joined

by local villagers and police teams led by Deputy Inspector General of Police, Udhampur-Reasi Range, Shiv Kumar Sharma. The rescuers pulled out survivors trapped in the wreckage before carefully retrieving the bodies of the deceased. During its violent descent, the bus struck an auto-rickshaw on the road below before crashing with massive force and landing upside down. The impact was so severe that the entire top

portion of the bus was crushed, leaving the vehicle mangled and trapping several passengers inside the wreckage. Eyewitnesses described scenes of chaos, with injured passengers crying for help amid twisted metal and shattered glass. A hydraulic crane was later brought in to straighten the overturned bus, allowing rescuers to access those still trapped and to clear the debris from the accident site.

Director Agriculture Reviews HADP Projects in Sunderbani

Jammu, April 20: Director Agriculture Jammu, Sh. Anil Gupta, today conducted an extensive tour of Sunderbani area in District Rajouri to review the progress of various initiatives being implemented under the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP). He was accompanied by Joint Director Agriculture (Extension), Sh. Sanjay Anand, Chief Agriculture Officer Rajouri, Sh. Rajesh Verma, along with other senior officers of the department.



During the visit, Sh. Anil Gupta visited the Growth Multipurpose Cooperative Society, Sunderbani, where he inspected a Commercial Vermicompost Unit established under HADP. The unit is playing a vital role in supplying quality organic manure to farmers, with a production of approximately 600 quintals of ver-

micompost recorded within a year. The members of the cooperative also informed that, with the support and guidance of the Agriculture Department, they are in the process of launching a local brand of pickles, aimed at enhancing value addition and farmers income.

Director Agriculture also visited a Hi-Tech Polyhouse established by young entrepreneur farmer Sh. Rajesh Prasher of

Bhujwal-A, Nadani, Sunderbani. The farmer apprised that through multi-layer farming practices, crops such as bitter melon, pumpkin, and bottle gourd are being cultivated simultaneously along with brinjal, strawberry, and tomato in lower layers. He further informed that the produce is completely organic, with no use of chemicals, and strict adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) is being ensured by workers. The

initiative is also generating employment opportunities for local youth. Appreciating the efforts of the progressive farmer Sh. Rajesh Prasher, Director Agriculture emphasized that youth must actively engage in modern and sustainable agricultural practices. He stated that adoption of innovative technologies like polyhouses and organic farming can significantly enhance farm productivity, generate employment, and contribute to strengthening the rural economy. He further highlighted that HADP is designed to transform agriculture into a profitable and sustainable enterprise, encouraging diversification, value addition, and entrepreneurship among farmers. During the tour, Director Agriculture conducted field visits to review natural farming practices, including cultivation of turmeric, ginger,

Need for Complete Digitization of Revenue Department and Ensuring Transparency in Public Services

Jammu, Apr 20: The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Jammu & Kashmir UT, expresses serious concern over the prevailing inefficiencies and lack of transparency in the functioning of the Revenue Department in the Union Territory. While acknowledging the recent policy reforms aimed at broadening access to government employment and ensuring equal opportunities for the educated unemployed youth, BSP emphasizes that systemic issues within the Revenue Department continue to cause hardship to the common people. It has been observed that although provisions exist for online application of essential documents such as Fard and Intekhab, applicants are often unable to receive these documents digitally even after completing all required formalities. Unnecessary objections and procedural delays compel citizens to visit offices repeatedly, leading to inconvenience, harassment, and loss of time and resources. The BSP strongly urges the administration to take immediate and effective steps to ensure that online services function efficiently in both letter and spirit. There is an urgent need to eliminate bureaucratic hurdles and make public service delivery citizen-friendly. The Party firmly believes that complete digitization



of the Revenue Department is essential to enhance transparency, improve efficiency, and curb corruption. A robust and accountable digital system will not only streamline processes but also restore public trust in governance. BSP calls upon the government to prioritize these reforms in the larger interest of the people of Jammu & Kashmir and ensure that the benefits of governance reach every section of society without discrimination or delay.

Government Degree College Khour Organized an Awareness Program on NashaMukt Bharat Abhiyan

Khour, Apr 20: Government Degree College Khour organized a series of activities under the NashaMukt Bharat Abhiyan under the supervision of Prof. (Dr.) T.K. Sharma, Principal, GDC Khour. The event began with an orientation session on HED NMBA by Lt. Shivani Sharma, ANO, Boys Senior Division. The main objective of the event was to educate students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and to inspire them to adopt a healthy, responsible, and drug-free life. Prof. (Dr.) T.K. Sharma, Principal, GDC Khour, briefed the students and staff about the three-month comprehen-



sive campaign (April-June 2026) being undertaken by the Government of J&K to mobilize youth towards a drug-free society. He also elaborated on the 3-Year Action Plan (2026-2029) and explained the role of students in creating a drug-free society. He sensitized the students about drug abuse and highlighted the

physical, mental, social, and legal consequences of substance abuse. Committee members, including, Dr. SapanNarana, Ms. Samita Sharma (Librarian), Dr. Pooja Kumari and other senior faculty members Prof. Jozafeen Afzal & Prof. Khalid Sajad Bohra were also present.

Central University of Jammu Organized Workshop on "Protecting IPR and IP Management for Start-ups"

Jammu, Apr 20: The Department of Chemistry and Chemical Sciences, Central University of Jammu, under the patronage of the Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, Prof. Sanjeev Jain, successfully organized a workshop titled "Protecting IPR and IP Management for Start-ups" today in collaboration with the Institution's Innovation Council (IIC). The IIC, an initiative of the Ministry of Education, aims to foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in academic institutions by encouraging students and faculty to engage



in ideation, workshops, and start-up-oriented activities that address real-world challenges. The program commenced with Dr. Sujata Kundan, Head of the Department of Chemistry and Chemical Sciences, introducing the

distinguished resource person, Prof. Balaram Ghosh from the Department of Pharmacy, BITS Pilani, Hyderabad Campus. Prof. Balaram Ghosh delivered an insightful lecture titled "Intellectual Property Rights & Patent

Filing: Special Emphasis on Pharmaceutical." In his talk, he emphasized the critical importance of protecting intellectual property rights (IPR) and adopting effective IP management strategies, particularly for early-stage start-ups. He elaborated on key aspects such as patent filing, trademark registration, and trade secret protection, highlighting how these mechanisms help prevent infringement, enhance business valuation, and promote sustainable innovation. The workshop witnessed active participation from around 60 attendees,

including postgraduate students (M.Sc. Chemistry), research scholars, and faculty members. Notable attendees included Dr. Sujata Kundan (Head), Prof. (Dr.) Pawan Kumar, Dr. Satyanarayana Battula, Dr. K. Kanagaraj (Convener), Dr. Princy Gupta, Dr. Akshay Kumar, and Dr. Indrani Chatterjee (Co-Convener). The event concluded with a formal vote of thanks delivered by Dr. K. Kanagaraj, Associate Professor of the department, expressing gratitude to the speaker, organizers, and participants for making the workshop a success.

Swami Vivekananda Medical Mission Charitable Hospital organized a Free Vitamin D3 Screening Camp

Jammu, Apr 20: Swami Vivekananda Medical Mission Charitable Hospital, Amphalla, Jammu today organized a Free Vitamin D3 Screening Camp in collaboration with Abbott India Ltd. at the Ortho OPD Complex. The camp was held from 10:00 AM to 12:30 PM and received an encouraging response, wherein 65 patients, along with their attendants and hospital staff, availed the benefit of the free screening services. The initiative aimed at spreading awareness regarding Vitamin D3 deficiency and promoting preventive healthcare. The camp was graced by the



esteemed presence of President Sh. Amar Chand Gupta, Sh. B.B. Gupta Sr. Vice President, Sh. B.S. Jammal (Retd. JKAS) General Secretary, Dr. Jatinder Gupta

Secretary, Sh. Subhash Chand Gupta Red. Judge, Dr. Sachin Gupta Treasurer, Sh. Shanker Dutt Sharma Member, Dr. Brij Mohan Gupta Member, along with senior

doctors and hospital administration. Dr. Rajesh Gandotra Sr. Ortho Surgeon SVMM highlighted the importance of Vitamin D3 for bone health and immunity and encouraged regular screening, while Dr. Sham Jurangal Sr. Ortho Surgeon SVMM added that awareness and timely diagnosis are essential to prevent complications related to deficiency. President Sh. Amar Chand Gupta appreciated the initiative and stated, "Nar Seva Narayan Seva is the guiding principle of our institution, and such health camps are a true reflection of this philosophy."

First 'Sindhu Samvad' Held at Central University of Jammu

Jammu, April 20: The inaugural 'Sindhu Samvad' a pioneering flagship intellectual and policy conversation was successfully held at the Central University of Jammu (CUJ). This Samvad was organised by the J&K-based Paramrshmiti Foundation and Red Lantern Analytica (RLA), based in New Delhi, with the Central University of Jammu serving as the host institution in coordination with Sindhu Central University. Inspired by the civiliza-



tional, strategic, and ecological significance of the Sindhu (Indus) river system, Sindhu Samvad aims to initiate a structured, interdisciplinary dialogue that intersects history, poli-

cy, and geopolitics as part of this nation-wide interdisciplinary project. The program commenced with an engaging session led by Prof. Ritika Bakshi, Dean of Students' Welfare.

Humanitarian Lifeline: Indian Army rescues ailing women from remote mountain village



Doda, Apr 20: In a swift and compassionate humanitarian response, Indian Army successfully evacuated a critically ill woman from the remote village of Chill, located at

an approximate altitude of 7,500 feet. On the night of 18 April 2026 at around 2000 hours, a villager approached the Military Operating Base seeking urgent medical assistance for his wife, Sheela Devi,

who was suffering from seizures. Responding promptly, troops mobilised under challenging night conditions and reached the residence, where immediate first aid was administered, stabilising the

patient in austere field conditions. At first light on 19 April 2026, a carefully planned evacuation was undertaken to shift the patient to the nearest road head at Ghar Katiyas. The evacuation involved traversing nearly 3 kilometres of rugged, forested terrain marked by steep gradients and the absence of any motorable track. Demonstrating exceptional endurance and dedication, Army personnel carried the patient on a stretcher for nearly three hours, ensuring her safe evacuation. The patient was subsequently transported by road to Primary Health Centre Dudu, where she is presently stable and receiving medical care. This operation underscores the Indian Army's commitment to humanitarian assistance in remote and inaccessible regions. In the absence of immediate civil infrastructure, the Army continues to serve as a dependable first responder, reinforcing its ethos of service, resilience and compassion beyond the call of duty.

NSS Unit of GDC Samba Leads PoshanPakhwa 2026 Rally, Highlights First Six Years as Key to Child Development



SAMBA, April 20: To commemorate the national campaign 'PoshanPakhwa 2026', the NSS Unit of Government Degree College (GDC) Samba organized an awareness rally today. The initiative aimed to sensitize the local community on the critical importance of nutrition, with a special emphasis on maximizing brain development during the first six years of life. The rally was flagged off by the worthy Principal, Prof. (Dr) NirlapeKour, who emphasised that a balanced diet, along with positive brain stimulation during the first 2,000 days, is crucial for brain architecture. She urged the community to prioritise nutrient-dense local foods and early childhood care to ensure every child reaches their full potential. The rally witnessed enthusiastic participation from 45 NSS volunteers, Anganwadi workers from Balore, Samba, and Anganwari beneficiaries. Carrying colourful placards, volunteers sensitised the local community, march through the village of Balore towards NH-44 Samba, raising slogans like "SahiPoshan, Desh Roshan", "PoshanApnao, Rog Door Bhagao", "Initial Six Years, Golden Years", highlighting that a child's cognitive foundation is built during this early window. NSS Program Officer

Prof. Babita Kumari, along with volunteers, focused on the vital link between maternal/neonatal care and long-term mental growth. They educated the community on the key components of a balanced diet, healthy food practices, and the benefits of traditional food recipes that provide essential micronutrients for developing brains. By involving Anganwadi workers and volunteers, we are spreading the message that proper nutrition today ensures a sharper, healthier generation tomorrow."

Indian Army strengthens outreach with Gujjar & Bakarwal community

Rajouri, Apr 20: In a continued effort to strengthen civil-military relations, the Indian Army conducted an interaction programme with members of the Gujjar and Bakarwal community at Solki. The initiative aimed at fostering mutual trust, understanding local concerns and enhancing cooperation with the nomadic population residing in the region. During the session, community members openly shared their issues related to education, healthcare, seasonal migration, and access to basic amenities. The Indian Army representatives assured all possible assistance within their mandate and reiterated the



importance of maintaining peace, communal harmony and close coordination with security forces. The programme also included awareness on various government welfare schemes, documentation procedures and educational opportuni-

ties for children. Conducted in a cordial and friendly environment, the interaction reinforced goodwill and further strengthened the bond between the Indian Army and the Gujjar & Bakarwal community in the area.

GCW Udhampur Organizes Poster making, Slogan Writing and Pledge taking ceremony on Road Safety

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 20, 2026: Road Safety Club Government College for Women (GCW) Udhampur in collaboration with IQAC took a significant step toward fostering a culture of civic responsibility by organizing an extensive Road Safety Awareness programs in the college. The event was a great way to speak up for safety. It combined art and action through poster making, slogan writing, and a group pledge to keep the roads safe. The program commenced with a high-energy creative session where students utilized their artistic talents to design visually striking posters and craft evocative



slogans. After the poster and slogan activities, students and teachers gathered to take a group pledge, promising to follow traffic rules and encourage safe driving habits in their own neighborhoods. Dr. Nalini Pathania, Principal of the college, who graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, commended the students for

their insightful contributions and emphasized in a keynote address that the youth are the most effective ambassadors for social transformation. Dr. Pathania further noted that such grassroots initiatives are indispensable in the national effort to reduce road fatalities and cultivate a generation of disciplined commuters. A meticulous

evaluation process followed, conducted by a panel of expert judges including Dr. Anita Sharma, Prof. Safina Choudhary and Dr. Mukteshi Sharma selected the most impactful entries based on creativity and clarity of message. In a gesture of appreciation, the Principal distributed rewards and certifi-

cates to the winners, encouraging them to continue their advocacy beyond the college gates. The event, which also included the distribution of refreshments to all participants to celebrate their hard work and programme concluded with a formal and heartfelt Vote of Thanks delivered by Mr. Pardeep Singh Convener Road Safety Club GCW Udhampur. In his closing remarks, Mr. Singh expressed deep gratitude to the college administration, Road Safety Committee Members and the enthusiastic students for their collective role in making the awareness drive a resounding success.

GDC Ramgarh Organizes Nasha Mukti Awareness Programme

Ramgarh, Apr 20: The NSS Unit 'Prabha' and NCORD Unit of Government Degree College (GDC), Ramgarh, in collaboration with District Police Samba and Government High School, Swankha, organized a Nasha Mukti Awareness Programme with great enthusiasm to sensitize students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and to promote the importance of a healthy lifestyle. The programme was conducted under the able guidance of the Principal, Prof. (Dr.) Meeru Abrol. On the occasion, Headmaster Sh. Raj Kumar Puri and Sh. Sat Paul (Master) from Government High School, Swankha were present and appreciated the initiative taken by the college in addressing



such a critical social issue. The programme was further graced by PSI Anshul Sharma and Sub Inspector Arahie Bushan as the Chief Guest. All the dignitaries addressed the gathering and spoke on the pressing issue of substance abuse, highlighting its harmful effects on individ-

uals and society. They emphasized the vital role of youth in building a drug-free society and encouraged students to stay away from drugs and spread awareness in their communities. Students of Government High School, Swankha actively participated in the

programme by organizing an awareness rally from their school to GDC Ramgarh to spread the message of Nasha Mukti. Students from GDC Ramgarh namely Sohani, Adarsh Malhotra, Anjali Tripathi, and Vansh Bagal shared their views on Nasha Mukti and stressed the need for awareness and collective responsibility to combat this growing menace. The programme included discussions on drug hotspot mapping, a Police-Community Interaction Meeting on drug hotspots, and an awareness session on drug abuse prevention, reflecting a strong collaborative effort between educational institutions and the Police Department. The event was coordinated by Dr. Snobar, NSS and

NCORD Convener, who played a key role in organizing and ensuring the smooth conduct of the programme. Faculty members including Prof. Brahm Dutt, Dr. Shivali Panigotra, Dr. Anjana Raina, Dr. Bisat Tariq, Dr. Shaqeeb, and Dr. Sushil were also present on the occasion and extended their support to the initiative. The programmes concluded with a pledge against substance abuse in align with the ongoing 100 Days 'Nasha Mukti Jammu & Kashmir Programme'. The pledge reaffirmed the collective commitment of students and staff to stay away from drugs, promote a healthy lifestyle, and actively spread awareness within society, thereby contributing towards the vision of a drug-free Jammu & Kashmir.

Shaping a healthier tomorrow Indian Army leads Nasha Mukti Campaign at Loran

Poonch: 20 Apr 2026. The Indian Army organised an impactful interaction programme with local residents and youth at Khanetar Dak Bungalow, Loran under the ongoing Nasha Mukti Abhiyan in J&K. The initiative aimed at spreading awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse and motivating the younger generation to adopt a disciplined, healthy and purpose-driven lifestyle. Aligned with nationwide efforts to build a drug-free society through community participation, the programme featured interactive sessions where Army personnel engaged with local youth, highlighting the physical, psychological and social consequences of substance abuse. Real-life examples,



motivational talks and open discussions encouraged participants to make informed life choices and resist negative influences. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from village elders, students and youth groups. Emphasising collective responsibility, the Indian Army urged families, educators and community leaders to play an active role in guiding the youth away from drugs and towards constructive

activities. Reiterating its commitment beyond safeguarding borders, the Indian Army highlighted its role in fostering social well-being and empowering youth. The interaction at Loran stands as a testament to the Army's dedication to nation-building and its proactive approach in addressing critical social challenges. The programme concluded with a call for sustained efforts and community.

Madni addresses massive gathering in RS Pura, reaffirms PDP's grassroots push and public outreach

Calls for unity, cadre discipline and proactive engagement; assures support to POJK displaced persons on ST-2 demand

RS Pura: JKPPD Vice President Mohd Sartaj Madni today addressed a mammoth public gathering at Kotli Shah Doula in the RS Pura constituency, reiterating the party's commitment to strengthening its grassroots base and intensifying outreach among the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The impressive programme was organized by senior party leader Narinder Sharma and witnessed enthusiastic participation from party workers, supporters, and local residents. Prominent among those present on the occasion included Gen Sectery

Rajinder Manhas, Satpal Singh Charak, Vicky Dogra, Bachan Lal, Aditya Gupta Addressing the gathering, Mohd Sartaj Madni emphasized the importance of unity and collective effort among party cadres to effectively raise public issues and ensure that the voice of the common people is heard at every platform. He said that the Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Democratic Party is consistently holding public meetings and worker conventions across the Union Territory with the objective of reconnecting with the masses and

reinforcing its organizational structure. Madni underlined that these outreach programmes are not merely political events but a sincere effort to understand the real concerns of the people at the grassroots level. He urged party workers to remain disciplined, active, and committed to the party's ideology, adding that strong cadre-based engagement is crucial for addressing the challenges faced by the people and for strengthening democratic values in the region. Highlighting key local issues, Mohd Sartaj Madni said that



unemployment, lack of adequate infrastructure, and developmental gaps continue to affect large sections of the population in both Jammu and Kashmir regions. He stressed that PDP remains dedicated to raising these concerns and working towards sustainable and inclusive development through effective public representation and policy advocacy. During the programme, a deputation of displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (POJK) submitted a memorandum to Madni seeking the party's support in secur-

ing ST-2 status. Responding to their concerns, Mohd Sartaj Madni assured the delegation that their genuine demands would be taken up at the appropriate forums and that the party stands committed to safeguarding their rights and addressing their long-pending issues. In his concluding remarks, Mohd Sartaj Madni reiterated that the PDP will continue to intensify its mass contact programmes and organizational activities across J&KUT. He called upon party workers to remain connected with the people, listen

to their grievances, and work tirelessly to strengthen the party's presence ahead of upcoming political developments. Speaking on the occasion, senior JKPPD leader Narinder Sharma, who organized the event, expressed gratitude to the large number of participants for their overwhelming response. He said such gatherings reflect the growing confidence of the people in the party's policies and leadership, and reaffirmed his commitment to further strengthening the party at the grassroots level in the RS Pura constituency.

Nasha Mukht J&K Campaign gains momentum with widespread awareness activities in Shopian

Departments, Institutions intensify outreach to promote drug free society

SHOPIAN, APRIL 20: In continuation of the ongoing Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Campaign, a series of awareness programmes were conducted across district with active participation from different departments and educational institutions in Shopian.

Health and Wellness Center, GDC Shopian organized an awareness programme focusing on sensitizing students about the harmful effects of drug abuse and promoting a culture of healthy and responsible living.

The programme began with an address by the Convener, who highlighted



the growing concern of substance abuse among youth and emphasized the importance of awareness, prevention, and collective responsibility. An expert

talk was delivered by Dr. Alameer from District Hospital Shopian, who elaborated on the medical and psychological impacts of drug addiction, early warning signs, and the need for timely intervention. He also informed that District Hospital Shopian has a dedicated Addiction Treatment Facility providing professional support and treatment to affected individuals. Similarly, the Department of Horticulture organized pledge ceremonies at fruit plant nurseries in Zainapora and Keegam, where officials and staff reaffirmed their commitment towards building a drug free society

and spreading awareness at the grassroots level.

An awareness programme was also held at HSS Kapran, where medical experts delivered informative sessions on drug addiction and its harmful effects. The speakers highlighted the physical, psychological, and social consequences of substance abuse and urged students to stay vigilant and make informed life choices.

At HS Tekipora, an awareness programme featuring painting and slogan writing activities was held to sensitize students about the dangers of drug abuse.

Awareness Programme on Drug De-addiction held at GDC Sumbal

BANDIPORA, APRIL 20:

Government Degree College (GDC) Sumbal on Monday organised an awareness programme on drug de-addiction at its auditorium under the guidance of Principal Prof. (Dr.) Shabeena Iqbal Shawl, featuring a powerful theatrical performance aimed at sensitising students about substance abuse.

Sub-Divisional Magistrate Sumbal, Maraza Ahmad, attended the programme as chief guest, urged students to stay vigilant and committed towards a drug-free society.

The Principal underscored the role of educational institutions in promoting



awareness and responsible citizenship.

The highlight of the programme was the staging of the play "Kanjoo" by Karam Buland Folk Theatre, introduced by

Nissar Naseem. The performance effectively depicted the harsh realities and far-reaching impact of drug addiction, leaving a strong impression on the audience.

Hakeem Yaseen Expresses Grief Over Udhampur Bus Tragedy, Demands Compensation for Victims

Srinagar, April 20:

President of the People's Democratic Front (PDF) and former minister Hakeem Mohammad Yaseen on Monday expressed profound grief and anguish over the tragic bus accident in Udhampur district that claimed at least nineteen lives and left several others injured.

In a statement issued here, Yaseen termed the incident as "deeply heart-breaking and tragic," extending his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families who lost their loved ones in the accident at Kagort village in Ramnagar area. He prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls and wished a speedy recovery to those injured.

The accident occurred when a passenger bus reportedly skidded off the road while negotiating a sharp curve and plunged into a deep gorge. Soon after the mishap, police, rescue teams, and local residents rushed to the spot and launched a massive rescue operation. The injured were immediately shifted to nearby hospitals for treatment.

Expressing serious concern over the recurring road accidents in hilly terrains,

Yaseen emphasized the urgent need for improving road safety measures, particularly on accident-prone stretches. He said that proper monitoring, better road infrastructure, and strict adherence to safety regulations are essential to prevent such tragedies in the future. The PDF President urged the administration to provide adequate compensation to the families of the deceased and ensure the best possible medical treatment for the injured. "The government must come forward to support the affected families in this hour of grief and ensure that those injured receive all necessary medical care without delay," he said. He further called for a thorough investigation into the incident to ascertain the exact cause of the accident, including the condition of the vehicle, road safety mechanisms, and any possible negligence.

"Accountability must be fixed, and corrective measures should be taken to avoid repetition of such unfortunate incidents," he added. Yaseen reiterated solidarity with the bereaved families and stressed that collective efforts are required to enhance road safety and emergency response systems across Jammu and Kashmir.

Baramulla ramps up preparations for Census 2027

BARAMULLA, APRIL 20:

Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Baramulla, Nisar Ahmad today chaired a review meeting of charge officers at the DC office meeting hall here to assess the preparedness for the upcoming Census 2027 exercise in the district. During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the roles and responsibilities at the charge level to ensure smooth and timely execution of the census operations.

Emphasis was laid on the creation of House Listing Blocks (HLBs) and accurate mapping of villages to facilitate systematic enumeration. The officers were directed to ensure that all necessary groundwork is completed well in advance to avoid any last-



minute challenges.

During the meeting, the CPO stressed on the charge officers to finalize the list of supervisors and enumerators, ensuring that the selected personnel possess a basic understanding of

technology to effectively handle digital tools and applications associated with the census process.

To strengthen capacity building, the CPO highlighted the need for organizing training sessions in

batches for enumerators and supervisors which will focus on familiarizing field staff with census procedures, digital platforms, and data collection methodologies.

Underscoring the impor-

tance of public participation, the CPO called for a robust Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) campaign at the grassroots level and hold Special Gram Sabhas across all the 402 panchayats and municipal wards to raise awareness about the significance of the census and to encourage active public participation.

The CPO reiterated the importance of coordinated efforts, timely execution, and community involvement in making Census 2027 a success, urging all stakeholders to work with commitment and diligence towards achieving the objectives of this vital national exercise. The meeting was attended by the District Coordinator for census Baramulla and all the appointed charge officers.

DDC Kulgam reviews status of works under District Capex 2025-26

Stresses prioritizing Public-Centric Projects in 2026-27 Capex Plan

KULGAM, APRIL 20:

District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kulgam, Shahzad Ahmad, today chaired a meeting at the Mini-Secretariat to review the status of works under District Capex 2025-26 and discuss preparation of the District Capex Budget Plan for 2026-27. During the meeting, the DDC took a detailed review of the progress of various developmental works being executed by different departments across the district.

He emphasized the need for effective planning, proper coordination among departments and timely completion of projects. The DDC directed all concerned officers to prepare the District Capex Plan for 2026-27 in a comprehen-



sive manner, ensuring that projects with maximum public benefit and developmental impact are prioritized. He further stressed the importance of identifying key infrastructure gaps and proposing works that address the genuine needs of the people, while ensuring transparency and efficient utilization of

resources. Various officers including, Joint Director Planning, Assistant Commissioner Development, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Agriculture Officer, Executive Engineers of different departments and other district officers attended the meeting.

GMC Anantnag emerges as major Cardiac Care hub

Cath Lab, other facilities renewed hope for patients of South Kashmir, parts of Chenab valley

JAMMU, APRIL 20:

Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag has rapidly emerged as a vital centre for advanced cardiac care, offering renewed hope to patients across South Kashmir and parts of the Chenab Valley.

The recent establishment of a state-of-the-art Cath Lab at the institution marks a significant milestone in strengthening tertiary healthcare services in the region. Commissioned in April 2025, the Omar Abdullah Lab established by Government has transformed the cardiac care landscape in South Kashmir. In a short span of just nine months, the Department of Cardiology has successfully conducted over 3,000 procedures, including more than 1,000 critical life-saving interventions such as primary angioplasties and pacemaker implantations. The Cath Lab has significantly strengthened timely and life-saving interventions like coronary angiography, angioplasty, pace-

maker implantation, electrophysiological studies, and other advanced cardiac procedures. This facility has brought critical cardiac care closer to the people of South Kashmir and other adjoining districts, eliminating the need for patients to travel long distances for specialized treatment. The facility, functioning under HoD, Dr. Syed Maqbool and other cardio specialists like Dr. Shamim Iqbal, Dr. Showkat Hussain Shah and Dr. Shahood is currently performing an average of 10-15 procedures and is catering not only to patients from South Kashmir but also from several districts of the Jammu division, including Banihal, Ramban, Doda, Kishtwar, Rajouri, and Poonch. Demonstrating high efficiency and preparedness, the cardiology also achieved a door-to-balloon time of just 15-20 minutes in eight primary angioplasty cases handled within a 12-hour window, an indicator of adherence to top clinical standards in emergency

cardiac care. Prior to the establishment of this facility, patients from South Kashmir, home to an estimated population of 25 lakh, were compelled to travel nearly 70 kilometers to Srinagar for specialized cardiac treatment. This often led to critical delays during emergencies and adversely impacted patient outcomes. The Cath Lab at GMC Anantnag has effectively bridged this crucial gap, significantly improving accessibility and timely intervention. In a further boost to its growing reputation, the National Board of Examinations in Medical Sciences (NBEMS) has granted accreditation for three DRNB (Doctorate of National Board) super-specialty seats in cardiology to GMC Anantnag. This recognition, awarded to the Department of Cardiology on February 17, underscores the institution's advanced medical infrastructure and clinical capabilities. Notably, GMC Anantnag has become the first among newly

established medical colleges in the country to receive such accreditation, marking a historic achievement. Recently, Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo also dedicated 1.5 tesla MRI facility for the public use at the associated hospital of GMC Anantnag, describing the development as a landmark moment for both treatment and specialist care at the facility. She described the MRI facility as a major milestone and a long-pending addition that will significantly improve diagnostic services at the hospital. "The facility will benefit patients across South Kashmir by providing timely and advanced diagnostic services locally, reducing the need for referrals to Srinagar hospitals," she said. Apart from these advanced facilities like Cath Lab and MRI facility, other facilities like advanced modular OTs and free diet for patients have also been started by the present Government.

DC Kulgam reviews Projects under NABARD Sector

KULGAM, APRIL 20:

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam today chaired a review meeting of NABARD funded RIDF Projects in the district. The meeting was attended by JD Planning, ACR, ACD, SE R&B, DDM NABARD, District Sectoral Officers and Executive Engineers of R&B, Jal Shakti, IPC and KPDCI.

Giving out the details, AGM, NABARD, Rouf Zargar informed that NABARD has sanctioned 115 projects worth Rs 362.66 Cr since inception out of which 25 are ongoing projects with total out-



lay of Rs 113.56 Cr, under different sectors.

The DC took the detailed physical and financial review of individual projects directing the executing departments to expedite the works and clear all the bottlenecks in the projects. He took stock of new projects formulated by the departments which could be considered under RIDF under various sectors in view of the operational guidelines of NABARD including the funding modalities, and sectoral priorities of the scheme.

Dosti Discussion held at High School Bagh; DC Bandipora Engages Students on Drug Abuse Concerns

BANDIPORA, APRIL 20:

Continuing the district-wide outreach under the 100-Day Mission Mode campaign of the Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, the District Administration Bandipora on Monday organised the second edition of the "Dosti Discussion" series at High School Bagh, aimed at addressing the menace of drug abuse through open dialogue and community participation.

The programme saw active participation from students and teachers. The Principal of High School Bagh welcomed the Deputy Commissioner and participants, underscoring the importance of such engagements in shaping a drug-free future.



Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, held a candid



and thought-provoking interaction, during which several students came forward with their observations and suggestions. Expressing concern, the DC noted



that the Bagh area has witnessed a high incidence of drug abuse, including reported fatalities, and termed the situation deeply alarming. She observed that even young

students being aware of drug prevalence in their surroundings reflects the gravity of the issue, and that such exposure at an early age calls for urgent intervention. Stressing the need for honesty, the DC remarked that many parents tend to ignore or conceal their children's involvement in substance abuse, only to regret it later. She urged society to first acknowledge the existence of the problem in order to effectively address it. Cautioning students on the tactics of drug peddlers, the DC said youngsters are often deliberately targeted and lured into addiction, which in turn can draw them into various forms of crime. At the same time, she clarified that drug addicts must be treated as patients requiring care and rehabilitation, not as criminals.

North in News

EDITORIAL

Iran-US conflict : "The tough times are yet not over"

The Iran US conflict remains one of the most entrenched and volatile geopolitical rivalries of the modern era and despite periods of negotiations, sanctions relief, and backchannel diplomacy, the tough times are yet not over because the core drivers of mistrust continue to operate at structural, ideological, and strategic levels. The relationship carries the weight of history dating back to the 1953 coup against Prime Minister Mossadegh, the 1979 Islamic Revolution, the US Embassy hostage crisis, and decades of mutual accusations of interference, terrorism sponsorship, and regional destabilization. Each attempt at rapprochement has been interrupted by events that reinforce headline narratives in both Tehran and Washington. So while the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action signed in 2015 briefly suggested a path toward normalization by limiting Iran's nuclear program in exchange for sanctions relief, the US withdrawal in 2018 and the reimposition of maximum pressure sanctions reintroduced economic pain, political suspicion, and a renewed cycle of escalation that has not fully subsided. Iran responded by gradually breaching enrichment limits, expanding advanced centrifuge use, reducing International Atomic Energy Agency access, and asserting that its program remains peaceful yet reversible only if economic benefits are guaranteed, which keeps the nuclear file permanently on the brink and ensures that every International Atomic Energy Agency report becomes a geopolitical event that moves oil markets, triggers statements from capitals, and influences. Military postures across the Persian Gulf, and the nuclear issue is only one layer because the conflict is also expressed through regional proxy competition in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Yemen, and the broader Middle East, where Iran's network of allied groups and the US network of bases, partners, and carrier deployments frequently operate in close proximity, creating constant risks of miscalculation. Iran US conflict will remain a central source of instability in which the tough times are indeed not over, because every pause is tactical and every escalation is possible, and the world watches each drone flight, each tanker movement, and each enrichment update knowing that the line between cold confrontation and hot conflict is thin and that the cost of crossing it would be borne far beyond the two protagonists.

RAJNI SHARMA, EDITOR

Delhi's EV Policy Gets the Big Picture Right. Charging Needs an Edit

VAIBHAV KUSH

Delhi has done a lot right with its draft Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy 2026. It comes at an important moment in India's electric mobility journey, where the shift is no longer about early adoption, but scaling up in a structured and durable way. The move from incentives in the 2020 policy to mandates and scrappage-linked measures in the draft 2026 policy reflects that progress. It shows intent, direction, and a willingness to take hard decisions.

The Delhi Government deserves great credit. It is among the first in the country to move towards phasing-out internal combustion engine vehicles in certain segments. That big step sets an important example for other states.

At the same time, one area of the draft policy needs a closer look: charging infrastructure. The current draft focuses heavily on public charging, which is undeniably important. But private charging, whether at individual, community or captive locations, is equally so. That policy piece is missing from the draft; its omission will become a bottleneck as adoption inevitably scales up.

Electric vehicles do not follow the same refuelling logic as outmoded petrol or diesel vehicles. They do not depend on a network of fuel stations. In fact, most EV charging globally happens where vehicles are parked for long durations, at home, at workplaces, or at depots. In Delhi too, private vehicles remain parked for most of the day, often upwards of 90 percent of the time. That makes private charging central to the transition, not peripheral.

While draft policy mentions the need for a comprehensive charging network, when it comes to actionable measures, it focuses mostly on expanding public charging stations. That is necessary, but insufficient.

Take the example of captive charging. The policy rightly introduces electrification mandates for segments like buses, school transport, and light commercial vehicles. But these



segments will rely heavily on charging within their own premises or operational hubs. Schools will need to charge buses within their compounds. Fleet operators will need access to depot-based charging. Without clear provisions to enable this, including for leased or hired vehicles, implementation will be difficult.

Smaller operators and institutions with limited space will also need support. Not every school or fleet owner will have the capacity to set up charging on their own. Shared infrastructure, along with guidance from a coordinating agency, would bridge that gap.

Then there is community charging. The draft defines it, but does little else. In a city like Delhi, where many residents live in group housing societies, this is a critical piece of the puzzle. Housing societies are often hesitant to invest in charging infrastructure. Their concerns around cost, low initial demand, and technical upgrades like transformer capacity are valid. While Delhi has already amended building bylaws to make new constructions EV-ready, the bigger challenge will be to retrofit existing buildings. This is where the policy must clarify how to assess demand, plan infrastructure, and scope financial and technical support.

The most immediate barrier, however, is for individual users. Today, when someone wants to install a private charg-

er in their designated parking space, they typically need approval from their Resident Welfare Association (RWA). In many cases, this approval is either delayed or denied, often without reasonable justification. While RWAs often cite superficial safety or aesthetic issues, the outcome is the same: people who want EVs are denied the ability to install chargers at home.

This is why the "Right to Charge" is essential.

The Right to Charge, or Right to Plug, is a legal protection that affirms the right of residents to install EV chargers in their own parking spaces, subject to reasonable safety and technical standards. It limits the arbitrary and capricious overreach of housing associations. This is a principle that has proven effective elsewhere. In 2020, Norway prohibited housing societies from refusing charger installations without valid reasons. More recently, the European Parliament has pushed for similar rights for citizens across Member States through its buildings directive. Several European countries have already affirmed these legal rights.

Delhi could take a similar step. Such a step would fit perfectly with the overall direction of the draft policy, which is already creating more structural supports. The Right to Charge would relieve one of the most common and immediate barriers faced by EV users.

Let us be clear about what this does and does not mean. It does not create a right to parking. It does not override legitimate safety requirements. It simply ensures that if someone has a designated parking space and meets reasonable requirements, they cannot be denied the ability to install a charger without a valid reason.

At the same time, the principle can be extended to community charging, especially for residents without dedicated parking. Ensuring fair and equitable access will be key as adoption increases.

The draft policy is currently open for public comments for 30 days. This is an important opportunity to fix these omissions. Inputs during this period can help sharpen the policy on charging by clearly outlining provisions for captive infrastructure across mandated segments, detailing implementation pathways for community charging in existing housing societies, and incorporating the Right to Charge. This is also the stage where we must clarify operational issues such as approvals, technical standards, and institutional responsibilities, so that the policy is not just ambitious on paper but workable on the ground.

Delhi's draft EV policy is ambitious and, in many ways, trailblazing. It gets the broader strategy right and builds on the experience of the past few years. But a few important adjustments would deliver its full potential.

Public charging will continue to play an important role. It will give drivers confidence in the range of their vehicles and unlock more opportunity for the commercial use of EVs. But the real backbone of the EV ecosystem will be private, community, and captive charging.

If Delhi can strengthen these aspects, and introduce the Right to Charge, it will not only improve the effectiveness of its own policy but also set a strong example for the rest of the country and, indeed, the world.

Emotional Intelligence: The anchor of human connection

BY SAKSHI SETHI

In an era marked by volatility and constant uncertainty, emotional intelligence has become less of a soft skill and more of a necessity. Global tensions, such as the ongoing conflict in West Asia, have far-reaching economic and psychological consequences, often filtering into everyday life. While such events are beyond individual control, the way people process and respond to them is not. This is where emotional intelligence—understood as the ability to recognise, manage and express emotions judiciously—assumes critical importance. It shapes the tone of relationships, deepens empathy, and sustains mutual respect.

The present climate of anxiety, driven by economic uncertainty and an unrelenting stream of distressing news, has heightened emotional vulnerability. When left unchecked, these emotions can spill into personal and professional relationships, magnifying minor disagreements into serious conflicts. Emotional intelligence provides a safeguard against this erosion. At its foundation lies self-awareness—the capacity to identify one's emotional state and understand how it influ-



ences behaviour. Recognising feelings of frustration, fear or fatigue allows individuals to prevent them from distorting interactions with others.

Closely linked to this is self-regulation, the discipline of managing emotional responses. Emotionally intelligent individuals tend to resist impulsive reactions, choosing instead to pause, reflect and respond thoughtfully. This deliberate restraint, often described as the "power of the pause," helps de-escalate tension and fosters a more balanced environment. In both personal and professional spaces, such composure can make the difference between conflict and resolution.

Empathy, another corner-

stone of emotional intelligence, plays a vital role in strengthening relationships. The ability to understand and share another person's perspective builds trust and emotional closeness. However, empathy must remain balanced. When it becomes excessive or misplaced, it risks enabling unhealthy behaviour or avoiding necessary truths. Effective communication is deeply intertwined with emotional intelligence. It is not limited to articulate expression but extends to attentive and mindful listening. Many conflicts arise not from fundamental disagreements but from misunderstandings and unspoken expectations. When people feel genuinely heard and acknowledged,

relationships naturally grow stronger.

Within families, emotional intelligence acts as an anchor of stability. Children, in particular, are sensitive to the emotional climate around them. Similarly, in professional settings, emotional intelligence has emerged as a defining leadership trait. Beyond individual relationships, emotional intelligence influences how people engage with society at large. In times marked by division and conflict, the ability to approach differences with understanding rather than hostility becomes invaluable. It encourages respect for diverse viewpoints. Importantly, emotional intelligence is not innate; it requires conscious cultivation. Practices such as mindful listening, reflection, gratitude and presence in conversations can gradually strengthen this capacity. In an unpredictable world, intellectual ability alone is insufficient. It is emotional intelligence that sustains relationships, nurtures trust and anchors individuals amid uncertainty. Ultimately, when external stability falters, it is the depth and quality of human connections—shaped by emotional awareness—that provide enduring strength.

DLSA Udhampur discusses strategies for upcoming National Lok Adalat

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 20: The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Udhampur convened a meeting today to discuss strategies and identify cases for the upcoming National Lok Adalat scheduled for May 9, 2026. Principal District and Sessions Judge and Chairman of DLSA Udhampur Kalpana Revo chaired the meeting. Additional District and Sessions Judge Udhampur Yash Pal Sharma and

Sub-Judge and Secretary of DLSA Udhampur Sumati Sharma were also present. Judicial officers of the District Court Udhampur participated in the deliberations. Representatives from various banks and their legal counsels, along with representatives of insurance companies and their advocates, attended the meeting. Discussions centred on directing to ensure the strategies to ensure the maximum disposal of cases during the Lok Adalat. Special emphasis was placed on shortlisting pre-litigation and pending matters with the potential for amicable settlement. These include cases related to bank recovery, cheque bounce, Motor Accident Claims Tribunal (MACT) and insurance claims. Stakeholders were directed to ensure the presence of parties on the day of the Lok Adalat to facilitate the smooth and timely.

NOTICE

I, Naseema Bano W/o Wikar Ul Majid, R/o Upper Dalwah, Tehsil Gool, District Ramban, J&K, U.T., have applied for the registration as Class-D contractor under J&K Registration of Contractors Rules, 1992. If anybody has any objection in this regard, the same may be conveyed to the Superintending Engineer, PWD (R&B), Udhampur-Ramban Circle within seven days from the date of publication of this notice in the newspaper.

NASEEMA W/O WIKAR UL MAJID R/O UPPER DALWAH, TEHSIL GOOLDISTRICT RAMBAN, J&K, U.T.

NOTICE

I MOHD SHAHID GANAI S/O FAROOQ AHMED GANAI R/O BASS MALGAM TEHSIL POGAL PARISTAN UKHIRAL DISTT. RAMBAN Have applied for the registration of DEE class contractor card in the Office of Superintending Engineer PWD R&B Udhampur -Ramban Circle HQ Udhampur. Objection if any may be conveyed to the above said office with in 07 days.

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS TEHSILDARRAMBAN

IERAN AHMED S/O IRSHAD AHMED R/O SERI TEHSIL, & DISTRICT RAMBAN.

UT OF J&K THROUGH BLOCK DEVELOPMENT OFFICER RAMBAN.

Whereas the applicant named above has sought a direction from Block Development Officer Ramban for registration of Date of birth of applicant, namely Ieran Ahmed, in Birth/Death record Register who was born on 25-11-2007, at home in village Seri. Whereas the public at large is informed through the medium of this notice that if any person/persons have any objection regarding the registration through person, post, e-mail or any other justified medium with respect to the birth of the applicant, mentioned above, he or she shall file his/her objections within 07 days to this court from the date of publication of this notice in the newspaper, failing which appropriate order shall be passed. In case the date fixed is declared as holiday, the matter shall be taken up on the next working day. Given under my hand and seal of this Court on 16-4-26

Executive Magistrate 1st Class Tehsildar Ramban

IN THE COURT OF TEHSILDAR EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASSGANDOH (BHALESSA)

Present: Muneeb Umar (JKAS) Zulfia Begum Vs Block Development Officer D/o Noor Mohd Gandoh R/o Village Kharangal

Tehsil Gandoh (Bhalesa) District Doda

In the matter of:- Application for seeking direction upon the non-applicant to enter/register the birth particulars of the applicant in the Birth and Death Register.

NOTICE FOR PUBLIC AT LARGE
Whereas, the applicant named above has filed an application seeking direction to the non-applicant to register the date of Birth particulars of applicant as mentioned below in the concerned register.
S.No Name of the Applicant
Sex Father's Name
01 Mother's Name
Date of Birth Place of Birth
ZULFA BEGUM
F NOOR MOHD
SHAKHEENA BEGUM
17/06/1985 HOME
Therefore by virtue of this notice public at large is informed that if any person has/ have any objection in respect to the above mentioned application, he/she shall file his/her objection in this office within 03 days from the issuance of this notice failing which said application shall be dealt into in accordance with law.
Dated: 20/04/2026.

Tehsildar Executive Magistrate 1st Class Gandoh.

Tourism Department organises cultural extravaganza to mark Baisakhi Utsav-2026 at Billawar

KATHUA, APRIL 20: The Directorate of Tourism in collaboration with the Billawar Dugan Development Authority (BDDA) and the District Administration Kathua, organised a cultural extravaganza today to mark Baisakhi Utsav-2026. The event took place at the Kall Mata Mandir in Billawar. MLA Billawar Satish Sharma highlighted the talent and potential of the youth in Billawar. He urged the administration to

provide adequate platforms for them to showcase their skills. He spoke about Dogra culture and history, emphasising the need to upgrade tourism infrastructure, particularly at the Chev Forest in Billawar and to construct guest houses to boost tourism. Sharma also administered the Nasha Mukat Jammu and Kashmir pledge. He spoke about the ongoing 100-day Nasha Mukat Bharat Yatra launched by the Lieutenant Governor and called upon the youth to assist the administration in eradicating drug abuse. Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma emphasised the importance of preserving cultural heritage. He appreciated the performances of local artists and stressed their continued promotion. He added that the

administration will organise similar cultural events in the future. Director Tourism Jammu Vikas Gupta appreciated the Baisakhi Mela of

Billawar and stated that efforts would be made to include the festival in the annual tourism calendar. He assured that the department

would explore budgetary provisions to improve infrastructure at the Mahabikeshwar and Sukrala Matatemple.

Crackdown continues- Jammu Police Headquarters Zone in Arnia Busts Illegal Illicit Liquor Unit; 500 litres illicit liquor Destroyed in Marhol; Woman Apprehended

ARNIA, APRIL 20: In a continued drive against illicit liquor manufacturing, a joint raid was conducted today at village Marhol by Police along with the Tehsildar Arnia. During the operation, one lady identified as Renu Devi W/o Dev Raj R/o Marhol was apprehended for her involvement in the illegal preparation of liquor. Upon inspection, approximately 10 litres of illicit (desi) alcohol were recovered from her possession. Further, around 500 litres of raw material (dahan) used in the preparation of illicit liquor was found at the site and was destroyed on the spot as per procedure. Necessary legal action has been initiated against the accused under relevant sections of



law.Police have reiterated their commitment to curb the menace of illegal liquor and urged the public to share any information regarding such activities to ensure strict action

NOTICE

I, Umar Farooq, S/o Farooq Ahmed, R/o Village Chamhalwas, Chak Narwah, Banihal, District Ramban (J&K):- 182146, hereby declare that my name and my father's name have been wrongly recorded in my Driving Licence as UMAR FAROOQ SOHIL and FAROOQ AHMED SOHIL. That my correct name is UMAR FAROOQ and my father's correct name is FAROOQ AHMED as per my Aadhaar Card, which shall be considered final and binding for all official purposes. Any discrepancy in the above names shall be treated as one and the same person. Objection, if any, may be conveyed to the concerned authority within seven (7) days from the date of publication of this notice.

BEFORE THE HON'BLE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS

I ZAKIR HUSSAIN NAIK S/O MOHD HUSSAIN NAIK R/O NEEL ZARADI Tehsil RAMSOO District Ramban V.S. (Applicant) U.T OF Jammu & Kashmir through Block Development officer Ramsoo

In THE MATTER OF: An Application seeking registration of Date of death of the applicant's children u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Birth and Death Act 1969

May it please your Honor The applicant humbly submits as under:
1. That the applicant due to some unavoidable circumstances could not record the date of death of his/her children with the non-applicant within the stipulated period of time provided under the Act.
2. That the applicant is badly in need of the same
3. That the applicant is filling the instant application for recording the date of death of his/her children in the register maintained by the non-applicant
4. That no prejudice will be caused to any person in case the direction with regard to the registration of date of death of the applicant's children is issued to the non-applicant
5. That the particulars of the applicant's children are given below.
6. That this application is supported by an affidavit duly sworn in by the applicant
Name Father Name Spouse Name Mother Name Date of Birth Sex Present Address Place of Birth Nationality
ZOHAB ZAKIR NAIK ZAKIR HUSSAIN NIL NAIK JAMEELA BEGUM 01-05-2022 M NEEL ZARADI NEEL ZARADI INDIAN AADYA DO DO DO KAWSAR 04-03-2024 F DO DO DO
It is, therefore, respectively prayed that non-applicant may kindly be directed to furnish the report and register the date of birth of above-mentioned Name's, u/s (13) of the Registration of Birth and Death Act, 1969 and issue the same in favor of the applicant.
Date: 28/02/20 Zarin, Applicant

IN THE COURT OF TEHSILDAR EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASSGANDOH (BHALESSA)

Present: Muneeb Umar (JKAS)/Mohd Sharief Vs Block Development Officer S/o Mohd Hussain R/o Village Chilly Pain, Bhatoli Chilly Tehsil Gandoh (Bhalesa) (Non-applicant) District Doda (Applicant) In the matter of:- Application for seeking direction upon the non-applicant to enter/register the birth particulars of the applicant's son in the Birth and Death Register. NOTICE FOR PUBLIC AT LARGE Whereas, the applicant named above has filed an application seeking direction to the non-applicant to register the date of Birth particulars of applicant, applicant's brother's and wife of the applicant as mentioned below in the concerned register. S.No Name of the Child Sex Father's Name Mother's Name Date of Birth Place of Birth 01 MOHD SHARIEF MOHD HUSSAIN HAJIRA BAGAM02/12/1987 HOME 02 HUSSAIN BANOOF MOHD IBRAHIM W/O MOHD SHARIEF????? BANOO01/01/1990 HOME 03 SHABIR HUSSAIN MOHD HUSSAIN HAJRAN BEGUM 21/08/1991 HOME 04 MASHOOM ALIM MOHD HUSSAIN HAJRAN BEGUM 07/04/1998 HOME 05 MITEYAZ HUSSAIN MOHD HUSSAIN HAJRAN BEGUM 03/12/2000 HOME Therefore by virtue of this notice public at large is informed that if any person has/ have any objection in respect to the above mentioned application, he/she shall file his/her objection in this office within 03 days from the issuance of this notice failing which said application shall be dealt into in accordance with law. Dated: 18/04/2026. Tehsildar Executive Magistrate 1st Class Copy to the:- 1. Leading Newspaper for publication. 2. Office file for records. Gandoh

Department of Wildlife Protection Office of the Wildlife Warden, Jammu Zoo Nagrota, Jammu SHORT TERM TENDER NOTICE

E-TENDERING
Tender Notice : e-NIT No.:- 01/WLW/JZ of 2026-27 dated: 18-04-2026
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Jammu & Kashmir UT, e-tenders are invited from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K UT Govt. / Central Govt. Organizations for the following works:

Name of work	Adv. Cost (L. in lacs)	Earnest Money (in Rs.)	Class of Contractor	Cost of Tender Document (in Rs.)	Time of completion	Receiving /Opening Authority
Construction of Septic Tank in Lion Enclosure at Jammu Zoo.	2.57	5200	D	600	15 Days	Tender opening committee

The e-NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities, (B.O.Q), set of Terms & Conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental Website:- <http://jktenders.gov.in>

Position of funds: CAPEX 2026-27
Position of AA : Accorded.
Position of TS : Accorded.

Publishing Date	18-04-2026
Download Start Date	18-04-2026
Bid Submission Start Date	18-04-2026
Bid submission End Date	25-04-2026 up to 04:00 PM
Date of opening of Technical Bid	27-04-2026 at 12:00 PM (In the Office of Regional Wildlife Warden, Jammu, Manda Hills, Jammu)
Date of opening of Financial Bid	28-04-2026 at 03:00 PM (In the Office of Regional Wildlife Warden, Jammu, Manda Hills, Jammu)

Bid documents can be seen at and download from the website:- <https://jktenders.gov.in>. Bid documents contain qualifying criteria for bidder, specifications, bill of quantities, conditions and other details.

Terms & Conditions:

- Bids uploaded must accompany Govt. Treasury Receipt (cost of tender document) in shape of Treasury Challan for the amount shown against the work above to be deposited in Govt. Treasury under Account Head 0406-Forest and earnest money in shape of CDR/FDR pledged to Wildlife Warden Jammu Zoo. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of bids.
- The Bid Security/Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) has to be uploaded at the time of bidding.
- The price bids uploaded on the website in time will be opened after the evaluation of the Technical Bids by the Tender Opening Committee of the Department. The dates of opening of price bids as per NIT. The price bids will also be opened in the office of Conservator of Forest/Wildlife (Regional Wildlife Warden, Jammu), Manda Hills, Jammu.
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of bids. If any bidder/ tenderer withdraws his bid/tender before the said period or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid, then the earnest money shall stand forfeited.
- No Engineer or Gazetted rank or other Gazetted Officer employed in Engineering or Administrative duties in an Engineering Department of the State Government is allowed to work as the contractor for a period of two years after his retirement from government service without permission of the government. This contract is liable to be cancelled if either the contractor or any of his employees is found any time to be such a person who had not obtained permission from the government as aforesaid before submission of the tender or engagement in the contractor's service.
- The interested bidder can download the NIT / Bidding documents from the website:- <https://jktenders.gov.in>.

Wildlife Warden Jammu Zoo, Jammu

NO.: WLW/JZ/ Dt:

DIP/J-840/26

Will Rohit Sharma play vs GT? MI coach drops big fitness update ahead of clash

New Delhi, Apr 20: Mumbai Indians (MI) have received a timely boost ahead of their Indian Premier League (IPL) clash against Gujarat Titans (GT), with bowling coach Paras Mhambrey confirming that both Rohit Sharma and Mitchell Santner are fully fit and available for selection.

MI, who began their campaign with a win over Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR), have since slipped into a difficult phase, losing four consecutive matches. The dip in form has exposed issues in both batting consistency and bowling execution, putting their playoff hopes under early pressure.

Their situation worsened when Rohit Sharma picked up a hamstring



injury during the match against Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), forcing him to miss the following fixture against Punjab Kings (PBKS). Skipper Hardik Pandya had earlier indicated the opener would require "a couple of

games" to recover.

New Zealand spinner Mitchell Santner also missed the PBKS game after suffering from illness, further weakening MI's bowling options.

However, Mhambrey delivered a positive update ahead of the GT encounter. "Both are fit. If you walk around the nets, you can see Rohit batting and working on his rhythm. Santner has also recovered from the bug he picked up. Unfortunately, we missed him last game, but both are available now," he said. With key players returning, MI will be hoping this fixture marks a turning point in their struggling campaign. Full Squad: Gujarat Titans Squad: Shubman Gill(c), Sai Sudharsan, Jos Buttler(w), Washington Sundar, Glenn Phillips, Rahul Tewatia, Rashid Khan, Ashok Sharma, Kagiso Rabada, Mohammed Siraj, Prasad Krishna, Shahruckh Khan, Ishant Sharma, Jayant Yadav, Jason Holder, Luke Wood, Ravirivrasan Sai

Kishore, Kulwant Khejroliya, Anuj Rawat, Manav Suthar, Kumar Kushagra, Arshad Khan, Gurnoor Brar, Nishant Sindhu, Connor Esterhuizen Mumbai Indians Squad: Quinton de Kock(w), Ryan Rickelton, Tilak Varma, Suryakumar Yadav, Hardik Pandya(c), Sherfane Rutherford, Naman Dhir, Mayank Rawat, Shardul Thakur, Deepak Chahar, Jasprit Bumrah, Rohit Sharma, Trent Boult, Corbin Bosch, Mitchell Santner, Ashwani Kumar, Will Jacks, Mayank Markande, Raghu Sharma, Raj Bawa, Robin Minz, AM Ghazanfar, Danish Molewar, Krish Bhagat, Mohammed Salahuddin Izhir.

Riyan Parag Called Out For Ravindra Jadeja Call. R Ashwin Goes On Relentless Rant

New Delhi, Apr 20:

The Rajasthan Royals became the first team of the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season to lose a match against the Kolkata Knight Riders, a team that had gone winless in its first six matches of the season.

The closely fought contest went down to the wire, with Rinku Singh lifting KKR with an exemplary 53 off 34 balls, while Anukul Roy added 29 off 16 to take the team home in the final over. Taking nothing away from Rinku and Anukul, former India all-rounder Ravichandran Ashwin tore into Rajasthan Royals skipper Riyan Parag for his captaincy blunders at the fag end of the game.

Ashwin accused Parag of not trusting Ravindra Jadeja, the team's senior-



most player, with the ball, despite the fact that he had taken two wickets in his three overs, conceding just 8 runs.

"You have a world-class left-arm spinner. Sure, numbers and data can tell you something, but he has conceded only 9 or 11 runs in three overs and taken two wickets.

"When Rinku Singh tried to hit, he was so close to getting out, but you thought, 'I am an off-spin-

ner; I can put pressure on these two left-handers, but Jaddu won't be able to. I am telling you, this is the mindset. It is possible that Jaddu bowls and the batter hits two sixes, but by not bowling him, you are not showing trust in your bowling unit in the long term." Ashwin said in the video, lambasting the Rajasthan Royals captain.

Rajouri Titans, Tantray Club register wins

JAMMU, Apr 19: The ongoing 1st Jammu Lochan T20 Cricket Tournament, organized by the Jammu and Kashmir Masters Games Association (JKMGA) at Maulana Azad Stadium, witnessed two thrilling encounters, with Rajouri Titans and Tantray Sports Club registering convincing victories in their respective matches today. In the first match, Hunter Cricket Club, after winning the toss, opted to bat first but were bowled out for 135 runs in 19.5 overs. Bandish top-scored with 37 runs. Rajouri Titans skipper Shahid Malik delivered a sensational bowling spell, claiming six wickets for 35 runs



and putting his team in a commanding position. Chasing 136, Rajouri Titans completed the task comfortably in 13.3 overs, losing four wickets. Rafiq led the chase with a fluent 68 off 43 balls. Malik was adjudged Man of the Match, and the award was presented by Anil Abrol (International Chess Player). In another match, Gentle Giants scored 160/8 in 20 overs, with Vishavjeet Singh contributing 56 runs. Vijay Dogra impressed with the ball, taking three wickets, and later smashed 76 runs to guide Tantray Sports Club to a thrilling win in 19.4 overs. He was named Man of the Match by Rameshwar Singh Manhas. The tournament continues to highlight young talent and promote sportsmanship in the region.

Shreyas Iyer In Line For Captaincy As BCCI Prepare 2-Team Structure For T20Is

New Delhi, Apr 20:

Indian cricket's talent pipeline has given the selectors an opportunity to think big. With the IPL continuing to churn out match-ready performers, the Board of Control for Cricket in India is planning on building a 30-35 player pool capable of fielding two competitive T20 sides simultaneously. Plans beyond a single core squad have to be framed immediately as India faces overlapping international commitments later this year, with the Asian Games clashing with a T20 series against the West Indies. The Asian Games and India vs West Indies T20 Series are going to be at the same time. So we have to look at two T20 teams playing. It is important from now to have a



pool of 30-35 cricketers who can be called up for International assignments. For the upcoming Ireland tour, like most tours to UK, a bigger pool of players will be kept in the squad. This will extend for the Asian Games." The Board is actively planning for parallel assignments this year and in the

future as well since cricket is now a part of multi discipline sporting fixtures as well, including the Olympic Games in 2028. The emphasis is on depth, flexibility, and readiness. These are the qualities increasingly demanded in a packed global calendar. The upcoming Ireland tour is expected to serve as a testing ground. Tours like these have traditionally been used to blood fringe players. This tour could now feature an expanded squad, mirroring the long-term vision of a larger talent pool extending through the Asian Games. India are also set to play Afghanistan in a 3-match T20I series in September, though the schedule for the tournament is yet to be finalised. The names under

consideration reflect the IPL's growing influence. In the batting department, talents like Vaibhav Sooryavanshi, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Priyansh Arya and Angkrish Raghuvanshi have caught the selectors' attention with their fearless strokeplay. The likes of Rajat Patidar and Ayush Badoni are also on the selectors' radar. The all-rounder slot, often the backbone of T20 balance, could see opportunities for players like Shashank Singh, and Anukul Roy, the cricketers who bring versatility and adaptability. On the bowling front, there is a mix of youth and experience. Ravi Bishnoi continues to be a standout in white-ball cricket, while Khaleel Ahmed (depending on availability).

Hardik Pandya Grilled By Ex KKR Star: "When Was Your Last Match-Winning Knock?"

New Delhi, Apr 20:

Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya hasn't had much going his way in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 season. While MI are languishing at the bottom of the 10-team points table, Hardik hasn't been able to create much impact on the field, be it with the bat or with the ball. The all-rounder has even had his captaincy skills questioned, including his inability to get the best out of Jasprit Bumrah, the finest fast bowler in the world. Ahead of MI's clash against GT, former Kolkata Knight Riders (KKR) star Aakash Chopra has asked Hardik when his last match-winning knock was for MI.

Hardik, who prominently paced-off India's most widely respected all-rounder, has struggled this



season. He has only scored 81 runs in 4 matches this campaign for Mumbai. Chopra, in a video on his YouTube channel, has asked some tough questions to the MI skipper. "You have corrected the batting

order now. I won't talk about Surya because he played many match-winning knocks last time, but Hardik, I don't remember when the last match-winning knock you played was. We have seen many

good cameos, but that match-winning 70 or 80 runs where you win the match alone. Hardik is capable of that," Chopra said.

The former India opener also feels Mumbai need some fresh ideas to bring their campaign back on track. Chopra backed the promotion of Sherfane Rutherford to help MI overcome the current middle-order crisis. "If you get less than that repeatedly, you think this is the time when Hardik does what he can do, because you are capable of doing that. They need fresh ideas and freshness, a little fearless approach, and Sherfane Rutherford should bat slightly up the order. All of that is required because the truth is that the five-time champions, the Mumbai Indians, are at No. 10 at this point in time," he added.

MCA Inaugurates Champions Trophy 2026 As Key Build-Up To T20 Mumbai League

New Delhi, Apr 20:

The Mumbai Cricket Association (MCA) today inaugurated the MCA Champions Trophy 2026 at the MCA BKC Ground, marking the start of a key preparatory tournament ahead of the highly anticipated T20 Mumbai League 2026. The inauguration ceremony was attended by MCA President Ajinkya Naik, Chief Guest Rajeev Kulkarni, former India captain Diana Edulji, MCA Secretary Prof. Dr. Umesh Khanvilkar, Joint Secretary Nilesh Bhosle, Treasurer Arman Mallick along with Apex Council members, and players. The tournament, scheduled



from April 20 to April 30,

will feature eight teams selected by MCA selectors from a pool of registered players for the T20 Mumbai League. Matches will be played across four venues: MCA BKC, MCA Sachin Tendulkar Gymkhana in Kandivali, Dadoji Konddev Stadium in Thane, and Western

Railway in Mahalaxmi.

Designed as a high-performance platform, the MCA Champions Trophy 2026 will provide valuable match exposure to emerging players, while helping franchisees assess player form, fitness, and readiness and fine-tune combinations ahead of the T20 Mumbai League 2026 auction.

Bench Warmers beat Vintage 11 in cricket match



JAMMU, Apr 19: A cricket match was organized today to support the 'Nasha Mukti Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan', aiming to spread awareness against drug abuse and promote a healthy lifestyle among youth. The match was played between the Bench Warmers and Vintage 11, delivering an exciting contest. Batting

first, the Bench Warmers posted a strong total of 215 runs in 20 overs. Soumya Jain started with a brilliant 91 off 52 balls, while Aneesh contributed 57 off 38 balls and Amit added a quick 25 off 16 balls. Shivam Gaiind took 3 wickets for Vintage 11, while Akshay Kotwal claimed 2 wickets. In reply, Vintage 11 fought well but

managed 199/9 in 20 overs. Jaypee scored 43 runs and Ravinder made 42, but the target proved challenging. Amav Sharma delivered a match-winning bowling performance, taking 4 wickets for 15 runs and was named Impact Player of the Match. Soumya Jain was adjudged Man of the Match for his outstanding.

Babar Azam Leaves Behind Virat Kohli, Chris Gayle. Scores Historic Century After 783 Days

New Delhi, Apr 20:

Babar Azam's long wait finally came to an end as he smashed a magnificent century for Peshawar Zalmi during their Pakistan Super League (PSL) 2026 clash against Quetta Gladiators on Sunday. It was a completely dominant display from Peshawar, who posted a massive 255/3 in 20 overs before bowling Quetta out for 137 to seal a comprehensive 118-run victory. The former Pakistan captain, who had been struggling for runs in recent times, reached triple figures after a gap of 783 days. With this century, Babar not only returned to form in emphatic fashion but also surpassed India star Virat Kohli in an elite T20 batting list.

Babar completed 12,000 runs in T20 cricket in just 338 innings, making him the fastest batter in the world to achieve the milestone. He went past West Indies legend Chris



Gayle, who reached the mark in 344 innings, and also bettered Kohli, who achieved the feat in 360 innings. The hundred against Quetta was Babar's 12th T20 century, keeping him second on the

record during his knock. He remained unbeaten on 100 off just 52 balls, hitting six fours and four towering sixes while facing only a single dot ball.

This was the first time in T20 cricket history that a batter faced more than 50 deliveries and played just one dot ball. Kusal Mendis also played a crucial role in Peshawar's batting onslaught, hammering 83 off 44 balls. The duo stitched together a vital 135-run partnership, which laid the foundation for Peshawar's mammoth total of 255/3 - the third-highest team score in PSL history. In reply, Quetta Gladiators were bowled out for 137, with Bevon Jacobs top-scoring with 34 runs. For Peshawar Zalmi, Mohammad Basit and Ali Raza picked up three wickets each, while Aaron Hardie chipped in with two scalps.



Tamil Nadu poll battle turns legal after right-wing think tank files complaint alleging 'Church collusion with DMK against BJP'

New Delhi, Apr 20: Tamil Nadu's high-stakes election contest has taken a legal turn days before polling, after a right-wing think tank filed a complaint with the Income Tax Department alleging financial and political collusion between church bodies and the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), escalating an already polarised campaign. The complaint was lodged after an RSS mouthpiece claimed collusion between the Church and the DMK against the BJP intensifying the political confrontation between the DMK-led alliance and the BJP-led camp. The Legal Rights Observatory (LRO) has approached the Income Tax Department, seeking a probe into "suspicious transactions" worth hundreds of crores allegedly routed from the DMK to the Tamil Nadu Catholic Bishops' Conference to secure public sup-



port for Chief Minister MK Stalin in the ongoing election battle. Notably, Christians and Muslims together make up nearly 15% of Tamil Nadu's electorate. Amid the controversy, a delegation of Christian bishops met CM MK Stalin on April 19 and expressed support for the DMK-led alliance. The meeting was seen by opposition voices as a sign of organised backing from sections of the

Church, while DMK leaders have maintained that outreach to communities is part of normal democratic engagement. On the same day, reports emerged of pamphlets critical of the BJP being distributed during Sunday prayers at churches across parts of Tamil Nadu. The pamphlets were said to have been jointly issued by multiple Christian organisations, including the Tamil Nadu Bishops' Conference and

other community groups, further fuelling allegations of coordinated political messaging. Minority groups reiterate support for DMK. Earlier, on April 10, representatives from Christian minority groups had publicly declared support for the DMK and its alliance. At a gathering in Chennai, CSI Zion Church Chairman Raja Freeman said the Christian and minority communities stood firmly behind the ruling party and expected its return to power. Chairman, CSI Zion Church, Raja Freeman says, "Today we are gathered here to show our support to the DMK party... We are expecting the DMK government to re-establish our Chief Minister again to get his seat again for the seventh time... The Christian community and minority community will support the work of the DMK party."

Noida man shot in chest after late-night fight, accused on the run

New Delhi, Apr 20: A late-night argument over a simple parking spot ended in tragedy in East Delhi, leaving one man dead and a neighbourhood shaken. Police said the fatal incident took place in Preet Vihar, where a dispute that had been simmering for days suddenly turned violent. The victim, Pankaj Nayyar, 34, had come from Noida after being called by his brother. Within minutes, the confrontation ended with a bullet fired at close range. Parking dispute that worsened over days. According to the Delhi Police, the argument began between 43-year-old Paras and his neighbour Gaurav Sharma, both living at the same address in Preet Vihar. The two had reportedly been arguing for sev-



eral days about parking space in the residential area. On Sunday night, the tension reached a breaking point. After another heated exchange, Paras called his brother Pankaj Nayyar from Noida. Police said Pankaj arrived to intervene in the dispute, but the situation quickly escalated instead of calming down. The three men got into a fresh argument. Voices rose, tempers flared, and the confrontation turned physical. What followed happened within seconds, and changed everything. Gunshot fired during heated confrontation. Investigators said that during the argument, Gaurav Sharma allegedly pulled out a pistol and fired at Pankaj Nayyar.

NDA to hold massive women's protest in Patna today over Women's Reservation Bill



New Delhi, Apr 20: The National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has organised a public meeting at Gandhi Maidan in Patna on Monday, where women activists from across Bihar will gather to stage a massive demonstration, expressing anger against opposition leaders for allegedly creating hurdles

in the passage of the Women's Reservation Bill in the Lok Sabha. Chief Minister Nitendra Kumar Singh and other senior NDA leaders will address the meeting. State BJP president Sanjay Sarangi said that lakhs of women, including NDA workers from all districts as well as ordinary citizens, are expected to participate in the protest to seek answers from opposition leaders for the bill's failure in Parliament. He added that all necessary preparations have been completed and a grand stage is being set up at Gandhi Maidan. Apart from the Chief Minister, several prominent NDA leaders will address the gathering of women from across the state. Meanwhile, a press conference was organised over the failure to pass the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam in Parliament. It was addressed by women leaders from NDA constituent parties, including BJP Mahila Morcha national vice president and Rajya Sabha.

Asaduddin Owaisi says Congress is "among those responsible" for Partition, rejects BJP 'B-team' charge

New Delhi, Apr 20: AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Sunday blamed the Congress as among those responsible for the 1947 Partition, saying it was wrong to hold Muslims responsible and citing the country's first Education Minister, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad's, book India Wins Freedom. Addressing a public rally in Gujarat's Limbayat, Owaisi said, "Muslims were not responsible for the partition. It is the Congress party not among those responsible for the partition? In his book India Wins Freedom, Maulana Azad writes that he went to Gandhi and Nehru and appealed to them not to let India be divided." He also hit out at the Congress and the Trinamool Congress (TMC) for calling AIMIM the BJP's "B team" in West Bengal, objecting to criticism over his



party contesting 11 seats. "Some allege that when Owaisi contests elections, the BJP benefits. In West Bengal, Congress is contesting 294 seats, TMC is contesting 294 seats, the Left front is contesting 250 seats, and Owaisi's party is contesting 11 seats. BJP is also contesting 294 seats. They have a problem with me contesting the elections... Forget 11,

win 270 seats and defeat the BJP... How long will you keep this society from forming its own leadership?" he said. Owaisi projected AIMIM as a party capable of challenging the BJP within constitutional limits. "If anyone can stop the BJP and, within the bounds of the Constitution, look them in the eye and force them to accept our rights,

then that party is the AIMIM... This is the time to stand up and assert your rights," he added. Earlier, at a rally in Asansol, Owaisi targeted the TMC and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, holding them responsible for the BJP's rise in the state. The BJP is strong in Bengal, then the TMC and Mamata Banerjee are responsible for that. The damage that the BJP and PM Narendra Modi do to India's Constitution and Muslims, especially the poor, is equally done by the TMC," he alleged. He further accused the state government of neglecting minority-dominated areas. "In those blocks of Bengal where there are a large number of Muslims, there are no schools, no hospitals, and if there is a hospital, there are no beds; if there are beds, there are no doctors."

Complete security lapse: BRS leader Ravula Sridhar Reddy on Tamil Nadu factory explosion

New Delhi, Apr 20: BRS leader Ravula Sridhar Reddy on Monday said the blast at a firecracker manufacturing unit in Tamil Nadu's Virudhunagar district, which claimed at least 23 lives, was an example of "complete security lapse," and called for effective security measures. Authorities said one firefighter was also injured during rescue operations at the site. Virudhunagar district collector N O Sukhaputra said that a second blast during rescue operations injured 13 personnel, adding that of the 23 dead, 19 bodies have been identified, 16 women and 3 men. Six injured victims remain in the ICU. Reddy expressed grievances over the incident and flagged concerns over the lack of safety measures and administrative lapses, attributing them to the loss of innocent lives in such incidents. He further



alleged that several factories in the region were unlicensed despite handling dangerous chemicals and explosives. Emphasising the need to implement better security measures to prevent such incidents, he urged the Tamil Nadu government to take cognisance of the matter. "It's very painful that 23 people in those factories. It is said that many

factories there are unlicensed. There are many firecracker factories. They handle very dangerous chemicals and explosives. Due to the lack of proper safety measures or the inability to prevent fire accidents, countless lives are being lost like this," he stated. "It has become common for governments to make a fuss when such incidents occur and then remain silent. This can be taken as an example of complete security lapses there. Therefore, at least now, the Tamil Nadu government and the concerned departments must ensure that no more lives are lost... generally, the workers who work there are the ones who die... It's absolutely necessary to take proper measures so that so many lives are not lost. The Tamil Nadu government must take more steps to ensure that such incidents do not happen again," he added.

Wayanad township inauguration designed to mislead public: LoP V D Satheesan

New Delhi, Apr 20: Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Assembly V D Satheesan on Sunday alleged that the LDF government's inauguration of the Wayanad township for the landslide victims was a strategic move designed to mislead the public ahead of the Assembly elections. Addressing a press conference in Kozhikode on Sunday, Satheesan said Phase I inauguration of the township on March 1, which provided keys to 178 families, was a political gimmick to mask the government's delays and administrative failures. Responding to recent reports about cracks and leaks in the houses built for the landslide victims and the visit of Revenue Minister K Rajan to assess the situation, he said the



Minister K Rajan on Saturday visited the houses constructed at the Wayanad rehabilitation township for the 2024 Chooralmala-Mundakkai landslide survivors, following media reports about cracks in two houses of the 178 houses completed in the first phase. After an on-site inspection, Revenue Minister Rajan clarified that the reported issues were merely minor water seepage marks on the terrace. The houses have not yet been formally handed over to the survivors, and only a small number of houses were distributed. As regards the probe by a Special Investigation Team (SIT) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) into the Sabarimala gas leak case, Satheesan asserted that the inquiry would yield.

Lenkart rolls out revised policy as CEO admits lapse in bindi-tilak row

New Delhi, Apr 20: Facing criticism over alleged restrictions on religious symbols for store staff, eyewear retailer Lenskart has issued a revised in-store style guide, stating that employees are free to wear markers of faith such as bindi, tilak and hijab. The clarification comes days after a social media controversy around an internal document triggered questions over the company's workplace policies. With its latest statement, the firm has sought to publicly define its position and calm concerns among employees and customers. **What Lenskart's new style guide says** In a statement dated April 18, the company said, "We have heard you. Clearly and openly. Over the past few days, our community and customers have spoken



bring their beliefs, their traditions, their identity to work every day. That is not something we will ever ask anyone to leave at the door." **Apology over communication lapse** The company also acknowledged that its earlier communication may have caused discomfort among staff. "If any version of our workplace communication caused hurt or made any of our team members feel that their faith was unwelcome here, we are deeply sorry. That is not who Lenskart is, and it is not who we will ever be," the statement read. It further said the company would ensure that "every policy, every training material, and every communication" reflects these values going forward, while committing to consistent implementation and review.

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Delhi-NCR temp crosses 40; yellow alert issued for heatwave; air quality worsens

New Delhi, Apr 20: The heat across Delhi-NCR has begun to intensify, with temperatures soaring past the 40 degrees Celsius mark. According to the latest forecast by the India Meteorological Department, the region is set to experience even higher temperatures in the coming days. In view of the rising heat, the department has issued a 'yellow alert' for a heatwave, effective over the next two days, urging residents to remain cautious. As per the IMD, the maximum temperature across NCR is expected to hover around 41 degrees Celsius, while the minimum temperature is likely to remain close to 21 degrees Celsius on April 20 and 21. Skies are predicted to stay largely clear, with no immediate weather disturbances. However, conditions are expected to worsen significantly from April 22 onward. On April 22, temperatures could climb to a maximum of 42 degrees Celsius, with the minimum rising



slightly to 22 degrees Celsius. The IMD has warned that heatwave conditions are likely to persist throughout the day, affecting morning, afternoon, and evening hours alike. The situation is not expected to improve on April 23 and 24, with maximum temperatures continuing to hover around 42 degrees Celsius and minimum temperatures around 23 degrees Celsius. Adding to public discomfort, humidity levels are projected

to rise sharply, reaching up to 70 per cent on April 24. This combination of high temperatures and humidity is likely to create sultry and oppressive conditions. Authorities have advised people to avoid stepping outdoors during peak afternoon hours and to stay adequately hydrated. Alongside the rising heat, air quality across NCR has also become a growing concern. According to data from the Central Pollution Control

Board and other monitoring agencies, the Air Quality Index (AQI) in several parts of Delhi has deteriorated from the 'moderate' to the 'poor' category. In Delhi, an AQI of 282 was recorded in Anand Vihar, 226 in Ashok Vihar, and 218 in Bawana, all falling under the 'poor' category. Meanwhile, Aya Nagar recorded an AQI of 169, which remains in the 'moderate' range. In Noida, AQI levels were also concerning, with Sector 1 recording 233, Sector 116 at 209, Sector 125 at 185, and Sector 62 at 182. The situation is grave in Ghaziabad, where AQI levels have reached the 'very poor' category. Loni recorded an AQI of 321, while Ved Vihar-Loni reported 317. Other areas such as Govindpuram and Vasundhara registered AQI levels of 257 and 234, respectively. Experts attribute the worsening air quality to rising temperatures and slow wind speeds, which allow pollutants to accumulate in the atmosphere. Vulnerable groups, including children,



Hormuz flashpoint rattles Dalal Street: Sensex, Nifty slide as oil surges towards \$100

New Delhi, Apr 20: Dalal Street opened the week on a cautious note, with benchmark indices slipping in early trade as fresh tensions around the Strait of Hormuz rattled investor confidence. The pullback comes even as global markets showed strength and domestic fundamentals remained supportive, underlining how geopolitical risks are once again dictating short-term market direction. The BSE Sensex was trading around 78,261, down 232 points or 0.29 per cent, while the NSE Nifty dropped over 100 points, or 0.46 per cent, to 24,241 amid selling pressure in sectors such as realty, metals and energy. Stocks including HDFC Life, Bajaj Finserv, HDFC Bank, Hindalco Industries, and Kotak Mahindra Bank were



among the key laggards. Analysts said the market continues to lack conviction despite underlying strength. "The broader message remains clear: momentum is building, but conviction continues to depend on global stability. Until greater clarity emerges on the geopolitical front, markets are likely to remain reactive, with opportunities driven more by tactical positioning than by a sustained directional trend," they noted. **Strait of Hormuz flashpoint rattles sentiment** Fresh nervousness was triggered after Iran tightened restrictions on shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, reversing earlier signals of reopening. The move followed renewed friction with the United States over alleged violations of ceasefire conditions. The Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps warned that the cru-

cial energy route would remain closed, cautioning vessels against movement in the Persian Gulf and Sea of Oman. "Therefore, the Strait of Hormuz will be closed until this blockade is lifted," the IRGC said, according to ANI. The statement added, "We warn that no vessel should move from its anchorage in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, and approaching the Strait of Hormuz will be considered cooperation with the enemy, and the violating vessel will be targeted." The escalation has raised fresh doubts over the fragile ceasefire, especially after the United States said it had seized an Iranian cargo ship, prompting Tehran to warn of retaliation. The US President Donald Trump, meanwhile, dis-

missed Iran's actions, saying it could not "blackmail" Washington by shutting the waterway. **Oil surges towards \$100 mark** The geopolitical flare-up sent crude oil prices sharply higher, adding to inflation concerns and weighing on equity valuations. Brent crude rose as much as 7.18 per cent to \$96.87 per barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) climbed 8.76 per cent to \$91.20. Earlier in the day, Brent was seen trading around \$94-98 per barrel range amid volatile swings. On the domestic front, crude prices on the Multi Commodity Exchange jumped 6.72 per cent to Rs 8,289. The spike in oil prices comes amid fears of supply disruption through the Strait of Hormuz.

Old or new tax regime? Which one should you choose



New Delhi, Apr 20: As the income tax filing season approaches, one question continues to interest taxpayers: should they stay with the old tax regime or move to the new one? The answer is not the same for everyone, as the best choice depends on income level, deductions available and personal financial habits. The old tax regime allows taxpayers to claim deductions such as Section 80C, Section 80D, house rent allowance, leave travel

allowance and home loan interest. However, it comes with higher tax rates. The new tax regime, on the other hand, offers lower tax rates but removes most exemptions and deductions, making it simpler and easier to follow. **New tax regime more attractive** In recent years, the government has made the new tax regime more attractive. It has become the default option, the standard deduction has been extended to it, and tax

slabs have been revised to make it more appealing, especially for salaried individuals who do not claim many deductions.

For taxpayers who invest regularly in tax-saving instruments, pay home loan EMIs or claim house rent allowance, the old tax regime may still be the better option. In many cases, if total deductions are substantial, the old regime can lead to lower overall tax liability despite its higher slab rates. The new tax regime is generally more suitable for those who prefer simplicity and have fewer deductions. It is also attractive for young professionals and others who value higher take-home income and flexibility over locked-in savings. For such taxpayers, the lower rates under the new regime may offset the benefit of deductions available.

VinFast's Free Charging Program Could Slash Fuel Costs by More Than Half

Gurgaon (Haryana), Apr 20: India's EV transition is accelerating, but for many drivers the decision still comes down to a practical question: will it actually save money over time? VinFast believes the answer becomes clearer with its latest ownership program. The company recently extended free charging at V-Green stations until March 31, 2029, allowing customers to charge their vehicles at no cost for several years. This charging program is supported by V-Green, a global EV charging infrastructure company focused on building and operating charging networks for VinFast vehicles. In India, V-Green has been steadily expanding its presence, including a recent partnership with Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL) to deploy EV chargers across HPCL's fuel station network nationwide, helping bring charging access to major cities, highways and key transport corridors as the country's EV market grows. To really see the benefits of VinFast's latest free charging program, one only needs to make one simple comparison. In early



March 2026, petrol in New Delhi was priced around Rs. 94.77 per litre, with similar levels across many major cities. Assuming a typical and balanced real-world estimate of 15.5 km per litre for mid-size SUVs, a driver covering about 1,350 km per month would consume roughly 87 litres of petrol monthly. At Rs. 94.77 per litre, that equals about Rs. 8,249 per month in fuel spending. Over three years, that reaches roughly Rs. 3 lakh. Now, take the VinFast VF 7 as an example. The vehicle carries a 75.3 kWh battery and offers a driving range of about 450 km.

Apple withholds data in India antitrust case, watchdog sets final hearing

New Delhi, Apr 20: Apple has not submitted data sought by India's antitrust body after an investigation found the US firm abused its dominant position in the iPhone app market, prompting the watchdog to fast-track a decision on penalties to a final hearing next month, an order shows. The Competition Commission of India (CCI) said in an April 8 order that Apple has not submitted details of its financials and its views on the investigation since October 2024, and instead cited a separate case pending in the Delhi High Court where the company has challenged India's entire antitrust penalty law. The CCI typically requires financial information from companies to calculate penalties when they are found to have contravened the law. Apple, which



denies any wrongdoing in the case, has said it fears it could be fined up to \$38 billion if the watchdog uses its global turnover to calculate penalties in the case. Apple has "been afforded adequate opportunities to file" its objections or suggestions to the

investigation report and has also "not submitted the requisite financial information," said the CCI order, which is not public but was reviewed by Reuters. Apple and the CCI did not respond to Reuters queries. The Indian case is among the many Apple faces around the globe for alleged antitrust breaches. India is a key market for Apple where its iPhones have a 9 per cent market share, compared to just 4 per cent two years ago, Counterpoint Research says. Although the CCI has given Apple two more weeks to file its responses, it has for the first time fixed a final hearing date of May 21.

Hearing date significant step Lawyers said the setting of a final hearing date signals the watchdog is hardening its stance. "Apple has the opportunity right now to submit its financials supported by an auditor's certificate and then argue on quantum of penalty during the hearing based on these financials," said Gautam Shahi, an antitrust partner at Dux Associates.

Advanced Nang Delivery Services: Redefining Speed, Efficiency, and Modern Culinary Access

New Delhi, Apr 20: Nang delivery has become a significant part of the modern on-demand service economy, reflecting the growing need for instant access to essential culinary tools. In today's fast-paced lifestyle, consumers increasingly prefer services that combine speed, convenience, and reliability. Nangs, commonly known as whipped cream chargers, are widely used in culinary preparation to create smooth textures, foams, and decorative finishes in food and beverage applications. The expansion of nang delivery services highlights a broader shift toward digital-first convenience and efficient logistics systems that support both personal and professional needs. Nang delivery operates through a streamlined digital system that allows users to access essential culinary products quickly and efficiently, instead of visiting physical retail stores, cus-



tomers can place orders online and receive products directly at their chosen location. This model is designed to prioritize simplicity, speed, and accessibility. It ensures that customers can obtain products whenever required, whether for planned culinary preparation or urgent needs. The structure of this service reflects the increasing demand for instant and reliable

delivery solutions in modern urban environments. **Why is nang delivery becoming increasingly popular?** The popularity of nang delivery is closely linked to changes in consumer behavior. People are prioritizing convenience and time-saving solutions in their daily lives. Delivery services provide a practical alternative to traditional shopping by eliminating travel

time and simplifying the purchasing process. Another major factor driving demand is the rise in home-based culinary experimentation. Many individuals are exploring advanced cooking techniques that require specialized tools. Cream chargers play a key role in these processes, enabling users to create professional-quality textures and presentations. Delivery systems ensure that these tools remain easily accessible, encouraging creativity in the kitchen. **How does speed influence nang delivery services?** Speed is one of the most important factors in nang delivery operations. Customers expect rapid fulfillment, and service providers have optimized their logistics systems to meet these expectations. Efficient dispatch systems and well-coordinated delivery networks help ensure fast service across different regions.

Markets end flat amid uncertainty on US-Iran peace talks; Nifty, Sensex see marginal gains

Mumbai, Apr 20: Indian equities closed largely flat on Monday as ongoing uncertainty and elevated tensions between the United States and Iran kept investor sentiment cautious. The NSE Nifty 50 index ended at 24,364.85, rising by 11.30 points or 0.05 per cent, while the BSE Sensex closed at 78,520.30, gaining 26.76 points or 0.03 per cent. Market participants remained watchful of global developments, particularly around the Strait of Hormuz and the evolving geopolitical situation in West Asia. Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Investments, said that renewed disputes over the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz injected volatility into global mar-



kets. Investors interpreted the recent disruptions in the Middle East as potential negotiation tactics rather than the onset of a full-scale conflict. With the ceasefire set to expire this week, market participants remain cautious, awaiting further developments," he said. He added that oil prices have surged but remained below the USD 100 mark, while the rupee has weakened, raising concerns about inflationary pressures. Despite these chal-

Manipal University Jaipur Invites Applications for Sir M. Visvesvaraya Scholarship for B.Tech Aspirants

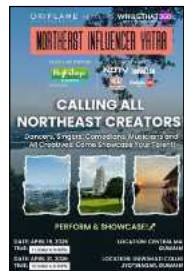


Jaipur, Apr 20: Manipal University Jaipur has invited applications for the prestigious Sir M. Visvesvaraya Scholarship aimed at supporting meritorious students aspiring to pursue B.Tech programmes at the institution. The University announced that a limited number of 200 scholarships will be offered under this flagship initiative across key engineering disciplines, including Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Computer Science & Bioscience, Electrical and Computer

Engineering, Electronics Engineering (VLSI Design & Technology), Mechanical Engineering, Mechatronics Engineering, and Fashion Technology. According to the University, the scholarship will be awarded strictly based on prescribed eligibility criteria. Among eligible candidates, priority in allocation will be given to those who complete the admission process and deposit a full programme fee earlier, following a first-come, first-served basis. In addition to the Sir M. Visvesvaraya Scholarship, the University offers a broad range of financial aid opportunities across multiple categories to support students from diverse academic and socio-economic backgrounds. University officials stated that due to the limited number of scholarships and high demand, interested candidates are advised to complete the admission formalities at the earliest to secure consideration under the scheme.

Oriflame Presents WhosThat360 Northeast Influencer Yatra Arrives in Guwahati, Creating New Opportunities for Youth and Women

New Delhi, Apr 20: Amid the rapid growth of India's creator economy, Oriflame presents WhosThat360 Northeast Influencer Yatra has become a major talking point across the country. After receiving an overwhelming response in cities like Shillong, Agartala, Aizawl, Dimapur, and Kohima, this much-awaited Yatra has now reached Guwahati with its dynamic presence. On Sunday, a grand event was organised at Central Mall, Guwahati, where hundreds of people participated enthusiastically. On strong demand from the local audience, the organizers have planned to conduct the Yatra for one more day in Guwahati. Therefore, it has been decided to organize it again on April 21 at Guwahati College, Jyotindra,



Guwahati. Recognized as one of India's largest regional influencer campaigns, the Yatra is providing

a powerful platform for talented youth, aspiring creators, and women from across the Northeast. With its arrival in Guwahati, this initiative has already started connecting local talent to national-level opportunities. At every location, participants get an engaging and interactive experience that blends creativity, commerce, and community participation. In the Guwahati leg, hundreds of students, beauty enthusiasts, and budding influencers have participated, many of whom will get opportunities on the national stage. A key highlight of the event is the Oriflame Beauty and Wellness Partner Truck, which offers a unique on-ground experience. Attendees get the opportunity to participate in live beauty masterclasses and cre-

ator add-ons. This interactive set-up allows participants to explore and experience Oriflame's premium range of skincare, cosmetics, and wellness products, while also gaining valuable industry insights. The Yatra is thoughtfully designed to empower individuals across sectors such as beauty, fashion, food, travel, wellness, and lifestyle. Beyond showcasing talent, it also encourages entrepreneurship and self-reliance among youth and women. Through Oriflame's Brand Partner Program, participants can explore opportunities to start their own ventures, earn flexible income, and build independent careers. This initiative is playing a crucial role in promoting financial independence, especially among women.

Yudhvir Sethi inaugurates Drain Upgradation Work worth Rs 15 lakh on Exchange Road

JAMMU, Apr 20: MLA Jammu East Constituency Yudhvir Sethi on Monday inaugurated the upgradation work of a drainage system near R.K. Traders at Exchange Road in Ward No. 8.

The project, being executed at an estimated cost of Rs 15 lakh, aims to improve sanitation and address long-standing concerns of waterlogging in the busy commercial area.

The MLA was accompanied by Swati Sharma (President of Amphalla Mandal), Rajesh (Xen JMC), Rakesh (JEE), former Corporator Dr. Akshay Sharma, Jammu District Spokesperson Sharda Devi, Exchange Road Market President Paramjeet Singh, Vijay Sharma, Kuldeep Mahajan, Jagdeep Singh, Naresh Singh, Karan Sharma, Suresh Salgotra, Puneet Chawla, Rohit Gupta, Kamaljeet Kour, and Parvinder Singh.

Speaking on the occasion,



Yudhvir Sethi said the development of basic civic infrastructure remains a top priority for him.

"This drain upgradation project is part of our continued efforts to improve living conditions for residents and ensure proper sanitation in densely populated and commercial localities. Exchange Road is a vital area, and addressing drainage issues here was essential," he said.

He further added that several complaints had been received from traders and residents regarding frequent water accumulation, especially during rains, which caused inconvenience and affected business activities.

"With this upgraded drainage system, we expect a permanent solution to the problem, ensuring smooth flow of wastewater and

preventing waterlogging," Sethi stated.

The MLA said similar works are being undertaken in various wards to enhance public convenience and urban living standards.

"Our focus is on delivering tangible development on the ground. Every project, big or small, contributes to the overall growth of Jammu city," he added. Local residents and shopkeepers welcomed the initiative and expressed gratitude for addressing a long-pending issue. They hoped that the project would bring much-needed relief and improve cleanliness in the area.

Officials present at the site informed that the work will be completed within the stipulated timeframe, ensuring minimal disruption to daily activities.

The inauguration reflects the ongoing push for infrastructure development in Jammu East constituency.

Ajeet Bhagat appeals to DC Kishtwar release MGNREGA Job Card Holders payment in Kishtwar District

KISHTWAR/ April 20, National Conference Senior leader and Spokesperson of Chenab Valley Region Ajeet Bhagat appeals to Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar has been made to immediately release the wages of all Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act MGNREGA workers in Kishtwar District.

The National Conference leader said the vision of MGNREGA is to enhance the livelihood security of rural households across the country by providing at least 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Bhagat said Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act MGNREGA recog-



Ajeet Bhagat

nizes the importance of strengthening the livelihood resource base of the poor by reaching the most vulnerable sections of rural areas, including Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, women-headed households, and other marginalized groups.

Bhagat said the scheme encourages a sense of community and collective responsibility by strengthening Panchayat Raj institutions, Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act MGNREGA promotes a bottom-up approach to planning and execution, empowering local communities to take charge of their development. Through the creation of productive assets of prescribed quality and durability, he said the scheme addresses immediate economic needs while laying the foundation for long-term prosperity.

The National Conference leader said Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act MGNREGA prioritizes sustainable development and environmental stewardship, striving to create a greener, more sustainable future for generations to come by prioritizing works that contribute to ecological conservation and rural infrastructure development.

Massive participation marks Day-7 of Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan in District Doda

DODA, APRIL 20: In line with the directions of the District Administration Doda and the Directorate of School Education Jammu, Day-7 of the ongoing Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan was observed with great enthusiasm across District Doda through Painting and Poster Making Competitions focusing on the ill effects of drug abuse.

The activities were conducted in all educational institutions, including Higher Secondary Schools, High Schools and Middle Schools of the district. The initiative witnessed an overwhelming response, with approximately 695 schools actively participating and a remarkable 10,425 students showcasing their creativity and awareness through impactful artwork.

The competitions aimed at sensitizing students about the dangers of drug abuse and encouraging them to become ambas-

sadors of a drug-free society. Students expressed their thoughts vividly through paintings and posters, highlighting the social, physical and psychological consequences of substance abuse.

The entire programme was conducted under the able supervision of the Chief Education Officer Doda, Bhushan Kumar Pathak, who lauded the enthusiastic participation of students and the proactive role played by Heads of Institutions and teaching staff in ensuring the successful conduct of the event.

The School Education Department reaffirmed its commitment to continue organizing such meaningful activities under the Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan aimed at building a healthier and drug-free future for the younger generation.

NSS Unit of (SMVDU) in collaboration with ICC successfully organized an Awareness Programme

Katra, Apr 20: The NSS Unit of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU), in collaboration with the Internal Complaints Committee (ICC), successfully organized an Awareness Programme on Gender Sensitisation and Sexual Harassment on campus. The programme aimed to spread awareness among students about gender equality, respectful behavior, and the prevention of sexual harassment in educational institutions and society at large. It emphasized the importance of creating a safe, inclusive, and harassment-free environment. The event was graced by Prof. (Dr.) Jaya Bhasin, a distinguished academican from the School of Business Studies,



Central University of Jammu. In her address, she highlighted the significance of gender sensitisation, legal awareness, and ethical conduct among youth. She also spoke about institutional mechanisms available to address complaints and ensure justice. The programme was conducted under the

guidance of ICC Chairperson Dr. Kakali Majumdar, with valuable support from ICC members Dr. Archana Purwar and Dr. Rajiv Kumar. Their presence and insights added depth to the discussion on safeguarding dignity and rights within academic spaces. As part of the event, a debate compe-

petition was also organized on the topic "Are Gender Stereotypes Still Strong in Today's Youth?". Students actively participated and presented diverse viewpoints, making the session engaging and thought-provoking.

The NSS Unit played a vital role in organizing the event and encouraging active student participation. Through interactive discussions and real-life examples, students gained a better understanding of gender-related issues and workplace ethics. The event concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Archana Purwar, ICC member, reaffirming the university's commitment to promoting equality, awareness, and a respectful campus environment.

Surjit Singh Slatia dedicates 100-meter Foot Suspension Bridge over River Basanter to the people of Samotha

Samba, April 20: In a landmark step towards strengthening rural connectivity and accelerating infrastructure development, MLA Samba Surjit Singh Slatia today inaugurated a 100-meter span Foot Suspension Bridge over River Basanter at Village Samotha, Block Samba. Constructed under the NABARD scheme at a cost of ₹172.62 lakhs, the bridge stands as a testament to the government's commitment to inclusive growth. This long-awaited project will significantly improve connectivity for the villages of Beli, Sarla, Daban, Bru, Dagerat, and Bela Dawala, ensuring seamless and safe movement of people throughout the year. Particularly during the monsoon season, when the Basanter River often becomes a barrier, the bridge will serve as a crucial lifeline, benefiting hundreds of resi-



dents by facilitating access to schools, healthcare institutions, markets, and other essential services.

Addressing the gathering, Surjit Singh Slatia stated that the project reflects the unwavering commitment of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) towards transforming rural infrastructure and empower-

ing grassroots communities. He credited the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi for ushering in an era of unprecedented development, where even the remotest villages are being brought into the mainstream.

"Connectivity is the backbone of progress. This bridge is not merely a physical structure, but a symbol

of hope, opportunity, and transformation. It will enhance the quality of life for the people and open new avenues for socio-economic growth," he remarked.

The MLA further emphasized that the BJP-led government is consistently working with dedication to ensure balanced development, improved connectivity, and ease of living across Jammu & Kashmir. He reaffirmed that the government remains focused on fulfilling the aspirations of the people and bridging developmental gaps in rural areas.

The inauguration ceremony witnessed enthusiastic participation from local residents, senior BJP leaders, officials, engineers, and representatives from various villages. The locals expressed heartfelt gratitude to Surjit Singh Slatia.

District Administration Samba holds interaction with Civil Society at Vijaypur under 100-Day Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyaan

SAMBA, APRIL 20: As part of the ongoing 100-Day Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan, District Administration Samba today organised an interaction session with Civil Society Organisations at Vijaypur to strengthen collective efforts against drug abuse. During the session, the Deputy Commissioner Samba, Ayushi Sudan along with SSP Samba, Anuj Kumar, interacted with members of civil society, public representatives and locals. The discussion focused on the growing concern of substance abuse, its impact on society and the need for coordinated and sustained action to



address the issue effectively. Members of civil society and the local public actively participated in the interaction and shared their views and suggestions on tackling the menace of drugs. The Deputy Commissioner assured that the administration is committed to taking strict and effective measures against drug abuse and will continue to act firmly against those involved in such

activities. She emphasized the importance of collective responsibility and called upon all stakeholders to work in a unified and determined manner towards achieving the goal of a Nasha Mukht Samba. It was highlighted that the ongoing 100-day campaign aims to create widespread awareness and sensitise every section of society against the harmful effects of drugs.

Month-Long World Oral Health Programme concludes at Government Hospital Gandhi Nagar



JAMMU, APRIL 20: A month-long series of activities and events organised under the World Oral Health Programme concluded today at Government Hospital Gandhi Nagar, marking the successful culmination of extensive awareness and outreach efforts aimed at promoting dental hygiene and oral health.

The programme commenced with announcements and awareness drives focusing on proper dental care and good oral hygiene practices. Throughout the month, a range of activities including special OPDs and awareness lectures were conducted across various wards and sections of the hospital to sensitize

patients and the general public about the importance of oral health.

To further engage the community, several interactive activities such as painting and slogan writing competitions, Nukkad Natak performances and a dental awareness rally were organised in collaboration with different institutions, witnessing enthusiastic participation from more than 60 students. Prizes were distributed among the students who excelled in these activities.

As part of the outreach initiative, a special oral health awareness programme was conducted at Bal Gran School, Channi, where students and teachers were educated on maintaining oral hygiene and informed about the harmful effects of tobacco and tobacco-based products.

DC Doda reviews preparations for World Red Cross Day; issues key directions

DODA, APRIL 20: A review meeting regarding the preparations for the upcoming celebration of World Red Cross Day was held today under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Doda Krishan Lal, who also serves as Chairman of the District Red Cross Society Doda. The meeting aimed at finalizing the planning, arrangements and overall strategy for the observance of the event on 8th May 2026 across the district. A comprehensive presentation on the celebration plan and preparedness was delivered by Assistant Commissioner Revenue Ashraf Pervaz which included organization of awareness programmes, health camps, blood donation drives, first-aid training sessions and grand rally to mark the occasion.



The Deputy Commissioner emphasized increasing the number of voluntary blood donors in the district to ensure timely availability of blood for needy patients. It was informed that the main rally for World Red Cross Day will commence from the DC Office Complex Doda, proceed towards GMC Doda and

culminate at Government Boys Higher Secondary School Doda, where a mega event will be celebrated. The Deputy Commissioner directed all departments to work in close coordination for the successful organization of the event and to ensure maximum public participation especially among

youth and students. He instructed the Chief Education Officer to organize Red Cross Day activities in all schools to promote awareness. The Deputy Commissioner issued directions to ensure proper security arrangements and preparation of banners for the event, assigning responsibilities to the Additional Deputy Commissioner. He further directed that individuals who have made notable contributions to Red Cross activities be felicitated during the celebration. He stressed the need for enhanced publicity of Red Cross initiatives and urged civil society members and business stakeholders to come forward and extend their support. The District Information Officer was directed to intensify awareness campaigns and ensure

wide dissemination of information regarding all activities under the Red Cross Society. The district officers also shared their valuable suggestions for the successful celebration of the event and for strengthening the Red Cross Society in the district. The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Anil Kumar Thakur, Additional Deputy Commissioner Sunil Bhatnagar, ASP Headquarters Mohd Aslam, ACD Din Mohammad Afaq, SDMS, SE Jal Shakti, Principal GDC Javid Iqbal, Chief Education Officer Bhushan Kumar Pathak, Chief Medical Officer Dr. Tanvir Ahmed, District Information Officer Abhimanyu Singh, District Social Welfare Officer Zubair Ahmed.

Satish visits GMC Udhampur, reviews treatment facilities for accident victims

Calls for strengthening Trauma Care, Emergency Response

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 20: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, and Information Technology, Satish Sharma, today visited the Government Medical College (GMC) Udhampur to review the medical facilities being provided to the road accident victims and assess the overall preparedness of the institution in handling such emergency cases. During the visit, the Minister conducted a detailed inspection of various wards including emergency and trauma sections. He took stock of the treatment being provided to the injured. He interacted with the patients and their attendants, seeking feedback on the services being extended to them by the hospital.



Sharma reviewed the availability of doctors, paramedical staff, critical care infrastructure, medicines and diagnostic facilities. He emphasized that timely and efficient medical inter-

vention during such emergencies is crucial in saving the precious human lives. He directed the hospital authorities to further strengthen the emergency response mechanisms. The Minister instructed the hospital administration to ensure round-the-clock availability of specialist doctors, well-equipped ambulances, blood bank services and essential life-saving drugs. Highlighting the need for an integrated approach, Sharma called for enhanced coordination among the health, transport and police departments to streamline accident response and patient referral systems. He also directed for regular monitoring of trauma care services and timely upgradation of medical equipment to meet growing healthcare demands. The Minister underscored the importance of maintaining high standards of hygiene, sanitation and patient care within the hospital premises. He also

reviewed the ongoing and proposed infrastructure development works at GMC Udhampur and assured that necessary resources would be provided to further strengthen the healthcare facilities in the region. Appreciating the dedication of doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff, Sharma lauded their efforts in managing the emergency cases, asking them to continue serving with commitment and compassion. The Minister was accompanied by M.L.A Rannagar R S Pathania, M.L.A Gulabgarh Khurshood Ahmad, Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, senior health officials and hospital authorities, who briefed the Minister on the functioning of the institution, patient load and steps being taken to enhance the

Sakeena Itoo expresses grief over Udhampur Bus accident

Directs emergency response, Round-the-Clock specialist care

JAMMU, APRIL 20: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo has expressed deep sorrow and anguish over the tragic loss of lives in the unfortunate bus accident on the Rannagar-Udhampur route. The Health Minister conveyed her heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved families and prayed for eternal peace to the departed souls. She also expressed solidarity with the injured passengers, wishing them a speedy and complete recovery. Taking immediate cognizance of the incident, the Minister issued urgent directions to the Principals of Government Medical College Jammu and Government Medical College Udhampur to ensure swift and coordinated medical response for all those injured. She instructed the Principals of both medical facilities to keep emergency services on high alert and ensure prompt admission of all referred patients without delay. "Deploy dedicated teams of senior doctors, trauma specialists, surgeons and paramedical staff for continuous monitoring and treatment. Maintain round-the-clock availability of specialist care, including critical care and surgical interventions wherever required", Sakeena Itoo



directed both Principals. The Minister also asked them to ensure adequate availability of blood, essential medicines and life-saving equipment in emergency wards and ICUs, as well as establish a coordinated referral mechanism between hospitals to handle critical cases efficiently. The Minister further directed that no laxity should be tolerated in the treatment of the injured and emphasized that all necessary medical facilities must be extended free of cost on priority.

DHJ conducts extensive tour of Samba

SAMBA, APRIL 20: Director Horticulture Jammu Gul Syed today conducted an extensive tour of district Samba. He was accompanied by Horticulture Development Officer, Purmandal Rakesh Kumar along with officials of Zone Purmandal. During the tour, the Director inspected the orchard of Baloch Din at Village Bari, Zone Purmandal, with a focus on-ground assessment of orchard management practices and directed the officer and officials for regular interaction with farmers. The Director also interacted with local farmers and generate awareness about various departmental



schemes including JKCP, HADP and MIDH, encouraging adoption of dragon fruit cultivation and other high-value fruit crops for enhanced income generation and diversification. Later, the Director visited a High-Tech Polyhouse at Village Badhori, Zone Purmandal, where he inter-

Chief Secretary outlines vision for digitally empowered J&K at 'Tech Saksham' workshop

JAMMU, APRIL 20: Presiding over 'Tech Saksham', a landmark capacity-building workshop jointly convened by the National Informatics Centre (NIC) and NCSI of Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) at the Convention Centre, Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo today set a resolute tone for the digital future of Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasised that digital governance is no longer a mere supporting function, but the absolute backbone of transparent, efficient and responsive public service



delivery mechanism. The workshop was also attended by Shantmanu, State Election Commissioner, J&K; Chandrak Bharti, Principal Secretary, Home Department; Dr. Piyush Singla, Secretary Information Technology Department; and Mahima Madan, Chief Executive Officer JaKeGA. Varindra

stressed that robust digital systems are instrumental in significantly reducing administrative barriers, compressing service timelines, curtailing corruption and ultimately sustaining the bond of trust between citizens and the administration. He favoured that digital platforms must feature user-friendly interfaces and local language support to ensure no citizen is left behind in this revolution. He further noted that structured, well-governed data will serve as the bedrock for deploying Artificial Intelligence in public administration, turning raw information.

Committee on Ease of Doing Business and New Industrial Policy begins stakeholder talks in Jammu, promises competitive, investor-friendly J&K

JAMMU, APRIL 20: The Committee on Ease of Doing Business and revision of the New Industrial Policy for Jammu and Kashmir held its first meeting with the stakeholders at Udyog Bhawan here today. The Committee, chaired by Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shailendra Kumar, met the representatives and office bearers of various industrial and trade associations from the Jammu Division. Committee members Vikramjit Singh, Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce Department and Amitava Chatterjee, Managing Director & CEO, J&K Bank, attended the meeting. This was the committee's first stakeholder consultation on revising the J&K Industrial Policy and improving the Ease of Doing Business in the Union Territory. The next meeting will be held in Kashmir. During the deliberations,



industry representatives gave detailed feedback on a wide range of issues. Suggestions focused on regulatory simplification, reducing the compliance burden, improving access to finance, upgrading infrastructure and building mechanisms to attract fresh investment while supporting the growth of existing units. The stakeholders also proposed specific amendments for incorporation in the new Industrial Policy. The Committee underlined the importance of continuous stakeholder engagement in policy for-

mulation and assured that all constructive suggestions would be examined. It stated that the forthcoming Industrial Policy will aim to create a competitive, transparent and investor-friendly ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir. The meeting was also attended by Director, Industries and Commerce-Jammu, Dr Arun Manhas; Chairman, Federation of Industries Jammu, Virender Jai; Anu Gupta, President, Chamber of Commerce & Industry Jammu, Anu Gupta; National Chairman, D2C Industry Association, M A Alim; Vice President, CII, Sidhant Choudhary; Chairman ICC, Rahul Sahai; President- ASSOCHAM Manik Batra; Chairman FICCI, Rakesh Bhat; President BBIA Lait Mahajan; President, PHDCCI Rakesh Wazir; Chairman, FICCI FLO, Varsha Bansal besides officers from the Directorate of Industries and Commerce.

Shantmanu reviews Revision of Panchayat Electoral Rolls in R S Pura, Miran Sahib blocks

JAMMU, APRIL 20: State Election Commissioner, Jammu & Kashmir, Shantmanu, on Monday conducted an extensive tour of Miran Sahib block and R S Pura block of Jammu district to review the progress on special camps being organised for Revision of Panchayat Electoral Rolls-2026. The Election Commissioner visited and inspected special camps at Panchayat Ghar Darsapur, Panchayat Ghar Badyal Brahmana (Lower), Panchayat Ghar Rathana, Panchayat Ghar Malikpur, Panchayat Ghar Kotli Mian Fateh and Government Middle School Nihalpur Simble (Upper). During the inspection, he interacted



with the Panchayat Secretaries, BLOs, PEBOs to assess the pace of the special revision camps set up for updation of Electoral Roll 2026. He reviewed the status of registration forms and progress on enrolment of newly eligible voters. The Election Commissioner examined the submission of forms related to inclusion, deletion, correction and transposition in the Panchayat

Rana directs fast-tracking, streamlining of FRA compliance in J&K

JAMMU, APRIL 20: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, on Monday directed the officials to expedite and streamline the compliance mechanism under the Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition of Forest Rights) Act, 2006

across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The directions were issued during a high-level review meeting held at the Civil Secretariat in Jammu to assess the progress on Act's implementation in the Union Territory. The meeting was attended by senior officials, including Commissioner Secretary



Forests, Ecology & Environment, Sheetal Nanda; Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Sarvesh Rai; Secretary Tribal Affairs Department, Prasanna Ramaswamy G; Director Tribal Affairs J&K, Mohd. Mumtaz Ali; Director Finance, Tribal Affairs Department, Iftikhar Chouhan and Nodal Officer, Tribal

Research Institute, Dr. Abdul Khahir, among others. Emphasising the need for a more efficient and transparent framework, the Minister instructed the officials to accelerate the recognition of forest rights and ensure prompt operationalisation of Forest Rights Act (FRA) cells at the district level. He noted that these cells play a piv-

otal role in facilitating claim documentation, ensuring inter-departmental coordination and enabling timely uploading of records. "The formation of FRA cells must be fast-tracked. The entire process should be time-bound, coordinated and people-centric with clearly defined accountability at every stage.

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