

# North in News

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## The goal of 2047 is not merely a date it is a national resolve: LG Sinha

JAMMU, APR 21: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday called for building India which our freedom fighters once dreamed of and in which every section and every individual is part of the mainstream of progress. "India is moving decisively towards becoming a developed nation. The goal of 2047 is not merely a date; it is a national resolve," the Lieutenant Governor said. The Lieutenant Governor was speaking at the statue unveiling ceremony of Shri Vijay Bahadur Singh, a well-known social worker



and the founder of Mahamadaleshwar Shri Bal Krishna Yati Inter College at Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh. Paying homage to

### LG unveils Statue Of Renowned Social Worker Shri Vijay Bahadur Singh In Ghazipur

desire for fame, and built not for himself but for the coming generations. The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that we must carry the ideals of Shri Vijay Bahadur Singh Ji, a true karma-yogi, to every segment of society. "I feel particularly proud that Shri Vijay Bahadur Singh Ji did not ask what Bindravan could do for him; instead, he showed what Bindravan and the Jakhania region

## Shah claims Mamata shielding infiltrators, vows to block attempts to build Babri mosque in Bengal

SALBONI (WB), APR 21: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday alleged that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was shielding "infiltrators", promoting dynastic politics and backing attempts to raise a "Babri Masjid-modelled mosque" in West Bengal, which the BJP would not allow. Addressing a rally at Salboni in Paschim Medinipur ahead of the first phase of the West Bengal assembly polls, Shah sought to turn the contest into a direct ideological battle between the BJP and the ruling Trinamool Congress. He declared that the election



was not merely about choosing a government but about "freeing Bengal from infiltrators, corruption and fear". "Mamata Didi wants to protect infiltrators. But I am telling you, press the button on EVM before the lotus (BJP's poll symbol) on April 23 and a BJP government will drive out

every infiltrator from Bengal," he said. The Union home minister also intensified his attack on what the BJP terms "bhaipo culture" in Bengal politics, targeting Mamata Banerjee's nephew and TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee, without naming him. "Mamata ji wants to make her nephew the chief minister of Bengal. She is misleading people by claiming that if the BJP wins, an outsider will become chief minister. I assure you, the next chief minister of Bengal will be from the BJP, born and brought up in Bengal," he said. (Contd on Pg 2)

## Memorial honours Pahalgam attack victims; security tightened ahead of first anniversary



PAHALGAM, APR 21: A memorial has been erected in the hill resort of Pahalgam as a sombre tribute to the 25 tourists and a local ponywallah who lost their lives in a brutal terror attack last year, even as

tourism industry - a key pillar of the local economy - which is now showing signs of revival following sustained efforts by the National Conference government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah. Although all three Pakistani terrorists involved in the massacre were eliminated by security forces in a gunfight in the Srinagar hills three months later, the probe by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) continued even as it filed a chargesheet in mid-December against seven

## Jitendra Singh visits accident victims in Udhampur hospital, announces critical care ambulance



JAMMU, APR 21: Union minister Jitendra Singh on Tuesday visited the Government Medical College (GMC) in Udhampur, a day after a road accident in his constituency killed 21 persons and injured 51 others. Accompanied by local BJP MLAs - Balwant Singh Mankotia, Pawan Kumar Gupta, Ranbir Singh Pathania and Sunil Bhardwaj - and Deputy

## CM Omar flags off ambulances, healthcare equipment under JKSPDC CSR initiative

JAMMU, APRIL 21: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today flagged off seven ambulances and other healthcare equipment from Civil Secretariat, Jammu for multiple districts across Jammu and Kashmir, provided by Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative. The ambulances have been distributed across Jammu and Kashmir at a total cost of ₹144.73 lakh. In addition,



JKSPDC has provided 07 TruNat machines at a cost of ₹58.80 lakh and 02 hand held X-ray machines costing ₹35.96 lakh. For the Thalassemia Day Care Centre at SMGS Hospital,

Jammu, essential medical equipment and medicines have been provided at a cost of ₹29.09 lakh to support treatment and patient care. Essential items have

### BRIEF NEWS

**BJP leader locks Banihal hospital gate to protest doctor 'shortage'**

BANIHAL/JAMMU, APR 21: A senior BJP leader on Tuesday created a ruckus inside a sub-district hospital in Jammu and Kashmir's Banihal over an alleged shortage of doctors by locking the main gate and holding a dharna inside the premises of the facility, briefly disrupting services. The chaos continued for nearly half an hour despite repeated requests from Sub-Divisional Magistrate Mohammad Naseeb, who had rushed to the scene with a police team after receiving information about the incident. The BJP leader, Mohammad Saleem Bhat, who unsuccessfully contested in the

**Police attach Rs 55 lakh properties of two drug peddlers**

JAMMU, APR 21: Jammu and Kashmir Police on Tuesday have attached properties worth over Rs 55 lakh belonging to two alleged drug peddlers from Baramulla and Anantnag districts as part of an intensified crackdown on narcotics, officials said. While the police attached an immovable property worth Rs 45 lakh belonging to a narcotics smuggler in Baramulla, it also attached a movable property worth Rs 10 lakh belonging to a drug peddler in Anantnag for their activities in Udhampur district. The action was carried out by Udhampur Police under the ongoing "nasha mukh Jammu and Kashmir abhiyan", targeting assets allegedly acquired

## Security of several vital installations reviewed in Reasi

JAMMU, APR 21: Security of several vital installations, including the world's highest railway arch bridge over Chenab, was reviewed during a high-level inspection in Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district on Tuesday, police said. Senior Superintendent of Police, Reasi, Mukund Tibrewal conducted the comprehensive security review of Chenab bridge, Dugga railway station and Sawalakote hydro-electric project in Arnas sub-division, a police spokesman said. At Chenab bridge connecting Kouri and

Bakal, the SSP interacted with CRPF and Government Railway Police (GRP) deployed for security of the bridge and adjoining areas, emphasising the need for strong inter-agency coordination to ensure effective joint area domination of nearby villages and forest belts. Tibrewal also sought strict access control measures and the use of modern surveillance systems to prevent any untoward incidents, the spokesman said. At Dugga station and Sawalakote, the officer interacted with deployed

## Iran refuses reports of another round of talks with US, says no delegation has been sent

TEHRAN, APR 21: Iran has refuted all reports that it will hold a fresh round of talks with the US in Islamabad, saying no delegation has been sent and that negotiations currently remain uncertain, as the ceasefire approaches its expiration. According to Iranian state media IRIB "So far, no Iranian delegation has travelled to Islamabad - neither the main delegation nor any subsidiary group," dismissing any reports of a second round of talks as untrue. Officials in Tehran signalled that participation in any new talks would depend on a shift in what they described as U.S. conduct, repeating that Iran would not negotiate "under the shadow of threats." The broadcaster also cited Iranian officials as saying that continued participation in negotiations depends entirely on behavioural change

by Washington, calling the current US demands "unrealistic" and "excessive", and reiterated Tehran's official stance, stating that the Islamic Republic would not negotiate "under the shadow of threats." The uncertainty comes as the clock runs down on a 14-day ceasefire brokered by Pakistan, set to expire on Wednesday. Islamabad has been trying to organise a second round of negotiations after hosting initial talks on April 11-12, but the next step remains unclear. US President Donald Trump has said that any possibility of him extending the ceasefire remains "highly unlikely", adding that Washington's naval blockade of Iranian ports would remain in place until a broader agreement is reached. Separately, Iranian lawmaker Mohammad Reza Mohseni Sani

## J&K ACB Files Chargesheet Against Former PWD AEE Sopore In Bribery Case

SRINAGAR, APR 21: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), Jammu & Kashmir, has filed a charge-sheet before the Special Judge Anti-Corruption Baranulla against then AEE, PWD (R&B) Sopore, in a bribery case involving the demand and acceptance of Rs 25,000 for processing a contractor's bill. The accused was allegedly caught red-handed during a trap laid by the ACB in October 2024. The case is now pending before the court, with the next hearing scheduled for June 6.

A spokesperson said the anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), Jammu & Kashmir, has presented a charge sheet before the Hon'ble Court of Special Judge, Anti-Corruption Baranulla. In a bribery case involving the demand and acceptance of Rs 25,000 for processing a contractor's bill, the accused was allegedly caught red-handed during a trap laid by the ACB in October 2024. The case is now pending before the court, with the next hearing scheduled for June 6. (Contd on Pg 2)

## Attempts being made to divide people on religious, linguistic lines: Bhagwat

AGARTALA, APR 21: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Tuesday alleged that attempts were being made to create divisions among people on religious and linguistic lines, asserting that India's strength lay in its unity amid diversity. Addressing a gathering after the consecration ceremony of Maat Chinmayi Soundarya Temple at Fakrimura, around 23 km from Agartala, Bhagwat said certain "evil forces" were worried that their "shops" would shut down if India progressed by drawing on its centuries-old civilisational strength.



"They are trying to engineer a quarrel among people along the lines of religions and languages. I don't need to give examples," he said. Tripura Governor Indrasena Reddy, Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma and Chief Minister Manik Saha were among those present at the event. Emphasising that diversity has long been India's defining feature, Bhagwat said the country had advanced through centuries despite having

## L-G Vinai Kumar Saxena calls on Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi

LEH, APRIL 21: The Lieutenant Governor of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena, today called on the Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), Nitin Gadkari, in New Delhi to discuss key infrastructure projects aimed at strengthening road connectivity and boosting overall development in the Ladakh region. During the meeting, the Lieutenant Governor apprised the Union Minister of several critical projects that require intervention and early sanction from the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. Saxena discussed the progress of the Zoji-La Tunnel with the Minister, wherein Nitin Gadkari informed that the final breakthrough of the tunnel is expected by the

### Highlights road connectivity and infrastructure strengthening projects in Ladakh



end of May. Once completed, the tunnel will connect Ladakh with the rest of the country, marking a significant milestone towards ensuring all-weather connectivity to the region. The Lieutenant Governor also highlighted the need for avalanche protection works along the Zoji-La Top stretch. Despite the completion of the tunnel, Saxena noted, this route will continue to be used for the movement of traffic, and hence, there was an urgent need for avalanche protection, as seven people lost their lives to an

avalanche in the region in a recent incident. The Lieutenant Governor raised the issue of pending projects under the Central Road and Infrastructure Fund (CRIF), informing that road and bridge works amounting to Rs 1465.88 crore are awaiting approval. He emphasised that these projects are critical for improving connectivity, enhancing safety, and driving economic growth, particularly in remote and strategically important areas of Ladakh. Another key issue discussed was the upgradation of the NH-03 stretch from Leh to Sindhu Ghat. Shri Saxena informed that while 5.20 km out of the total 10.08 km has already been upgraded to a four-lane road, the remaining

## When boundaries of humanity are crossed, response is decisive: Army

NEW DELHI, APR 21: On the eve of the first anniversary of the Indian Army on Tuesday reaffirmed its resolve to fight against terrorism, and said, "When boundaries of humanity are crossed, the response is decisive". On April 22 last year, terrorists killed 26 people, mostly tourists, at Pahalgam in south Kashmir. In retaliation, India launched a military operation early on May 7 and decimated multiple terror infrastructure in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu-Kashmir (PoJK). Ahead of the anniversary of the standstill act that shook the nation and drew condemnation from governments and leaders across the world, the Army in a post on X,

FROM PAGE ONE

**The goal...**

he had was an unshakable belief that education is the power which can change society," the Lieutenant Governor said. In his address, the Lieutenant Governor spoke about service, sacrifice and nation-building. He highlighted that under the leadership of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, India has taken development beyond mere statistics and carried it to every doorstep. The Lieutenant Governor said that Crores of families who once had no roof over their heads now have their own homes, and this has brought them dignity and security in society. "Roads have reached every village, the number of airports has doubled, the digital revolution has connected every section of society. Today the marginalised section have bank accounts, they have an identity, they hold smart mobile phones for financial transactions, and in my view this is not merely technological progress but social empowerment

In far-flung regions of the country, new schools, new universities and a new education policy together have begun to build an India in which the hands of the youth hold the reins of the future. The facilities now available particularly for girls are unprecedented in our history, and the purpose of education through innovation and research is no longer merely to pass exams but to create an aware and responsible citizen," he further said.

**Shah claims...**

He said, "I speak Bengali." Shah said. "Certainly, he will not be bhaipo. He will be a BJP worker."

In one of his sharpest attacks on the TMC during the ongoing campaign, Shah invoked the Ram temple-Babri Masjid dispute and referred to suspended TMC MLA and AUPP founder Humayun Kabir, who proposed building a Babri-like mosque in the Beldanga area of Murshidabad district.

"Modi ji built the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. For 550 years, these people did not allow the Ram Temple to be built. At the place where the Babri Masjid stood, a Ram Temple has now been built," Shah said as the crowd raised the chant of 'Jai Shri Ram'.

He alleged that Mamata Banerjee, through Humayun Kabir, wanted to build a "Babri Masjid" in Bengal.

"Mamata Didi wants her associate Humayun Kabir to build a Babri Masjid in Bengal. Didi, listen carefully, Bengal is in India. We will never allow a Babri Masjid to be built in Bengal," Shah said.

He also promised that the BJP, if voted to power in Bengal, would implement a Uniform Civil Code in the state.

"We will bring the Uniform Civil Code in Bengal. Some people marry four times. Should that stop or not? No one will be able to marry four times," he said.

The BJP has been aggressively pushing the UCC plank in several poll-bound states, presenting it as a measure for gender justice and equality, while opposition parties have accused it of targeting minorities.

Seeking to make women's safety another key poll issue, Shah cited incidents such as Sandeshkhali, RG Kar Medical College and Hospital, Durgapur Medical College and the alleged rape at a south Kolkata law college to accuse the TMC government of failing to protect women.

"Mamata Didi says that after 7 pm, mothers and sisters should not step out of their homes. But I assure the mothers and sisters of Bengal that after May 5, a BJP government will be formed here under Modi ji's leadership. Then, if a girl goes out on a scooter even at 1 am, no thug will dare raise his eyes at her," he said.

"Whether it is Sandeshkhali, R G Kar, Durgapur Medical College or the south Kolkata law college incident, we will identify every accused involved in atrocities against women and put them behind bars," Shah added.

He also accused Banerjee of opposing bills for the implementation of women's quota in legislatures from 2029. "Modi ji brought a bill to provide 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and assemblies. But Mamata Didi worked to defeat it," Shah claimed.

Attempting to strike an emotional chord with the people of Paschim Medinipur, Shah invoked freedom fighter Khudiram Bose, who hailed from the district.

"Khudiram Bose, the great son of West Medinipur and the youngest martyr of the country, is described as a terrorist in the Bengal government's books. Should such a government continue?" he asked the gathering.

He also attacked the TMC government over alleged corruption and illegal sand mining in the region.

"Sand is being stolen from the rivers of Salboni. From a BJP government, and we will not allow even a single pebble to be stolen," Shah told the people at the rally.

**Memorial...**

accused, including the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), its proxy The Resistance Front (TRF), and a handler operating from across the border.

In an unprecedented response, people across Kashmir had taken to the streets in protest, marking one of the first such large scale public demonstrations against terrorist attack in over three decades.

In a significant political gesture, the Jammu and Kashmir government on April 28, 2025 convened a special session of the Legislative Assembly which unanimously passed a resolution to express shock and anguish over the Pahalgam attack and resolved to fight resolutely to defeat the nefarious designs to disturb communal harmony and hinder progress in the Union Territory.

A memorial built of black marble, bearing the names of the 26 victims, was constructed along the banks of the Lidder river, standing a solemn reminder of the terror attack that took place in the meadows of Baisaral valley. A year on, the site draws a large number of tourists, many of whom refuse to let fear define their travel choices. Some visitors also spoke highly of the security arrangements and the hospitality of the locals.

"What had to happen has already happened. But if we choose not to visit this place now, that would be wrong. In India, almost every household nurtures a dream...I hail

from Assam-we too share that dream of visiting Kashmir," Navojit Sarkar, a tourist, told PTI

Sarkar along with a sizeable number of tourists from different parts of the country is currently camping in the hill resort of Pahalgam, reflecting a steady return of visitors to the popular destination.

Despite the shadow of last year's attack, tourists have continued to arrive, with many expressing confidence in the prevailing security arrangements and the region's hospitality.

"We did not face any issues at all-there was never a moment of trouble or discomfort during our stay. The people of Kashmir have been exceptionally warm and helpful, they interacted with us with kindness and ensured we felt welcome at every step.

"From small gestures of guidance to genuine hospitality, the experience has been reassuring and memorable," Ankur Maheshwari, a tourist from Punjab, said.

Dropan Rawat, a middle-aged visitor from Lucknow, said she and her companions had a positive experience, noting that they were not afraid and felt confident travelling as Indians.

She remarked that they were deeply impressed by the overall atmosphere and would gladly visit the place repeatedly.

"We would like to tell other travellers to definitely visit this place and experience it for themselves-it is truly wonderful and reassuring. We felt very comfortable throughout our stay, with strong security arrangements and a very pleasant environment, which made our experience thoroughly enjoyable in every respect," Rawat said.

The administration has deployed additional police and paramilitary personnel in and around Pahalgam, with intensified checking at multiple points and heightened surveillance to ensure a peaceful commemoration.

Senior officials said all necessary arrangements have been put in place for the event, which is expected to be attended by several politicians, civil society members, families of the victims, and local representatives.

Post-terror attack, many tourism stakeholders said the industry has shown signs of revival in recent months, aided by sustained outreach and promotional efforts spearheaded by Chief Minister Abdullah, who also holds the tourism portfolio.

**Jitendra...**

Commissioner Minga Sherpa, Singh visited the intensive care units and orthopaedic wards, where he reviewed the treatment being provided to the injured patients. He met all the patients and assured them of all possible assistance.

At least 21 people were killed and 51 injured on Monday when overcrowded passenger bus plunged nearly 100 metres down a hillside in Rannagar area of Udhampur, crushing an auto-rickshaw before landing upside down on the road below.

The minister announced that a state-of-the-art critical care ambulance will be provided to Udhampur under the MPLAD fund. He said the ambulance will also be available for use by GMC, and will facilitate life-saving treatment during the transportation of patients.

Singh, the Minister of State in the Prime Minister's office, lauded the swift response of all agencies involved.

He said the Army acted as the first responders and promptly reached the site to rescue the injured.

The minister said he personally began monitoring the situation within 20 minutes of the incident and remained in constant touch with the deputy commissioner to ensure timely coordination of relief efforts.

Describing the incident as "unforeseeable", he said the injured were evacuated and shifted to nearby hospitals without delay, and a helicopter was pressed into service within half an hour.

He commended the prompt and coordinated efforts of the Army, medical fraternity, and district administration in managing the situation effectively.

Providing an update on the condition of the injured, Singh said that two patients have been referred to GMC, Jammu, while the condition of most patients undergoing treatment at GMC Udhampur is stable, except for a few who are under close observation.

The Command Hospital of the Army will conduct MRI scans of at least two patients with neurological issues, and further specialized intervention will be arranged if required, he said.

The minister said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed deep sorrow over the incident and announced ex-gratia relief for the victims.

He noted the prime minister's special affinity with the Udhampur region.

**CM Omar...**

been provided to Child Care Institutions at Palaash/Parisha/AAA Udhampur at a cost of ₹3.11 lakh to improve living conditions and support the needs of children. Further, various Braille items have been provided to the Blind School, Roop Nagar, Jammu at a cost of ₹2.90 lakh. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said,

"Strengthening emergency healthcare access, especially in underserved areas, remains a top priority. These ambulances and medical equipment will significantly improve timely medical response and save precious lives."

Minister for Health & Medical Education Sakina Ito, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Managing Director JKSPDC Rahul Yadav, Director Health Services Jammu, and other senior officers were present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister was also briefed about civil construction works undertaken by JKSPDC during the financial year 2025-26 across multiple districts, amounting to ₹23.28 lakh.

The total cost of all CSR initiatives, including procurement and construction works, stands at ₹523 lakh for the last financial year.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to inclusive

development, the Chief Minister appreciated the role of JKSPDC in extending support to vital sectors through its CSR initiatives.

**Security...**

security personnel and members of the Village Defence Groups.

He directed that all area domination exercises be documented daily and stressed the importance of regular engagement and training, including firing practice for Village Defence Groups.

The SSP also visited the Dhansal police post and Arnas police station.

At the Arnas police station, he issued directions to improve the maintenance of police records and ensure cleanliness of the premises. Investigating Officers were instructed to focus on expediting inquests, tracing missing persons, and apprehending absconders to reduce pendency, the spokesman said.

The SSP said the security of vital installations, including religious sites, remains the top priority for the district.

**Iran...**

said negotiations were "not acceptable" under current conditions, according to comments carried by Mehr News Agency, accusing Washington of making excessive demands. Simultaneously, preparations for another round of negotiations appear to be moving ahead on the US side, with Vice President JD Vance being expected to travel to Islamabad for what officials describe as high-stakes talks, with senior envoys also set to join.

Behind the scenes, mediation from Pakistan, Egypt and Turkey has been working to bring both sides back to the table, while Iranian decision-making has been delayed, as it grapples with internal pressure, as a strong headline section, particularly from the IRGC has pushed back against holding talks with the US, arguing for a tougher stance to open negotiations, including the lifting of the US blockade as a requirement, further complicating efforts, and putting any possibility of renewed talks in a limbo.

**J&K ACB...**

complaint lodged by a contractor alleging that the accused demanded a bribe @ 2% for processing the bill amounting to Rs 28.27 lakh, pertaining to the construction of a classroom lecture block at Government Degree College Sogpo. Discreet verification substantiated the allegations, leading to registration of a case under Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988, and laying of a trap.

"On 16.10.2024, the accused Mubarak Ahmad Ganai, AEE was caught red-handed while demanding and accepting a bribe of Rs 25,000 from the complainant. The tainted amount was recovered from his possession in the presence of independent witnesses. Investigation conducted revealed that the accused, by virtue of his official position, had direct authority over processing of the pending bill and had deliberately withheld the same to extract illegal gratification from contractor/complainant," said the spokesman.

He said, upon completion of investigation, the case was placed before the competent authority, which, after due application of mind, accorded sanction for prosecution against accused AEE, after which Final report /challan was presented before competent court by the agency.

"The matter now stands placed before the Hon'ble Court for judicial determination. The next date has been fixed on 6th June 2026. The Anti-Corruption Bureau remains steadfast in its mandate to enforce accountability and ensure that abuse of public office is met with firm legal action.

multiple languages, faiths, traditions and cultures. "Nations that do not have a history of more than 4,000 or 5,000 years can have one religion and one language, but India is completely different, possessing a long history, tradition and culture," he said.

He urged people to remain united and defeat attempts to sow discord. "There should be no reason for fear, whatever suspicion may arise," he said. The RSS chief also said that in the present world order, power often overshadows what is right.

"If you have power, your might will be proven, and no one will pay heed if you are on the right path. Therefore, acquire knowledge and power," he said.

Bhagwat said temples were not merely places of worship but had historically served as centres of social life and enlightenment.

**L-G Vinai...**

4.88 km continues as a double-lane stretch, resulting in traffic congestion. He requested early approval for the upgradation of the remaining stretch to ensure smooth and efficient traffic flow.

The Lieutenant Governor also sought early sanction for the construction of the Leh Bypass. He informed that the DPR for the southern alignment of 48.10 km, estimated at Rs 1011 crore, has already been submitted, while the DPR for the northern alignment is under preparation. He noted that the project is expected to significantly ease congestion within Leh town and improve urban mobility.

Shri Nitin Galkari, underscoring the strategic importance of Ladakh, instantly directed the concerned officials to prioritise all infrastructure projects in the region without delay and in a time-bound manner. He assured that sanctions for the pending CRIF projects would be accorded by the month of May, and instructed the concerned officials that all necessary approvals be expedited on priority.

Highlighting the broader impact of these initiatives, the Lieutenant Governor stated that the timely execution of these projects would significantly transform connectivity and infrastructure in Ladakh. He emphasised that the development of robust road infrastructure is essential for the region's growth, given its strategic location and challenging terrain, and added that these projects would not only ensure seamless connectivity but also boost tourism,

facilitate economic activities, and generate employment opportunities for the local population.

**When...**

said, "When boundaries of humanity are crossed, the response is decisive. Justice is Served. India Stands United. #SindoorAnniversary #JusticeEndures #NationFirst".

The post, heavily symbolic, also carried a digital poster bearing a silhouetted image of the map of India with the caption "SOME BOUNDARIES SHOULD NEVER BE CROSSED".

The 'O' in the word 'CROSSED' was depicted by a bowl carrying a dash of 'sindoor' (vermillion), and a tagline at the bottom printed in crimson hue, read, "INDIA DOES NOT FORGET" with a red line drawn at the bottom.

After launching the decisive military operation, the Indian Army in a post on X at 1:51 am on May 7 had said, "#PahalgamTerrorAttack Justice is Served. Jai Hind!" along with a digital poster that carried the name 'OPERATION SINDOOR'. One of the Os in 'SINDOOR' was portrayed as a bowl carrying a dash of 'sindoor'.

Pakistan later also launched offensives against India, and all subsequent counter-offensives by India were also carried out under Operation Sindoor. The military conflict between the two nuclear-armed neighbours, lasting nearly 88 hours, halted after they reached an understanding on the evening of May 10.

Top Indian military leaders in the past year have asserted multiple times that Operation Sindoor "still continues", and the country's military preparedness must remain at a "very high" level, round-the-clock and throughout the year. (Agencies)

**BJP leader...**

last assembly elections from the Banihal constituency, related after authorities assured him that his concerns have been conveyed to the top officials.

Before unlocking the gate, Bhat claimed that for the past many months, several posts of doctors have been lying vacant in the hospital located on the Jammu-Srinagar national highway. He claimed that the authorities have repeatedly ignored his appeals to address the shortage.

The BJP leader further claimed that four doctors were on study leave, another suspended from duty, and one was recently deputed to the Ramban District Hospital without finding a replacement for him.

"If seeking justice were considered a crime, I am ready for it. I will continue my struggle even if the police file an FIR against me," Bhat said.

The hospital authorities have maintained that patient care was not significantly affected. They said that a block medical officer and 12 doctors are currently posted at the hospital and attending to patients.

"More than 500 patients were examined in the Outpatient Department (OPD) even today," said an official who did not wish to be named.

The official further said that the health department is aware of the situation and is taking necessary steps to ensure the availability of doctors.

**Police...**

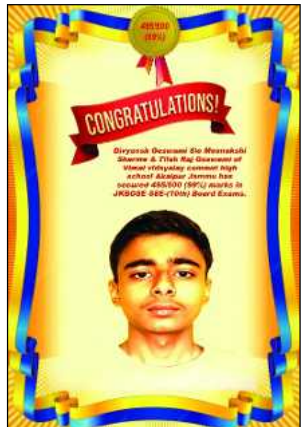
through proceeds of the illicit drug trade. In the first case, police attached movable and immovable property worth Rs 45 lakh belonging to Mohammad Rustum Shah, a resident of Hamdania Colony in Baramulla district, they said.

During the investigation, it was found that the accused had acquired a residential house, registered in the name of his wife, along with a car, using proceeds from narcotics trafficking, they said. The property has been attached for further legal proceedings.

In a separate case, the police attached a movable property worth Rs 10 lakh belonging to Shahbaz Gulzar Khan, a resident of Anantnag district's Devpora, they said. The attached property includes a Baleno Sigma taxi car, which investigators found to have been purchased using money earned through drug peddling, they said.

The attachment was made under the relevant sections of the NDPS Act in connection with FIRs registered at police stations of Rehambal and Chenani, they said.

Officials said that with these latest attachments, Udhampur Police have so far attached properties worth Rs 80 lakh under the anti-drug campaign.



## NC pays glowing tributes to Bodhraj Bali on his 24th death anniversary

JAMMU APRIL 21ST: Jammu and Kashmir National Conference on Tuesday paid glowing tributes to former minister and senior party leader Mr Bodhraj Bali on his 24th death anniversary, describing him as a leader par excellence who devoted all his life in service of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Leading the party cadre in paying floral tributes to Mr Bali, at a function held at Sher-e-Kashmir Bhavan Jammu here this morning. Provincial President Jammu Mr Rattan Lal Gupta highlighted the immense contribution of the veteran leader in the development and progress of Jammu and Kashmir.

Paying tributes to Mr Bali, Provincial President Jammu Mr Rattan Lal Gupta said that the departed leader worked with a sense of commitment.

Mr Gupta said that Mr Bali



worked tirelessly for the upliftment of poor and down-trodden in different capacities. His contribution in strengthening National Conference at the gross root level in the Jammu Province remains a high point of his political career, he said, adding that the veteran leader made a distinct mark by serving the people, which will serve as a source of inspiration for the coming generations. Mr Gupta further said that Mr Bali worked for strengthening the fabric of secularism and brotherhood in the state of J&K.

He said the best tribute would be to strengthen the party at gross root level and make it a vibrant force to satiate the urges and aspirations of the people. He said that the late leader will be remembered for his high political caliber and having passion for serving the people, especially poor and down-trodden. While paying tributes to late Mr Bali Provincial Secretary Jammu Sheikh Bashir Ahmed described the late leader as a person of immense qualities who remained at the forefront in solving problems of the

people. He said that the veteran leader worked tirelessly in various capacities as a party functionary and senior cabinet minister for people belonging to all walks of life. His services shall be remembered for the years to come. Among others who were present including: Abhis Gani Malik former minister and Zonal President Udhampur Reasi Zone, Bushan Lal Bhat former MLC, Pardeep Bali Provincial Secretary Jammu, S. Tejinder Pal Singh Aman Provincial President 'NCC', Vijay

Lochan Chairman SC Cell, Abdul Gani Teli Chairman OBC Cell, Rajni Devi Working President Women Wing, Laxami Datta Senior leader, Rakesh Singh Raka Vice President Central Zone, Dr. Shamshad Shan former DDC Chairperson, Chandher Mohan Sharma District President Jammu Urban, Subash Chander Bhagat District President Jammu Rural "A", Rita Gupta, Disha Malik Vice Presidents Central Zone, Nar Singh President Labour Wing, Ch. Rehmat Ali former BDC Chairman, Door Mehta S. Gurnam Singh District Secretary Jammu Urban, Wasis Gill, Bahadur Lal Block President Bahu, Dharminder Sharma Block President Jammu West, Sahil Chib, Rahul Attri, Prabhat Kapai, Prabhath Slathia, Surinder Singh Janwal, Karan Singh and other party functionaries

## Former DDCs, Corporators barred from Secretariat; Govt silencing grassroots voice: Tony

Tony calls curbs 'Anti-People', terms Move an Attack on Democracy

Jammu, Apr 21: Former DDC Suchetgarh Taranjit Singh Tony launched a sharp and hard-hitting attack on the administration over the reported restriction on entry of former DDCs and ex-corporators into the Jammu Civil Secretariat, calling it a "direct assault on democratic representation." In a strongly worded statement, Tony said the move has effectively shut the doors of governance on grassroots representatives who were elected by the people. "If former DDCs and corporators are stopped at the gates, it clearly shows that this government does not want to hear the voice of the common people," he said. He questioned how public grievances would reach the authorities if those who represent people at the grassroots are denied access. "These representatives are the first point of contact for the public. If they cannot approach the Secretariat, then how will issues related to development, welfare, and basic services ever reach the corridors of power?" Tony asked. Targeting the disparity in access, he said, "Former MLAs are being given smooth passage into the Secretariat, but former DDCs and corporators are being stopped. Are they not elected representatives? Were they not chosen by the people? This select-



ive approach exposes the double standards of the administration." Tony termed the restrictions as "unjustified, discriminatory, and anti-people," adding that it reflects a failure of governance. "Instead of strengthening democratic institutions, the government is weakening them by sidelining grassroots voices. This is nothing but an attempt to centralise power and avoid accountability," he alleged.

## Dr. Pardeep reviews organizational setup, civic issues at Kabir Nagar Shakti Kendra Meeting

BJP holds meeting of Kabir Nagar Shakti Kendra at Talab Tillo

Jammu, 21 April 2026: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) held an organizational meeting of Kabir Nagar Shakti Kendra at Ward No. 40, Talab Tillo, under the Jammu West Assembly Constituency. Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, Media Incharge, J&K BJP chiefly addressed the meeting, who was accompanied by former Councillor of Ward 40 Neelam Nagotra. BJP Talab Tillo Mandal Vice-President Rahul Nagotra, Mandal General Secretary Arun Dubey, Mandal Media Secretary Vikas Kumar, Booth President Mohan Lal Gupta, Ramesh Sharma, Rupali Mehra, Naresh



Gupta, Rohit Kumar, and others were present. The meeting witnessed two-way interaction with the Booth Presidents, BLO-2s, and members of Booth Committees representing Booth Numbers 46, 47, 48, 49, and 50. Various organizational and public issues were discussed in detail including the

improper sanitization, stray dog menace, and inadequate street lighting. Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, addressing the meeting, emphasized the crucial role of booth-level strengthening in ensuring the party's success at every level. He stated that a well-organized and active booth structure is the backbone.

## Extension Lecture on 'Fundamentals of Geographical Field Techniques' Organised at Central University of Jammu

Jammu, Apr 21: The Department of Educational Studies, Central University of Jammu, today organised an extension lecture titled "Fundamentals of Geographical Field Techniques" under the Shiksha Shastharth Forum. The Shiksha Shastharth initiative, launched by the School of Education, serves as a distinguished platform for intellectual discourse and academic enrichment. The programme was conducted under the guidance of the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Sanjeev Jain. The Head of the Department, Prof. Asit Mantry, formally welcomed the resource person, Dr. Rajinder Singh, by presenting a memento. The course-in-charge, Ms. Shivali Khajuria, introduced



the guest speaker and highlighted the significance of the lecture. Dr. Rajinder Singh, Senior Scientist from the Department of Geography, University of Jammu, delivered an insightful and comprehensive presentation on geo-

graphical field techniques. His lecture covered key areas such as Geographical Information Systems (GIS), remote sensing, spatial data analysis, emerging trends in geospatial technology, and the importance of fieldwork in geo-

graphical studies. He also discussed relevant case studies and traced the evolution of fieldwork techniques in geography.

The session witnessed active participation from students, who engaged in an interactive discussion with the speaker. Dr. Singh addressed their queries in detail and emphasized the importance of practical field techniques in enhancing research and academic understanding. His lecture significantly contributed to deepening students' knowledge of geographical field survey methods.

The event concluded with a formal vote of thanks delivered by Ms. Shivali Khajuria, expressing gratitude to the resource person and all those who contributed to the successful organisation of the lecture.

## KALA – ANANT Celebrates Musical Excellence at Central University of Jammu

Jammu, Apr 21: The Music Club of Central University of Jammu organised KALA ANANT today in the University Brig, Rajinder Singh Auditorium. The programme was a huge success, marked by enthusiastic participation of the students of university. The singing performances were melodious, expressive, and deeply engaging. Equally impressive were the instrumental renditions, which showcased remarkable skill, coordination, and creativity across a diverse range of musical styles. A total of 40 participants across the various departments showcased their performances in Kala Anant. There were three categories in which the prizes and certificates were given. In vocal solo category, Mr. Baibhab from Dept. of ECE stood first followed by Mr. Harshit Gupta from Dept. of ECA and Mr. Gourav



Dogra from Dept. of Education. In group song category, Mr. Ayush and group from dept of ECA stood first followed by Ms. Nidhi Sharma and Ms. Mehak Sharma of Dept. of Zoology and Ms. Manya Singh and Ms. Isha from Dept. of Education. In Instrumental category Mr. Nikhil from dept of Education

stood first followed by Mohd. Zuhab from dept of B.Tech, CSE and Ms. Riddhi from the Department of Zoology. The event witnessed wide participation from students, highlighting the inclusive and vibrant musical culture of the university. The seamless blend of vocal and instrumental talent created an unforget-

table experience for the audience, making the programme a true celebration of artistic excellence. The programme was organised by the team of music club Dr. Shelly Sehgal (Convener) and Co-Convenors Dr. Shvetambri Jasrotia, Dr. Shashikant Mishra and Dr. Anuj. The event was well coordinated by the President of Music club, Mr. Manish Kumar Mishra. Dean Student Welfare, Prof. Ritu Bakshi congratulated the conveners of the Music club on this occasion and encouraged the students to participate in such events. The success of the programme stood as another testament to the visionary leadership of the Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Sanjeev Jain, whose constant encouragement helps to maintain the cultural environment in the University.

## Shiv Public School Honours Class 10 Toppers in Inspiring Ceremony

JAMMU, Apr 21: In a heartfelt celebration of academic excellence, Shiv Public Higher Secondary School, located on Ghou Manhasan Road in Sari Rakwalan, Jammu, felicitated its outstanding Class 10 students during a dignified function held on campus today. The ceremony spotlighted five high-achieving scholars whose remarkable performances have elevated the school's reputation in the region's educational landscape. These meritorious students who were honoured included Arushi Rajput, who clinched an extraordnary 99% marks, setting a benchmark for brilliance; Radhima Saini, securing an impressive 98.8% marks with unwavering dedica-



tion; Paras Meena, attaining 98.4% marks through sheer perseverance; Janavi Sharma, earning 97.8% marks in a display of consistent excellence and Navvii Sharma, matching Janavi's stellar 97.8% score with remarkable poise. School Principal, alongside the esteemed management committee, commended the young achievers for their tireless hard work and commit-

ment. "These students have not only upheld but hoisted our institution's flag higher in the competitive world of education," the Principal remarked, urging peers to draw inspiration from their success. The event underscored Shiv Public School's ongoing dedication to nurturing talent and fostering a culture of meritocracy, promising a bright future for Jammu's young minds.

## Sat Sharma, Ashok Koul review BJP's organizational programmes

Jammu, 21 April 2026: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Jammu & Kashmir, held an organizational meeting at the party headquarters, Jammu, which was focused on reviewing ongoing party programs and discussing the upcoming party programmes aimed at strengthening the party at the grassroots level. Sat Sharma CA, President, BJP J&K and Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), along with Ashok Koul, General Secretary (Organizational) addressed the meeting. J&K BJP Vice President Rekha Mahajan, General Secretary Baldev Singh Billawaria, Secretary Reema Padna, and other senior leaders of party par-



ticipated in the meeting. Sat Sharma, while addressing the meeting, emphasized the importance of continuous engagement with the public at the grassroots level. He reviewed the progress of ongoing programs and stressed that every worker must act as a bridge between the party and society. He also called for active participation in upcoming programs

including the "Mann Ki Baat" outreach, ensuring that its message reaches every household. Sat Sharma strongly criticized Congress and INDI alliance for their "double standards" on women empowerment, stating that these parties historically failed to ensure meaningful representation for women and obstructed the Women Reservation Bill.

## Omar targeting BJP to hide governance failures: Bali Bhagat

"Stop hiding failures behind BJP criticism": Bali Bhagat slams Omar

Jammu, Apr 21: Senior BJP leader and former Health Minister Bali Bhagat on Tuesday launched a detailed and sharp critique of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, accusing him of attempting to deflect attention from his government's "complete failure" by repeatedly targeting the BJP. In a strongly worded statement, Bali Bhagat said that instead of indulging in political rhetoric and allegations, Omar Abdullah should present a report card of his government's performance. "The people of Jammu and Kashmir gave him a mandate with expectations of governance, development, and

relief. However, what they are witnessing is blame-shifting and excuses," he said. Reacting to Abdullah's remarks on the restoration of statehood, Bhagat said the issue is being unnecessarily politicised. "The Government of India has clearly stated that statehood will be restored at an appropriate time. Repeating the same question in every rally is nothing but an attempt to mislead people and create a false narrative," he said. He further alleged that the National Conference-led government has failed to make any visible impact on key sectors. "Where are the promised jobs? Where is the roadmap to tackle ris-



ing unemployment? What steps have been taken to strengthen healthcare, improve education, or upgrade infrastructure?" Bhagat questioned. Referring to Abdullah's criticism of BJP over women's reservation, Bhagat said the party has demonstrated its commitment through historic legislation. "It is ironic that

those who ruled for decades and failed to empower women are now questioning the intent of the BJP, which has taken concrete steps toward ensuring representation," he added. Taking strong exception to Abdullah's allegations about targeting of political families, Bhagat dismissed them as "baseless and politically motivated." "These are serious allegations being made without evidence. Such statements are aimed at gaining sympathy and diverting attention from administrative inefficiency," he said. Bhagat also pointed to what he described as a "lack of governance clari-

ty" under the current administration. "Announcements are being made, but there is little follow-up on implementation. People are still struggling with basic issues — electricity, water supply, road connectivity, and employment opportunities," he said. On Abdullah's claims regarding welfare measures such as free gas cylinders and relief initiatives, Bhagat said the public deserves transparency. "If such schemes exist, the government should clearly state timelines, eligibility, and delivery mechanisms. Mere announcements do not translate into governance," he remarked.



## SMVDNSH Challenges Medical Textbooks, Saves Life in Rare High-Risk Midnight Brain Surgery

Katra, April 21: In a remarkable medical achievement, doctors at Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspecialty Hospital, Katra successfully performed a rare and extremely high-risk midnight brain surgery on a 75-year-old patient, saving a life that was rapidly deteriorating. The patient was admitted with pulmonary thromboembolism, a life-threatening condition requiring clot-dissolving medicines (thrombolytics). During treatment, the patient suddenly developed a massive brain hemorrhage, creating a critical medical paradox — the same medicines needed to treat the lungs had significantly increased the risk of bleeding during brain surgery.

Dr. Khushwant Singh, Consultant Neurosurgery, explained, "that the patient developed a large brain bleed while on strong clot-dissolving medication. In such situations, surgery is usually avoided due to the risk of uncontrollable bleeding. However, the



patient's condition was deteriorating rapidly, leaving us with no option but to proceed with emergency surgery."

The surgery began around midnight and continued for nearly seven hours. Despite the high risk, the team successfully removed the clot, relieved pressure on the brain and controlled the bleeding.

Dr. Summit Dev, Consultant Neurocritical Care, said, "that

operating during active thrombolysis carries a very high risk, but timely intervention was the only viable option. The success reflects strong teamwork and clinical coordination."

Following surgery, the patient received intensive care in the Neurocritical Care Unit and showed steady recovery, leading to discharge on the twentieth day.

Dr. Yashpal Sharma,

Executive Director, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence, said the case reflects the vision of the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board in strengthening advanced healthcare in the region.

"The Shrine Board has consistently focused on building robust healthcare infrastructure and bringing advanced medical care closer to people, ensuring timely and life-saving treatment within the region."

The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board continues to play a key role in developing state-of-the-art healthcare facilities, enabling access to super-specialty care and improving patient outcomes across Jammu & Kashmir.

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Narayana Superspecialty Hospital, Katra remains a leading tertiary care centre with advanced infrastructure and round-the-clock emergency services, capable of handling complex and high-risk cases.

## GDCW Kathua Organizes Awareness Lecture on Drug Abuse and NDPS Act

Kathua, Apr 21: Government Degree College for Women (GDCW), Kathua organized an insightful and awareness-oriented lecture on the topic "Drug Abuse: Its Psychological Impacts and Recent Changes in the NDPS Act, 1985."

The programme was conducted under the aegis of the Drugs De-addiction Cell and Psychological Counseling Cell with the aim of sensitizing students about the growing menace of substance abuse and its psychological, social, and legal consequences.

The session featured Inspector Satish Kumar from the SPS Police Training School, Kathua as the resource person. In his detailed address, he explained the adverse effects of drug addiction on mental health, behavior, decision-making, and overall well-being. He emphasized that drug abuse is not just an individual issue but a serious societal concern affecting families and communities.

Inspector Kumar also elaborated on the provisions of the NDPS Act, 1985, highlighting recent amendments and stricter enforcement measures. He cautioned students about the severe legal consequences associated with possession, consumption, and trafficking of narcotics, and how such actions can negatively impact their future and careers. Principal of the



college, Prof. Dr. Jaipal Singh, appreciated the initiative and encouraged students to remain vigilant, make informed decisions, and actively contribute towards building a drug-free society.

Senior Professor Dr. Ashwani Khajuria shared his expert insights on the psychological and hormonal factors that make adolescents more vulnerable to substance abuse. He stressed the importance of emotional awareness and maintaining a balanced lifestyle.

Senior Professor Dr. Ashwani Khajuria shared his expert insights on the psychological and hormonal factors that make adolescents more vulnerable to substance abuse. He stressed the importance of emotional awareness and maintaining a balanced lifestyle.

## Samba Police arrests drug peddler with 9.10 gm heroin like substance

Samba: April 21, 2026: Intensifying its drive against drug smugglers/peddlers in the ongoing Nasha Mukh Abhiyan, Samba Police has arrested a drug peddler in the jurisdiction of Police Station Vijaypur and recovered approximately 9.10 grams heroin-like substance (Chitta) from his possession.

A Police team of Police Station Vijaypur during patrolling near SBI Bank Vijaypur, intercepted a motorcycle bearing registration No. JK02CP-4926 which was coming from Samba side. During checking, approximately 9.10 grams of heroin-like sub-



stance (Chitta) was recovered from the possession of the motorcyclist.

The drug peddler identified as Shabir Ahmed S/o Gulam Qadir R/o Rakh Barotian tehsil Vijaypur district Samba has been

arrested. The contraband item alongwith motorcycle has also been seized.

A case FIR No 61/2026 U/S 8/21/22 NDPS Act has been registered at Police Station Vijaypur and investigation started.

## Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL) Udhampur Leads JEE Main 2026 Performance: 7 Students Excel; Abhinav Batta Emerges State Topper with AIR 1008

Strong performance highlights disciplined preparation and academic consistency

Udhampur, 21 April 2026: Students of Aakash Educational Services Limited (AESL), Udhampur, have delivered a strong performance in JEE Main 2026, reflecting consistent academic outcomes and focused preparation.

Leading the cohort is Abhinav Batta, who secured an impressive 99.94 percentile with AIR 1008 and emerged as the Jammu & Kashmir State Topper, showcasing exceptional academic excellence. In JEE Main 2026 (Session 2), students from Aakash Institute, Udhampur, delivered commendable results across batches. Other



notable performers include Dhruv Khajuria, Rohan Kumar Singh, Niharika Sharma, Manish Thakur, Vasuda (Gupta), and Rishika Jain, reflecting a broad base of performance from the centre.

According to the National Testing Agency (NTA)

Udhampur, Aakash Educational Services Limited said: "The success of the students from Udhampur reflects their commitment to academics and the strength of the Aakash learning ecosystem. Their dedication, discipline, and consistent efforts have been instrumental in achieving these results. We congratulate all our students and wish them continued success in their future endeavours."

Students credited their success to a combination of self-discipline, consistent practice, rigorous training, timely mentoring, and regular assessments, which helped them identify gaps

early and steadily improve their performance. Supported by a structured curriculum, guidance from qualified instructors, and regular simulated tests, they were able to maintain focus, strengthen their fundamentals, and enhance their overall exam readiness.

JEE Main, conducted by the National Testing Agency, offers students two opportunities each year, enabling them to improve their scores. It serves as the gateway for admissions into NITs, IITs and other institutes supported by the Government, as well as qualifying candidates for JEE Advanced.

## Crop fires ravage fields in Akhnoor; Bharat Priye demands urgent govt intervention

Calls for compensation, deployment of fire tenders and preventive measures to safeguard farmers' livelihoods

JAMMU, APR 21: Highlighting the growing menace of crop fires during the harvest season, JKPCSS Kissan Congress Chairman Bharat Priye on Tuesday termed the issue a "burning concern" requiring immediate government attention. Visiting Chaks Chak in the Akhnoor subdivision, where fires recently destroyed standing wheat crops spread over nearly 80 kanals, he expressed serious concern over the recurring incidents that are severely impacting farmers' livelihoods.

Interacting with affected farmers, Bharat Priye said that such incidents, particularly during April, have become alarmingly frequent due to dry weather conditions and sparks originating from overhead



power lines. He pointed out that these fires often occur at a critical time, just before harvest, resulting in devastating losses for farmers who depend entirely on their crops for sustenance. He strongly demanded the immediate deployment of additional fire tenders near agricultural fields, especially in vulnerable areas like

Pargawal, where currently only a single fire tender is responsible for covering more than two dozen villages. Calling the arrangement grossly inadequate, he stressed that timely response is crucial to prevent small sparks from turning into large-scale disasters. Raising concern over similar incidents reported from border areas such as

R.S. Pura and districts like Kathua and Samba, Bharat Priye said that farmers across the region are facing repeated destruction of crops due to short circuits, negligence, and stray sparks. He warned that if timely preventive measures are not taken, such incidents could further deepen the agrarian distress in the region.

He also urged the government to provide immediate and adequate compensation to the affected farmers, stating that delays in relief only add to their hardships. He emphasized that a transparent and swift mechanism must be put in place to assess losses and disburse financial assistance without bureaucratic hurdles. Taking note of the role of power infrastructure in trig-

gering such fires, Bharat Priye demanded that the Power Development Department (PDD) take concrete steps, including regular inspection and maintenance of transmission lines, replacement of worn-out wires, and ensuring proper insulation to prevent sparking during peak harvest periods. He further suggested a comprehensive action plan, including the establishment of temporary fire stations in rural belts during the harvesting season, awareness campaigns for farmers on fire prevention, and the creation of rapid response teams equipped to handle emergencies in agricultural zones. Prominent among those present on the occasion included Sunam Deep Singh.

## GDC Marheen Hosts Voter Literacy Campaign, Registers Students for Voter ID

MARHEEN, APR 21:

The Voter Literacy Club and NSS Unit of Government Degree College (GDC) Marheen organized an awareness-driven Voter Literacy Campaign on April 21, 2026, aimed at educating students about the importance of voting and the process of voter registration. A Panchayat Secretary from BDO Block Marheen was invited as the resource person for the programme. During the session, around 25 students were successfully registered, and detailed guidance was provided regarding obtaining Voter ID cards. He informed the students that individuals born on or before March 31, 2008, are eligible to register for



Voter ID cards for the upcoming Panchayat elections. The programme was conducted under the patronage of the esteemed Principal, Prof. (Dr.) Anupama Gupta, who encouraged students to actively participate in the democratic process and exercise their voting rights responsibly. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from a large number of students. It was efficiently managed by Dr.

Arun Dev Singh, NSS Programme Officer; Dr. Balbinder Singh, Convener, Voter Literacy Club; along with Dr. Shalru Rani and Dr. Priti Khajuria. Among the faculty members present on the occasion were Prof. Anoop Sharma, Dr. Munisha Devi, Prof. Charan Singh, Dr. Reemi Verma, and Dr. Priti Khajuria, who appreciated the initiative and motivated students to become aware and responsible citizens.

# Digital empowerment of students necessary to transform education: Sunil Sharma

Sunil Sharma distributes learning tablets to students in GDC Kishtwar

KISHTWAR, APR 21: Sunil Sharma, Leader of Opposition (LOP) in Jammu & Kashmir Assembly and MLA Padder-Nagseni distributed the Learning tablets among the students, with a vision to strengthen digital education and youth empowerment in the remote region of Padder, at Government Degree College (GDC) Padder.

Sunil Sharma, while distributing the tables, interacted with the students and encouraged them to fully utilize digital resources to excel in academics and compete at national and global levels in the presence of faculty members, students, and

local representatives. This event marks an important milestone in enhancing access to modern digital learning tools in one of the most remote regions of Jammu & Kashmir, he stressed. The initiative was made possible through the Social Responsibility (CSR) efforts of KK Modi Group, implemented in collaboration with Tathya Welfare Foundation. The KK Modi Group, led by its Chairperson and Managing Director Dr. Bina Modi, has been at the forefront of impactful educational initiatives across the country. Sunil Sharma emphasized that digital



empowerment is no longer a luxury but a necessity in today's education system. He stated that bridging the digital divide in remote areas like Padder is crucial to ensure that students

are not left behind in the rapidly evolving technological landscape. Sharma further remarked that the youth of Padder possess immense potential, and it is our responsibility to provide them

with the right tools and opportunities. These tablets are not just devices but gateways to knowledge, innovation, and a brighter future. Our government and public representatives are fully com-

mitted to ensuring that even the remotest corners of Jammu & Kashmir are connected with the digital revolution, he added. Sunil Sharma reiterated his commitment to strengthening educational infrastructure, improving connectivity, and bringing more such initiatives to the Padder region. He appreciated the contribution of the KK Modi Group and Tathya Welfare Foundation, stating that such collaborations between public leadership and responsible corporate entities are essential for holistic development. He also praised Dr. Modi, who has consistently emphasized a philosophy of "purpose before profit," with a focus on

empowering communities and promoting sustainable development. On the sidelines of the event, a deputation from Shasho village met Sunil Sharma and submitted several key demands related to infrastructure and connectivity. These included the construction of a Welcome Gate at Padder, installation of a mobile network tower, development of road connectivity from Shasho to Sazzar, and strengthening of power infrastructure in the area. Giving a patient hearing to the deputation, Sunil Sharma assured them that all genuine demands would be taken up with the concerned authorities on priority.



## Mentor to District Kulgam for NMBA reviews implementation of ongoing 100-day campaign

Also presides over mega awareness programme

KULGAM, APRIL 21: Mentor to District Kulgam for Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) and Chairman JKSSRB, Vikas Kundal, today visited Kulgam where he reviewed the implementation of the ongoing 100-day campaign and presided over a mega awareness programme organised under the initiative. During the programme, Vikas Kundal led a pledge ceremony in which participants collectively pledged to work towards building a drug-free society and actively support the fight against substance abuse. He also participated in a plantation drive. A signature campaign was also conducted on the occasion, with participants expressing their



commitment to spreading awareness and encouraging people to stay away from drugs. Speaking on the occasion, Vikas Kundal emphasized that eliminating drug abuse requires collective and sustained efforts from all sections of society, including government agencies, community leaders and youth. He urged the participants to actively contribute towards making Kulgam a drug-free district and to continue spreading awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse. He further emphasized that the ongoing campaign must yield tangible results in the fight against substance abuse. Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, while speaking on the occasion, highlighted that the focus is on demand reduction, supply reduction and rehabilitation as key pillars to tackle drug abuse. He said that a comprehensive activity calendar has

been prepared under the 100-day campaign to intensify awareness programmes across the district. The DC further stated that a significant number of drug seizures and arrests have been made in Kulgam, adding that strict action against drug peddlers will continue. He also noted that the District De-addiction Centre is functioning effectively and that the administration is focusing on continuous counselling, skill training and a comprehensive rehabilitation plan for victims of substance abuse. Showkat Ahmad Rather, Member JKSSRB, and other officers also spoke on the occasion. While presenting a brief on the activities, actions.

## DIPR's Cultural Unit Srinagar organizes Awareness Programme at BHS Theed

SRINAGAR, APRIL 21: As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukta Abhiyan, the Cultural Unit Kashmir of the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) organized an awareness programme at Government Boys High School (BHS) Theed, Harwan.



The event featured a thematic short play and a series of folk songs aimed at highlighting the harmful effects of drug abuse and promoting a healthy, substance-free lifestyle. The performances were well received and widely applauded by the students and staff, who appreciated the engaging and impactful medium of communication. Addressing the gathering, AECO, Cultural Unit

Srinagar, Syed Shakeel Shan delivered a strong message to the youth, urging them to stay away from drugs and contribute positively to society. Principal BHS Theed and other speakers also emphasized the importance of awareness, community participation, and early intervention in combating substance abuse. The Principal expressed gratitude to the Cultural Unit Kashmir, for organizing such meaningful programmes across the Valley, stating that these initiatives play a vital role in educating and guiding young minds.

## DC Budgam chairs meeting on Revision of Panchayat Electoral Roll

Emphasizes accuracy, transparency and timely completion of process

BUDGAM, APRIL 21: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Amir Khan who is also the District Panchayat Election Officer, today chaired a comprehensive review of the revision of the Panchayat Electoral Roll with reference to April 1, 2026 as the qualifying date. During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the modalities, timelines, and procedures for carrying out the revision exercise across all Panchayat constituencies of the district. The DC stressed the importance of maintaining an accurate and updated electoral roll to ensure a free, fair, and transparent



electoral process at the grassroots level. Officers were directed to undertake meticulous verification of the existing electoral rolls to facilitate inclusion of all eligible voters who have attained the age as on the qualifying date, while ensuring deletion of duplicate and ineligible entries. He emphasized strict adherence to guidelines and timelines prescribed for the revision process. The DC also highlighted the need for robust coordination among departments and field-level functionaries to ensure smooth conduct of the exercise. He instructed officials to intensify awareness efforts so that eligible citizens are encouraged to participate actively in the revision process.

## Dosti Discussion under NMBA reaches Gurez; DC Bandipora engages youth at BHSS Dawar

BANDIPORA, APRIL 21: Continuing the district-wide outreach under the 100-Day Mission Mode campaign of the Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, the District Administration Bandipora on Tuesday organised a "Dosti Discussion" programme at Government Boys Higher Secondary School (BHSS) Dawar, Gurez, aimed at raising awareness and fostering dialogue on drug abuse prevention.



The programme, held at the BHSS Dawar auditorium, commenced with the National Anthem and was attended by PO ICDS, ACP, SDM Gurez, Principal GDC Gurez, Executive Engineers, Tehsildar Gurez, BDO

Gurez, ZEOs, Principals of various schools, BMO, KVK Incharge, SHO, TSO, besides senior citizens, AWWs, ASHA workers and a large number of students. Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner, Indu Kanwal Chib observed that parents often ignore or dismiss concerns about their children's behaviour, which delays timely intervention. She reiterated that the district administration is actively conducting awareness campaigns in collaboration with all stakeholders, including religious leaders. Emphasising the importance of choosing the right peer group, she advised

students to remain vigilant against any attempts to lure them into substance abuse and encouraged open communication within families and communities. On the occasion, the Prime Minister's message on drug abuse was presented, noting that over 11 crore people have joined the movement against substance abuse, and emphasising the need to protect future generations while ensuring rehabilitation of addicts. A video clip on drug awareness was also screened. SDM Gurez delivered a detailed introduction under the theme of Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan, stating that drug abuse silently enters lives and destroys individuals and families. He identified key causes including negative peer influence, mental stress, unemployment, and domestic issues, and stressed collective responsibility in addressing the problem. The programme featured a cultural performance by students of BHSS Dawar, which was widely appreciated. Speakers underscored the importance of engaging youth in cultural and sports activities to channel their energy in a positive direction.

## DLMC reviews Nutrition Procurement, calls for strengthened monitoring of AWCs in Ganderbal

GANDERBAL, APRIL 21: In order to review the procurement of nutrition items for Anganwadi Centres (AWCs) and assess the overall implementation of services under the Poshan initiative in the district, a meeting of the District Level Monitoring Committee (DLMC) was today convened under the chairmanship of the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Ganderbal, Syed Faheem Bhaq. The meeting held detailed deliberations on improving monitoring mechanisms, ensuring quality control, and enhancing inter-departmental coordination for effective service delivery at the grassroots level. During the meeting, the chair directed all concerned departments to strengthen monitoring of AWCs across the district to ensure better outcomes. The Food Safety Officer was instructed to increase the collection and analysis of supplementary nutrition samples on a quarterly basis, particularly at the time of



procurement, to maintain quality standards. Jal Shakti Department was asked to undertake 300 drinking water quality tests within the next 15 days to ensure safe water supply at Anganwadi Centres.

The Health Department was directed to provide block-wise data on anaemic women and girls to enable focused interventions, while the Education Department was advised to work in close coordination with ICDS, especially in ensuring smooth transition and admission of children from AWCs to schools. The committee also took note of valuable feedback received from mothers of children attending AWCs. The District Legal Services Authority was requested to organize awareness camps on issues related to child rights and domestic violence to further strengthen community outreach. The ADC emphasized the need for sustained coordination among departments and stressed that collective efforts are essential to improve nutritional indicators and ensure that the benefits of welfare schemes effectively reach the intended beneficiaries. Among others, the meeting was attended by Programme Officer ICDS, all members of the committee including representative of the District Legal Services Authority, nominated members, besides other concerned officers.

## DLSA Kulgam organize Awareness Program on Transgender Rights

KULGAM, APRIL 21: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Kulgam, in collaboration with The Noble Helping Hands, successfully organized a comprehensive awareness program today at the ADR Centre Kulgam. The initiative focused on the legal rights, dignity, and socio-economic empowerment of the transgender community. The event was graced by Aijaz Ahmad Khan, District Principal and Sessions Judge, who attended as the Chief Guest. Syed Qayoom, Secretary DLSA Kulgam, was also present, alongside Para-Legal Volunteers (PLVs), the Legal Aid Defense Counsel team, and representatives from The Noble Helping Hands.

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
E-Tender Notice	
S.O. DEEQUAT acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders (www.mca.gov.in) against below listed Tenders. Bidders will be able to submit their registered bid on to closing date and time only.	
Tender No.:	251-2-Elect-1-06-2026-27
Name of work:	Electrical Work in 25W Housing and Extension of High-Level Platforms at 11 stations in BHAI-0906 section
App. Cost (in Rs.):	Rs. 17,12,82,85
Estimated Money (in Rs.):	Rs. 2,42,72,000
Completion Period:	6 months
Opening of tender:	13.05.2026 after 15:00 hrs.
Website Particulars:	www.nrrp.gov.in
No.:	251-2-Elect-17, Notice No. 94-Elect/2026-27, Dated: 20.04.2026
REGD. OFFICE: GUSTOFCES/ET/17/2026	

## UTRC meeting held at Shopian, Seven undertrial prisoners recommended for release

SHOPIAN, APRIL 21: In compliance with the directions of Justice Vikram Nath, Judge, Supreme Court of India and Executive Chairman, NALSA, and in accordance with the UTRC meeting schedule issued by the Legal Services Authority J&K for the year 2026, the District Legal Services Authority Shopian today conducted the 2nd Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC) meeting at District Court Complex Shopian. The meeting was convened to expedite the identification and review of prisoners eligible for release and to ensure the effective and



regular functioning of the UTRC mechanism, with a focus on all eligible under-trial prisoners (UTPs). The meeting was chaired by Pr. District & Sessions Judge (Chairman DLSA), Shopian, Mehmood Ahmad Chowdhary, and attended by members of the Under Trial Review Committee. During the proceedings, the Committee examined cases of eligible UTPs-prisoners shortlisted by the Secretary, DLSA Shopian.

## SANJY-2026: DC Anantnag chairs Rate Fixation Meeting

Directs strict adherence for convenience of Pilgrims

ANANTNAG, APRIL 21: Deputy Commissioner Anantnag (Yatra Officer, Pahalgam Axis), Dr. Bilal Mohauddin Bhat, today chaired a meeting at Dak Bungalow Khanabal to finalize the rates for various services for the Pahalgam axis during the forthcoming Shri Anantnag Ji Yatra (SANJY)-2026. The meeting was attended by the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Pahalgam, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Pahalgam Development Authority, Assistant Labour Commissioner (ALC), Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Chief Animal Husbandry Officer (CAHO), along with other concerned officers. Representatives of ten service providers, pony walas, palki walas, and labourers were also present on the occasion. During the meeting, detailed deliberations



were held on the fixation and regulation of rates for services such as tented accommodation, hiring of ponies (pack and riding), palkiwallas, porters, dandies, and labourers at various camp sites along the Pahalgam axis enroute to the Holy Cave. Representatives of

different service providers also put forth their suggestions and concerns before the DC. The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need to ensure fair, reasonable and uniform rates for all services, keeping in view the convenience of pilgrims as well as the interests of local service providers. He stressed the importance of maintaining transparency and strict adherence to the approved rates during the Yatra period so the pilgrims are provided convenience and seamless experience during the journey. It was decided that the concerned departments shall ensure wide publicity of the finalized rates and closely monitor their implementation on the ground to prevent any instances of violation or over-charging.

North in News  
EDITORIAL

Online classes serving students breaking the limits of geography

Online classes are increasingly serving students in a better way than traditional offline study because they break the limits of geography, time, and cost that often restrict learning. This shift is most visible in regions like Jammu and Kashmir where harsh winters, travel difficulties, and limited local faculty once forced students to migrate or miss classes, while now a stable internet connection brings expert teachers, recorded lectures, and global resources to a phone or laptop at home. The ability to pause, rewind, and review complex topics allows learners to master concepts at their own pace instead of keeping up with the fastest student in a crowded room, and shy students who hesitate to raise hands offline often ask more questions through chat features, polls, and private messages, which improves participation and confidence, and the cost advantage is significant because families save on transport, hostel fees, and relocation while investing that money into data packs and a single device that serves multiple courses. Online platforms offer animations, virtual labs, and real time quizzes that make abstract subjects like physics or mathematics easier to visualize than chalkboard diagrams alone, and working students or those preparing for competitive exams benefit from flexible schedules that let them learn early morning or late night without missing livelihood duties, and recorded sessions create a permanent revision library so exam preparation depends on the teacher's exact explanation rather than incomplete notes, and continuous assessment through automated tests gives instant feedback that helps correct mistakes faster than weekly offline checks. Access to national and international faculty exposes students to diverse teaching styles and updated content that small town schools may not provide, and for students with health issues or disabilities, online study ensures continuity that physical attendance cannot guarantee, and while discipline and practical subjects remain challenges because labs, sports, and peer interaction are harder to replicate on screen, the rise of blended models shows that when theory and doubt solving move online and hands on work stays offline, outcomes improve, and data from the last few years indicates that self motivated college students and exam aspirants score equal or higher through online modes due to repeated revision and wider resources, so although offline study still leads in mentorship, classroom energy, and social development, online classes are serving a large section of students in a more accessible, affordable, personalized, and resource rich way, making them better for reach and revision if not for every aspect of education, and the future clearly points to integration where online becomes the primary driver of content delivery and offline supports what screens cannot replace.

RAJANI SHARMA, EDITOR

SHREY MADAN

Delhi's cheap electricity was never truly cheap. It was deferred. For years, power tariffs remained largely unchanged even as the real cost of generating, transmitting, and distributing electricity steadily increased. That gap didn't disappear, it was pushed into the future. Now, with over Rs 38,000 crore in regulatory assets set to be recovered, that future has arrived.

What is being presented today as a tariff adjustment is, in reality, the cost of years of ineffective price management coming due, with interest. This is not a sudden shock. It is the result of a long-running policy choice: keeping prices artificially low while allowing underlying costs to build up in the background. Regulatory assets, in principle, are approved expenses meant to be recovered later through tariffs. In practice, they have become a way to defer difficult pricing decisions. The longer the delay, the larger the eventual correction. The current plan is to recover these dues through surcharges spread over several years, even as the government considers subsidies to buffer the immediate impact.

On paper, this may appear balanced. In reality, it shifts costs rather than reduces them. Whether through higher tariffs, surcharges, or taxpayer-funded subsidies, consumers pay either way. This is the central problem with politically managed pricing. It prioritizes short-term affordability over long-term sustainability. Electricity was never truly cheap. The cost was simply deferred. The consequences of that approach are now visible.

Delhi's cheap power always a myth



Because tariffs were not adjusted to reflect costs, regulatory assets grew steadily. Interest accumulated on delayed recovery, further inflating the burden. What could have been gradual and predictable adjustments has turned into a concentrated financial correction. Subsidies are often presented as a solution in such moments. They do not eliminate costs; they redistribute them. When tariff hikes are held off, the burden shifts from electricity bills to taxpayers who ultimately pay the difference, often without the same level of transparency. What looks like relief in one place re-emerges as pressure elsewhere in the system. This pattern is not unique to electricity. Similar dynamics have played out across sectors where prices are held below cost for extended periods. In fuel pricing, delayed adjustments have historically led to abrupt changes later. In public transport, lower fares often result in poor service quality and mounting fiscal pressure. The lesson is clear: when prices do not reflect

costs, distortions accumulate. The trend is not unique to India either. Argentina illustrates how low tariffs for prolonged periods, along with heavy subsidies, can strain public finances and discourage investment in the power sector. When adjustments finally came, they were abrupt and economically disruptive. Similarly, in the United Kingdom, price caps delayed the impact of rising wholesale costs, but once those caps proved unsustainable, consumers paid the price. Electricity is very prone to this, given its central role in both daily consumption and economic activity.

Keeping tariffs below cost can delay infrastructure investment, weaken efficiency incentives, and strain distribution companies' finances. When cost recovery is consistently deferred, the system moves away from performance and becomes increasingly dependent on financial support. There is also a question of transparency. Consumers are more likely to accept a price rise when they are predictable,

phased in, and clearly reflects actual costs rather than abrupt adjustments. Deferring price changes does the opposite. It hides the real cost of consumption, creates a false sense of affordability, and allows liabilities to build until they must be recovered all at once.

Electricity is essential, and affordability matters. But keeping prices artificially low for everyone is a blunt and often counterproductive approach. A more sustainable model is to keep tariffs closely linked to real costs through periodic revisions, while supporting vulnerable households. This keeps the system stable and prevents costs from accumulating into more drastic amendments later. Systems that combine cost reflective pricing with targeted assistance to manage transitions smoothly. In Germany, electricity prices broadly reflect market conditions, while assistance is focused on vulnerable consumers rather than applied universally.

Delhi's situation offers a clear lesson for energy policy. As these deferred costs come due, the focus should be on breaking the cycle rather than simply managing the immediate impact. Energy pricing is most sustainable when it reflects real costs upfront. When changes are transparent and timely, consumers can plan better, markets respond efficiently, and the system remains stable. It shows the limits of postponing reality. Deferring costs may create the illusion of affordability. It only ensures that when they return, they do so with greater force, less flexibility, and far fewer good options.

Where Trump went wrong

HARSHA KAKAR

The ceasefire in Iran is likely to end shortly, resulting in either renewed attacks or a peace deal, details of which could emerge soon. US President Donald Trump's major blunder was assuming tactical superiority would enable strategic victory. He expected Iran to capitulate after the removal of its hierarchy, especially since Israeli Premier Benjamin Netanyahu promised regime change, based on Mossad's control over the Iranian opposition and presence of agents within.

Days stretched into weeks and Iran held its ground. It opened new frontiers, hit back, and forced Trump into a corner. Weeks later, with no capitulation, rising losses and low availability of missiles, Trump started becoming delusional. He threatened eradicating an 'entire civilization,' demanding NATO join the conflict and switched from claiming 'strategic' victory to announcing 'tactical' gains, implying destruction of Iran's military assets. Yet, Iran held its ground, aware that it only had to survive to win, while the US would lose if it did not secure an unconditional surrender.

For the US to win, boots on the ground or destruction of civilian infrastructure and residential areas - as Israel had done in Gaza - is the only option. Netanyahu already faces an ICC warrant for Israel's actions in Gaza, defended on the logic that these were Hamas's bases. It is repeating the same in Lebanon. It is unlikely Trump can copy this model. The US armed forces will most likely refuse and this could mean an insult to Trump's leadership.

What Trump failed to realize was that nations where nationalism rides high have the resilience to absorb strikes and retaliate with asymmetric force. Korea, Vietnam and Afghanistan forced the US to withdraw in defeat, despite powerful and damaging aerial strikes but failure at the ground level.

Conventional carpet bombing and a naval blockade failed to bring about a Japanese surrender at the end of World War II. It only did so after nuclear strikes. Nuclear strikes are currently not on the cards in Iran. A major lesson from earlier conflicts - that military superiority, largely aerial, does not guarantee victory - was missed by Trump and his cronies. At the end of the second week of the conflict, Trump tweeted, 'There will be no deal with Iran except UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER! After that, and the selection of a GREAT & ACCEPTABLE Leader(s), we, and many of our wonderful and very brave allies and partners, will work tirelessly to bring Iran back from the brink of destruction, making it economically bigger, better, and stronger than ever before.'

IRAN WILL HAVE A GREAT FUTURE. MAKE IRAN GREAT AGAIN. On the contrary, it is Trump who is now pushing Pakistan to mediate and draw Tehran into talks. The US has stopped referring to unconditional surrender and instead announces economic actions and ceasefire talks. There was no doubt from the start that the US possesses air power to inflict tactical losses on Iran, especially since Israel had destroyed most of its air defence systems in June last year. Iran absorbed these losses and hit back, forcing

the US to recalibrate its objectives.

Trump chose Pakistan as the mediator, mainly because the 'Interests Section' of Iran operates under the Pakistani embassy in Washington. The first round of US-Iran talks failed largely because Pakistan never correctly shared each nation's demand with the other. Had it done so, talks could have been delayed till there was some common ground for agreement. US intelligence has also red-flagged Asim Munir as a wrong choice for his close links with Iran's IRGC, and Pakistan for unreliability in mediation based on the Afghan experience.

Trump has hurt US interests by regularly tweeting his terms of dialogue with Iran. This surrenders the initiative to Tehran, which rejects them on social media, embarrassing Tr up. Ideally, conditions should have been kept under wraps until some basic commonality was reached. Trump's claim that the US will shift all enriched uranium to its soil will never be acceptable to Iran. Moving it to Russia may be a better option. If Trump now agrees on Russia, it will be termed a defeat by his detractors. Trump refuses to accept that his midnight tweets cause more damage than good.

Tehran has insisted that a ceasefire in Lebanon is a primary condition for commencement of talks. Without consulting Netanyahu, Trump accepted and went as far as tweeting, 'Israel will not be bombing Lebanon any longer. They are PROHIBITED from doing so by the U.S.A. Enough is enough.' Israel was shocked, but had no choice. The reason, Trump realized is that victory in Iran is no longer possible and the best option is accepting talks, opening

doors to an honourable exit. Trump assumed that imposing a blockade would add to pressure on Iran and speed up dialogue. By insisting on opening of the Hormuz Strait, it was Trump who told Tehran that this was their master card.

Iran has shut Hormuz, until the blockade is lifted. The blockade may have been a tactical victory for the US but ended up as a strategic defeat. Trump has limited options. If he lifts the blockade, he would hand victory to Iran, if he does not do so, then the only option is re-starting hostilities. His only face-saver would be to lift the blockade with simultaneous opening of Hormuz, alongside commencement of talks. The US is in dire straits. It is running out of missiles, has lost around 20 aircraft and around two dozen UAVs while its critical radars and bases in the Middle East are destroyed.

Its forces are expeditionary, deployed away from the war zone, making supporting ground operations difficult. His naval troops are exhausted and facing scarcity of rations. Deploying closer to the Middle East brings them within missile range of Iran. European allies are also being unhelpful. Iran has emerged as a regional powerhouse as its strategy of selective disruption and asymmetric warfare has proven successful against the world's most powerful nation. Trump by his tweets announcing demands even before they are accepted, and by changing his base line from strategic victory to a tactical one, has weakened America's military reputation. The US end game was faulty from the start. Trump should read Clausewitz, who said, 'No one starts a war - or rather.

**Javed Rana listens to public delegations at Civil Secretariat Jammu**



**JAMMU, APRIL 21:** Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today met several delegations at Civil Secretariat, here, and listened to their grievances. A delegation from Sidhra called on the Minister and apprised him of the difficulties being faced by residents due to irregular water supply

and inadequate tanker services in the area. The Minister took immediate note of the concerns and directed the concerned officers of the Jal Shakti Department to ensure improved water supply and create more tanker services on priority. Another delegation comprising casual labourers of the Wildlife Department projected their

long-pending service issues and honorarium-related concerns. A separate delegation from the Bagh-e-Banu area also met the Minister and sought installation of a tube well to ensure adequate and safe drinking water supply for local residents. The Minister assured the delegation of immediate action and directed the concerned authorities to examine the feasibility and take necessary steps at the earliest. Reiterating the Government's commitment to responsive governance, the Minister emphasized that public grievances will continue to be addressed on priority to ensure improved service delivery and public welfare.

**Secretary RDD inspects Yatri Niwas at Kheer Bhawani, Reviews DDC Building Works**

**GANDERBAL, APRIL 21:** Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) & Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad, today inspected the ongoing construction of the Yatri Niwas at the revered Mata Kheer Bhawani Temple, Tulmulla, to review progress and ensure its timely completion. Accompanied by senior officers, the Secretary was informed that the project, sanctioned at ₹288.10 lakh, is nearing completion with 99% physical progress achieved and only minor finishing works pending. Secretary directed the

concerned officers to complete the pathway to the Yatri Niwas within a week, ensuring accessibility for the devotees. Emphasizing the significance of the facility, he stated that the Yatri Niwas will substantially enhance accommodation and basic amenities for visiting pilgrims. He also stressed the integration of essential services including drinking water, sanitation, and lighting prior to inauguration. Aijaz Asad also inspected the District Development Council (DDC) building constructed at a

cost of ₹195.01 lakh. He directed the Assistant Commissioner/Development to undertake land demarcation, lawn leveling, and proper fencing of the premises. He further called for preparation of a comprehensive landscape plan to enhance the surroundings. Stressing timely completion, he instructed that interior finishing works be expedited and the building made fully operational at the earliest, underscoring its importance for effective grassroots governance and public service delivery.

**Jal Shakti Minister reviews desiltation of Kuls in Jammu**

**JAMMU, APRIL 21:** Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana today chaired a meeting to review the status of desiltation and cleaning of kuls (minor irrigation canals) in Jammu division. The meeting was attended by the Chief Engineer, Irrigation & Flood Control (I&FC) Jammu, Director Rural Development Jammu and other concerned officers. Former Minister Sukhmandan Choudhary, who had recently highlighted the issue of cleaning and maintenance of minor canals, also participated in the meeting. During the meeting, the Minister held detailed discussions on the present status of desiltation works and the measures required to ensure timely cleaning of all kuls to facilitate smooth irrigation for farmers. He stressed that proper maintenance of irrigation channels is essential for safeguarding agricultural productivity and supporting rural livelihoods. Javed Rana assured that the Government is committed to addressing the issue on priority and directed the concerned departments to accelerate desiltation works and prepare a comprehensive plan to ensure regular maintenance of irrigation canals across the region.

**CM congratulates students on JKBOSE Class 10 results of Summer Zone**

**JAMMU, APRIL 21:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today congratulated the students of summer zone schools on the declaration of the Class 10 results by the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education. The Chief Minister extended his best wishes to all successful candidates and encouraged those who may not have achieved their desired outcome to remain determined and continue striving for excellence. Earlier today, the JKBOSE declared the Class 10th Annual Regular Examination results for Summer Zone of Jammu Division, recording an overall pass percentage of 88.85 percent. A total of 50,754 students appeared in the examination, out of which 45,094 qualified successfully.

**CONGRATULATIONS TO**



**ADHIRA PANDOH D/O SMT. BINDHYA PANDOH & S.H. RAJESH PANDOH RESIDENCE OF RASHI ON SCORING 490 MARKS OUT OF 500 (98%) IN CLASS 10TH RESULT DECLARED BY JK BOARD.**

**DC Bandipora embarks on 03-Day Tour to Gurez**

**BANDIPORA, APRIL 21:** Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chik, on Tuesday embarked on a three-day tour to Gurez Sub-Division, during which she visited various areas, interacted with the public, and reviewed ongoing developmental works. At Kanwal and adjoining areas, the Deputy Commissioner interacted with local residents, patiently listened to their grievances, and assured timely redressal. She reiterated the commitment of the District Administration towards addressing public concerns and ensuring equitable development in the remote region. At Tansam, Markoon, the Deputy Commissioner inspected the ongoing construction of the Plastic Waste Management Unit of Block Gurez, being executed under the Swachh Bharat Mission at an estimated cost of ₹15.45 lakh, by the Department of Rural Development. During the inspection, it was informed that the flooring work of the unit is scheduled to commence within the current week. Officials further apprised that the procurement process for the unit will be completed within the next fortnight.

**NOTICE**  
I JOYI DEVI D/O JAI CHAND R/O KANGA RAMBAN have applied for correction of my name and DOB which has been wrongly written as Joyi Devi and DOB 26-01-2009 instead of correct name Joyi Devi and DOB 26-01-2008 in my Aadhar card bearing No.257240571086 objection if any may be conveyed to the concerned authority within seven days from the date of publication of this notice

**NOTICE**  
This is to all through this notice that M/S AMAR SINGH FOODS PRIVATE LIMITED situated at Plot No.53, Phase-I, SICOP Industrial Complex, Gangyal, Jammu (J&K) (formally/permanently registered unit with DIC Jammu vide PMT/EM-II No. 07/004/12/14579 Dated 13.02.2020 is applying for the Transfer of Lease Hold Rights to M/S FAIRDEAL AUTOMOTIVE PRIVATE LIMITED (a new unit to be established) and subsequently De-Registration of M/S AMAR SINGH FOODS PRIVATE LIMITED from the records of District Industries Centre, Jammu (J&K) Any person (Individual/Collective) Bank/Govt. Body/Semi Govt. Body having any type of objection can report to the office of the General Manager, District Industries Centre, Jammu within 07 (Seven) days from publication of this notice.  
**M/S AMAR SINGH FOODS PRIVATE LTD/PLT NO.53, PHASE-I, SICOP INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, GANGYAL, JAMMU (J&K)**

**NOTICE**  
I am Satya Devi Widow of Ex Sep. No 3951298 late Anant Ram presently residing at V PO: Bhaddu Teh: Billawar Dist: Kathua (J&K) that in my Service record of my husband my DOB is wrongly recorded as 30-06-1948 instead of real DOB 04-02-1948. Now I want to correct my DOB as 04-02-1948 instead of 30-06-1948 in my record of my Husband. objection if any may be conveyed to concerned authority within 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 RAMSOOD District Ramban VS. (Applicant)  
U.T OF Jammu & Kashmir through Block Development officer Ramssood

**IN THE MATTER OF:** An Application seeking registration of Date of death of applicant's children s/o 183) 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 did 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 filing the instant application for recording the date of death of his/her children in the register maintained by the non-applicant.  
3. 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.  
4. That the particulars of the applicant's children are given below.  
5. 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 ZOHAI B ZAKIR NAIK ZAKIR HUSSAIN NIL NAIK JAMEELA BEGUM 01-05-2022 M NEEL ZARADI NEEL ZARADI INDLAN AADYA DO DO DO KAWSAR 04-03-2024 F DO DO DO  
Therefore by virtue of this notice at large is informed that if any person have any objection in respect in the above mentioned application, he/she shall file his/her objection in this office within seven days from the issuance of this notice failing which said application shall be dealt into accordance with law  
Date: 28/02/20 Zarin, Applicant

**IN THE COURT OF TEHSILDAR EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS RAJGARH**  
MOHD RAFIQ S/O SHER MOHDR O Dhandla Tehsil Rajgarh District Ramban Applicant  
Versus  
Through BDO Rajgarh IN THE MATTER OF: Non-Applicant  
Application for seeking direction upon the non applicant to enter/register the birth Particulars of the applicant's children in the Birth Register.  
**NOTICE FOR PUBLIC AT LARGE**  
Whereas the applicant named above has filed an application seeking direction to the Non applicant to register the date of DOB particulars of children as mentioned Below in the concerned register.  
S.No: NAME 1 2 MAHIRA JAAN NAIRA JAAN FATHER MOHD RAFIQ MOHD RAFIQ MOTHER NAZIA JAAN NAZIA JAAN D-O-B 11/11/2024 6/11/2025  
Therefore by virtue of this notice at large is informed that if any person have any objection in respect in the above mentioned application, he/she shall file his/her objection in this office within seven days from the issuance of this notice failing which said application shall be dealt into accordance with law  
Issued under my hand and seal of this court today on date  
Executive magistrate 1st class Rajgarh

**UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD R AND B DIVISION BAKSHI NAGAR JAMMU Short e-NIT No.06 of 2026-2027 Dated:-20-04-2026**

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

S. No	Name of Work	Name of Division	Advertis if Cost (Rs. Lakh)	Cost of document (in Rs.)	Earnest Money (in Rs.)	Time Allowed for opening of tender	Time and date of opening of tender	Class of Contractor
1	Provision of Channel for water runoff for staff qtrs in premises of H and P Deptt. at Canal road Jammu.	PWD (R&B) DIVISION BAKSHI NAGAR JAMMU	38.52	600/-	2% of Advertised Cost	30 Days	28-04-2026 (12.00 Pm)	"A&B"

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

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	20-04-2026
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 20-04-2026 to 27-04-2026 upto 1800 Hrs
3	Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting	-
4	Bid submission Start Date	20-04-2026
5	Bid Submission End Date	27-04-2026 upto 1800 Hrs
6	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	28-04-2026 on or after 1200 Hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Bakshi Nagar Jammu
7	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

- Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of e-challan through Treasury indicating Treasury Voucher No. & date, e-NIT No. and name of work duly crediting to MH 0059 (Revenue) favoring Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Bakshi Nagar Jammu and upload the same Le treasury challan / receipt, Earnest money/Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR/BC pledged to Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Bakshi Nagar Jammu The CDR/FDR/BC shall be valid for 45 Days beyond the bid validity period. The original instruments in respect of cost of documents, EMD and relevant documents of LI to be submitted to the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Bakshi Nagar Jammu at the time of allotment.
- The electronic bidding system would not allow any late submission of bids after due date and time as per server time. Bidders may modify their bids by uploading their request for modification before the deadline for submission of bids. For this, the bidder needs not to make any additional payment towards the cost of tender document. For bid modification and consequential re-submission, the bidder is not required to withdraw his bid submitted earlier. The last modified bid submitted by the bidder within the bid submission time shall be considered as the bid. For this purpose, modification/withdrawal by other means will not be accepted. In online system of bid submission, the modification and consequential submission of bids is allowed any number of times. The bidders may withdraw his bid by uploading their request before the deadline for submission of bids; however, if the bid is withdrawn, the re-submission of the bid is not allowed. No bid shall be modified or withdrawn after the deadline of submission of bids.
- The date and time of opening of Financial-Bids shall be notified on Web Site [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financial-bids of responsive bidders shall be opened online in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Bakshi Nagar Jammu The date for same shall be intimated separately.
- The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids.
- The earnest money shall be forfeited, if -  
a) Any bidder/tenderer withdraws his bid/tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.  
b) Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within specified time period after issue of letter of acceptance.  
c) Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement on same day of allotment of work contract as per Chief Engineer PW (R&B) Department Jammu's Circular No. CEI/G/12660-87 dated 07-10-2021.
- Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process:**  
6.1 Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website [www.jktenders.gov.in](http://www.jktenders.gov.in) to acquaint bid submission process.  
6.2 To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.  
6.3 The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.  
6.4 Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned above.  
6.5 Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents mentioned in NIT and SBD with technical bid online.  
**Note - Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.**  
7. The department will not be responsible for any delay in online submission due to any reasons.  
8. Scanned copy of cost of tender document in shape of e-challan through Treasury indicating Treasury Voucher No. & date, e-NIT No. and name of work duly crediting to MH - 0059 (Revenue) favoring Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Bakshi Nagar Jammu and upload the same Le treasury challan/receipt, Earnest money/Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR/BC pledged to Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Bakshi Nagar Jammu and Correctness of Information on the notarized affidavit which must be notarized between the period of downloading of bidding document as per the format mentioned in the e-NIT/SBD with the technical documents of the bid.  
9. Bidders may contact office of the Chief Engineer PW (R&B) Department, Jammu or concerned Executive Engineer for any guidance for getting DSC or any other relevant details in respect of e-tendering process.

Nr - EE/R&B/N/733-35  
Dated:- 20-04-2026  
S/-  
ER SANDEEP GUPTA  
Executive Engineer  
PWD (R&B) Division  
Bakshi Nagar  
DIP/J-886/26

## DC throws open District Level Cricket Tournament at Sports Stadium Budgam

BUDGAM, APRIL 21: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan today threw open the District Level Cricket Tournament at Sports Stadium Budgam amid enthusiastic participation of youth and sports lovers from across the district and Kashmir Division.

The tournament, organized by the local youth of Budgam, aims to promote sports culture, strengthen youth engagement, and provide a vibrant platform for budding cricketers to showcase their talent. A total of 31 cricket teams from across the Kashmir Division are participating in the tournament, reflecting the growing enthusiasm for sports among the youth.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC appreciated the efforts of the local youth for organizing such a large-scale sporting event and termed the initiative as a positive step towards channelizing youthful energy into constructive activities. He emphasized that sports play a vital role in



personality development, discipline, teamwork, and the overall well-being of young people. Highlighting the significance of the Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan, the DC underscored the importance of sports as a powerful tool in the fight against drug abuse. He urged the youth to actively participate in sports and constructive activities to stay away from substance abuse and lead a healthy, purposeful life.

He further emphasized that such initiatives not only promote physical fitness but also serve as an effective platform to spread awareness about the ill effects of drugs, encouraging young people to adopt a drug-free lifestyle.

The DC lauded the organizers for taking the lead in promoting sports at the grassroots level and encouraged them to continue organizing similar events in future. He reiterated the District Administration's commitment to supporting youth-oriented initiatives that foster healthy competition, community participation, and contribute towards realizing the vision of a drug-free society.

The DC also interacted with the players of the opening match, extended his best wishes to all participating teams, and encouraged them to uphold the spirit of sportsmanship and fair play throughout the tournament.

## R Ashwin Predicts The Next Big Thing In Indian Cricket



New Delhi, Apr 21:

Punjab Kings (PBKS) batter Priyansh Arya lit up the Indian Premier League (IPL) with a blistering 37-ball 93 against Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) last week. The 24-year-old announced his arrival in the IPL last season, scoring 475 runs for PBKS in his debut season in the cash-rich league. Following his

knock against LSG on Sunday, Ravichandran Ashwin praised Priyansh's ability to play impactful knocks, which puts him slightly ahead of the likes of teenagers Ayush Mhatre and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. "Kisiko upar-neeche laane ka nahi hai, magar ye jo Priyansh Arya hai na, Jitna Ayush Mhatre, jitna Vaibhav Sooryavanshi

hain, usse bhi thora ek kadam mujhe lag raha hain aagey hain. Compare nahi kar raha hu. Kyunki yeh bada run bana leta hain, inke paas range of shots zyada hain ('I am not trying to put anyone above or below anyone, but Priyansh Arya, to me, looks a step ahead even of Ayush Mhatre and Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. I am not comparing them, because he goes on to make big scores and he has a wider range of shots.'). Ashwin said on his YouTube channel. After an 11-ball 39, 20-ball 57, and 37-ball 93 in the current campaign, Priyansh has proved that he isn't a flash in the pan and doesn't carry the proverbial 'headweight' after one good season.

## Entire Gujarat Titans Team Out For 100 Yet Shubman Gill Finds Fault With Bowlers Against MI

New Delhi, Apr 21:

Gujarat Titans (GT) skipper Shubman Gill took pointed finger at his team's poor show with the ball in the middle overs as the team suffered a thumping 99-run defeat against the Mumbai Indians (MI) in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2026 match on Monday. Despite the fact that Kagiso Rabada picked up 3 wickets in the power-play, MI went on to put a total of 199 on the board, thanks to Tilak Varma's exemplary hundred. Speaking after the match, Gill admitted that Gujarat were unable to restrict MI to a competitive total



despite admitting that nature of the pitch was a little sluggish and slow, something that his team had identified early in the game. "Honestly, I think we gave away too many runs in the middle overs. On a wicket like that, I think

160-170 was a par score. But I think there are a lot of learnings for us from this game," Gill said. The GT skipper said that defeat serves as a learning curve for the team, even as they prepare for upcoming away fixtures in the tournament.

## Ayush Mhatre sidelined with hamstring injury, to miss remainder of IPL 2026

New Delhi, Apr 21:

Chennai Super Kings have suffered a major setback, with young batter Ayush Mhatre ruled out of the remainder of IPL 2026 due to a hamstring injury. The franchise confirmed on Tuesday that the 18-year-old sustained a left hamstring injury during their clash against Sunrisers Hyderabad on April 18 and will require a rehabilitation period of six to 12 weeks.

"Ayush Mhatre has been ruled out of the remainder of IPL 2026 due to a left hamstring injury sustained while batting during the match against Sunrisers Hyderabad on April 18. Ayush's injury will require a rehabilitation period of 6-12 weeks. We wish



Ayush a speedy recovery," CSK said in a statement. Mhatre picked up the injury while attempting a second run in the fifth over of CSK's chase. Despite pulling his hamstring, he chose to continue batting briefly before

wicket a couple of deliveries later. The youngster had made an immediate impact, scoring a quickfire 30 off 12 balls after coming in as an impact substitute. Speaking after the match, CSK batting coach Michael Hussey had

indicated the seriousness of the injury. "It's a hamstring tear. Don't know how bad it is. We'll scan him probably the next day. I'm not sure, but yes, it looks pretty bad. Unfortunately, he's going to be a big loss because he has been in nice touch for us. He is an exciting young talent, but it is going to give someone else an opportunity, so that's exciting as well. We have got some really good players that haven't got an opportunity, so it's going to be exciting for one of those guys. As much as we are really disappointed to lose Ayush, I don't know for how long, but it's exciting for a new player to come in and get a chance," Hussey had said.

## Iran's FIFA World Cup 2026 participation in doubt amid US tensions

Tehran, Apr 21:

Iran's participation in the upcoming FIFA World Cup 2026 remains uncertain, with Sports Minister Ahmad Donyamali confirming that a final decision will depend on evolving political and security conditions. Speaking to reporters on Tuesday, Donyamali indicated that authorities are weighing multiple scenarios amid ongoing tensions between United States and Iran.

"We had a discussion about the national team itself, the conditions of the national team, and we also formed a committee. Today we also have a meeting in the framework of this discussion, and we are fulfilling our legal duty. We must be prepared. In any case, it might be decided not to go. And if it is



decided to go, we should be prepared anyway, so that our presence, if it is to be, is a strong presence. But again, I emphasise, in this area, the decision-making is anyway based on the conditions that exist today, with the govern-

ment and probably the National Security Council." The tournament, co-hosted by the United States, Canada, and Mexico, is scheduled to run from June 11 to July 19. Despite the uncertainty, FIFA president Gianni Infantino

has backed Iran's participation, reiterating that the team remains part of the competition. Infantino recently met the Iranian squad in Turkey and praised their determination to compete on the global stage. Iran have already qualified for the expanded 48-team tournament and are drawn in Group G alongside Belgium, New Zealand, and Egypt. Their matches are currently scheduled to take place in Los Angeles and Seattle. However, geopolitical tensions have raised concerns about Iran playing on US soil. Former US President Donald Trump recently questioned whether it would be appropriate for the team to compete in the United States, citing safety concerns.

## PCB bans Dasun Shanaka for one season after PSL exit to join IPL

New Delhi, Apr 21:

Taking a strict stance on players switching leagues, the Pakistan Cricket Board has banned Dasun Shanaka for one season after the Sri Lankan all-rounder opted out of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) to join the Indian Premier League (IPL). Shanaka, who was part of Lahore Qalandars, withdrew from the tournament and was later signed by Rajasthan Royals on March 23 as a replacement for injured Sam Curran in IPL 2026.

In an official statement, the PCB termed Shanaka's withdrawal a "clear breach" of the player registration terms and the tripartite



agreement. "Following a comprehensive review... the player's unilateral withdrawal from the tournament on March 21, 2026, constituted a clear breach... Effective immediately, Dasun Shanaka has been declared ineligible to participate in the next edition of the PSL (2027)," the board said.

The decision highlights PCB's increasing firmness on contract obligations, especially amid growing instances of players prioritising IPL opportunities over PSL commitments.

## 'I'd rather come back in great shape': Carlos Alcaraz doubtful for French Open 2026

New Delhi, Apr 21:

Carlos Alcaraz is facing a race against time ahead of the French Open as he continues to recover from a wrist injury, with upcoming medical assessments set to determine his participation at the clay-court major.

The World No. 2 was forced to withdraw from the Barcelona Open and the Madrid Open after sustaining the injury during his opening-round match in Barcelona. The setback has raised concerns ahead of Roland Garros, where the Spaniard is a two-time defending champion.

"We've been trying to do everything we can to make sure that this test goes well. I'm trying to be very patient. But we are good and just waiting a lit-



tle bit. We have a few tests in the next few days and then we will see how the injury is and what the next steps will be," Alcaraz said. The 22-year-old stressed the importance of not rushing his return, even if it means missing key tournaments on the clay swing. "I'd rather come back a little later but in great shape than come back early, rushing around, and unwell. I have a very long career ahead of me, and pushing myself too hard at

this Roland Garros could harm me in future tournaments. I need to recover really well if I don't want it to affect me later on," he added.

Alcaraz's absence has also impacted the rankings race, with Janmik Sinner reclaiming the World No. 1 spot after defeating him in the Monte Carlo Masters final earlier this month.

Despite the injury concerns, Alcaraz had reason to celebrate off the court after being named the Laureus World Sportsman of the Year at a ceremony in Madrid. He edged out a strong field that included Sinner, Tadej Pogacar, Osmane Dembele, Armand Duplantis and Marc Marquet.

Reflecting on his achievements, Alcaraz highlighted both success and the journey behind it. "Winning two Grand Slams and finishing the year as world No. 1 is something I dreamt about since I was a little kid," he said. "When I look back, I do not only think about the trophies and results but also the journey, the work, the difficult moments, the people who stayed by my side and everything I learned."

He also credited his support system for his growth. "I want to thank my family and team. They are with me through the good moments and especially the tough ones. They help me grow as a player and as a person. This award belongs to them too," he added.

## Asian Games gold medallist Prathamesh Jawkar on two-year whereabouts ban

New Delhi, Apr 21:

Prathamesh Jawkar, part of India's gold medal-winning compound team at the Asian Games 2023, has accepted a two-year suspension for breaching anti-doping whereabouts rules, sidelining him from international competition until April 2028. The 22-year-old agreed to the sanction imposed by the International Testing Agency (ITA), with the period of ineligibility effective from April 19.

Jawkar's suspension follows three whereabouts failures within a 12-month period, recorded in January, July, and October last year, constituting a violation under Article 2.4 of anti-doping regulations. Athletes in the Registered Testing Pool are required to regularly update their location



details on the Anti-Doping Administration and Management System (ADAMS) to remain available for out-of-competition testing. Reflecting on the setback, Jawkar acknowledged responsibility for the lapse. "It is unfortunate, but it is a fault from my side nonetheless," Prathamesh told the Tribune.

"I was so engrossed in my training that I failed to notice. I hope other archers who are part of the problems for the Asian Games and other major tournaments take my case as an example and do not repeat the same mistake," he added. The archer had also admitted the lapses were due to "sheer negligence," citing missed deadlines, communication gaps, and uncertainty around travel during an overseas trip.

# From children's deaths to statewide shutdown What is fuelling Manipur's unrest

New Delhi, Apr 21: Protests continued in parts of Manipur on Tuesday over the Tronglaobi bomb attack, with demonstrators demanding justice for two minor siblings killed in the April 7 strike in Moirang's Tronglaobi Awang Leikai area. The unrest has now widened beyond one protest site, with the Meira Paibi Lup's five-day shutdown affecting normal life across several districts. Roads, markets, shops and business establishments remained shut in many areas, while commercial vehicles largely stayed off the roads. Protests continue as shutdown disrupts daily life.



Monday seen blocking roads and checking vehicles as part of the agitation.

In Keishamthong and other parts of the state, protesters raised slogans and held banners as anger over the killings continued. Along Imphal Mayai Lambi, Heirangthong and Singjamei, women and youths were on

in April 7 attack The protest centres on the killing of a five-year-old boy and his five-month-old sister after suspected militants allegedly hurled a bomb at their residence around 1 am on April 7 while the family was asleep. Their mother was also injured in the attack. During the demonstrations, protesters accused "Kuki militants" of being responsible for the killings and demanded immediate action.

### Security tightened after clashes in Kachhing

Security deployment has been stepped up in sensitive areas, with Rapid Action Force personnel also deployed after clashes were reported in several places. On Sunday night, security forces used tear gas, smoke bombs and stun grenades to disperse protesters during a mass Meira torch rally in Kachhing. The confrontation broke out after protesters, returning from the market,

tried to move towards the Kachhing DC office and were stopped by a large police contingent at the Kachhing Keithel bridge. As tensions rose, protesters allegedly responded with stone pelting and slingshots. Several people were injured in the clash, including 35-year-old Irengham Ranjita of Kachhing Irum Mapal, who was hit by a tear gas shell. She was taken to Kachhing District Hospital by an Indian Red Cross Society team. The identities of others injured had not yet been confirmed.

Police warn rallies are being misused Amid the rising tensions, Manipur Police on Sunday issued a warning over what it described as a spike in violence during recent public demonstrations. Superintendent of Police Ksh Shivakanta Singh said while many people were taking part in "Meira rallies",

# 'Look at my background first': Madhya Pradesh BJP MLA threatens police after son hits five with Thar

New Delhi, Apr 21: A road accident in Madhya Pradesh's Shivpuri district has spiralled into a political controversy after a BJP MLA allegedly issued a warning to police while responding to a case involving his son, who is accused of hitting five people with a speeding SUV. The incident in Karera, where five people were injured after being struck by a Mahindra Thar, has drawn attention not only for the crash but also for the alleged conduct of BJP MLA Preetam Lodhi, whose son Dinesh Lodhi has been booked by police. Five injured after SUV hits bike and pedestrians



Police said the accident occurred on April 16 at around 7:30 am when a rashly driven vehicle hit a motorcycle and pedestrians, including two women.

According to local accounts, the accident allegedly left the spot after the crash and went to a nearby gym. Victims claimed that when confronted, he said, "Go, I will speak to the station in-charge," and added, "My father is an MLA, he can handle even murder cases." These statements have intensified the controversy surrounding the case. MLA's tone shifts after initial response Soon after the incident, BJP MLA Preetam Lodhi had stated that public interest was paramount and claimed he had asked police to register an FIR. However, his stance appears to have changed. Addressing police officers, including Karera SDOP Ayush Kishor, the MLA said, "I want to tell the SDOP sir to first look.

# 'Rahul ji se chalne wala nahi hai': Bombed in Bihar, Tej Pratap endorses Priyanka Gandhi



New Delhi, Apr 21: Tej Pratap Yadav, son of Lalu Prasad Yadav and brother of Tejashwi Yadav, today openly backed Priyanka Gandhi Vadra as the potential face of the new INDl alliance, while launching a scathing attack on Rahul Gandhi's leadership. Speaking in Patna, Janshakti Janta Dal Founder Tej Pratap said

Indira Gandhi ji ki tarah hai. Rahul Gandhi ji se chalne wala nahi hai. "Rahul Gandhi should go and dance in Hollywood" In his blunt remarks, Yadav accused Rahul Gandhi of being driven by ambition and lacking seriousness. He alleged that Rahul was "consumed by the desire for power" and alleged that he was trying to assert control beyond his political space. Mocking Rahul's public appearances, Yadav said symbolic gestures like yattaras, riding a Bullet motorcycle and playing songs on a DJ do not translate into leadership. He also took a swipe at Rahul's style, portraying him as more focused on spectacle than substance.

Priyanka alone could steer the opposition bloc, drawing a direct comparison with former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. "Priyanka is like Indira Gandhi. Rahul Gandhi cannot run it," he said, dismissing Rahul's political style as ineffective. He said, "Priyanka Gandhi hi chala sakti hai, woh

# 'Symbol of anger against Opposition's anti-women behaviour': UP CM Yogi leads 'Jan Aakrosh Mahila Padyatra' in Lucknow

Lucknow, Apr 21: A large protest march led by women, 'Jan Aakrosh Mahila Padyatra' was held in Lucknow on Tuesday, with Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath calling it a nationwide expression of anger against opposition parties over the failure to pass a key women's reservation bill in Parliament.



The 'Jan Aakrosh Mahila Padyatra' began from the Chief Minister's residence and moved towards the Vidhan Bhawan, drawing participation from thousands of women, including ministers, party workers and members of women's organisations. The march was organised to protest the non-passage of the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill, which sought to enable reservation for women based on delimitation. Senior leaders of the BJP joined the march, including Deputy Chief Ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak, along with the party state president Pankaj Choudhary. Lucknow

the "anti-women behaviour" by opposition parties, including the Congress, Samajwadi Party, Trinamool Congress and DMK. He accused these parties of blocking efforts to pass legislation aimed at enhancing women's political representation, stating that the protest reflected widespread dissatisfaction among women. "A 'Jan Akrosh Rally' (Public Outrage Rally) is being organised today to protest against the attempts to obstruct the new amendments to the National Shakti Vandan Adhinyam and to defeat the bill in Parliament. I express my gratitude to the large number of women who have turned out for this protest

demonstration. Be it the Congress or the Samajwadi Party, their true nature is undemocratic. They are anti-women. Modi Ji had offered them an opportunity—a chance to redeem their image. However, they chose to reject it. You have all come out despite this scorching heat," he said. The Chief Minister also highlighted initiatives led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying that several welfare schemes have focused on women's empowerment. He referred to programmes such as Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao and sanitation initiatives under the Swachh Bharat Mission, which aim to improve living conditions and opportunities.

# North India roasts, Northeast drenched: IMD flags relentless weather extremes across India

New Delhi, Apr 21: India is witnessing sharply contrasting weather patterns, with parts of the country battling an intense heatwave while others face heavy rain, thunderstorms and hailstorms, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Tuesday. The unusual mix of extreme conditions has been driven by multiple active weather systems, with the IMD warning of continued disruptions across regions, including crop damage, flooding risks and health concerns due to rising temperatures.



Pradesh, have ranged between 40°C and 45°C. Warangal and Akola in Maharashtra recorded the highest temperature at 45°C. In Delhi-NCR, conditions have turned unusually harsh for April, resembling peak summer months. The IMD has issued a heatwave alert from April 21 to 24. The cap-

ital recorded a maximum temperature of 41°C on Tuesday, which is likely to rise to 43°C over the next two days. Heatwave conditions are expected to persist even during evening hours, with only marginal relief likely towards April 25-26. Air quality worsens in Delhi-NCR amid rising heat. The heat has been accompanied by poor air quality

across the region. Several monitoring stations in Delhi reported AQI levels in the 'poor' category, including Anand Vihar (224), Bawana (196), Ashok Vihar (173), and Chandni Chowk (162). Neighbouring areas also showed similar trends. Noida recorded AQI levels between 147 and 197 across sectors, while Ghaziabad's Loni touched 301, falling in the 'very poor' category. Experts have warned that the combination of high temperatures and pollution could increase health risks, advising residents to limit outdoor activity, stay hydrated and use protective measures. Heavy rain, storms and hail hit other regions while northern and central parts reel under heavy rain. Several other regions are witnessing intense rainfall and storm activity. Assam recorded very heavy rainfall between 12 cm and 20 cm, while Nagaland received 7 cm to 11 cm rainfall.

# Pachpadra HPCL refinery fire: Rajasthan CM orders high-level probe as inauguration by PM Modi postponed

New Delhi, Apr 21: Rajasthan Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma on Monday ordered a high-level probe into the fire incident at the HPCL Rajasthan Refinery in Balotra district's Pachpadra. Terming the fire that broke out hours before the refinery-cum-chemical complex's inauguration by Prime Minister Narendra Modi "extremely unfortunate", CM Sharma said that he has directed relevant authorities to conduct a high-level inquiry into the incident. "The fire incident at the HPCL Rajasthan Refinery in Pachpadra is extremely unfortunate. In this regard, I held immediate consultations with administrative officials and the refinery management to obtain detailed information about



the situation." "Currently, the situation is completely under control. Prioritising safety standards above all else, the Prime Minister's proposed visit has been postponed for the time being. Directives have been issued for a high-level inquiry into this incident," he said. He further added that the

grand inauguration of the Pachpadra refinery will be carried out by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at a new date. Earlier today, a fire had broken out in the Crude Distillation Unit (CDU) at the HPCL Rajasthan Refinery in Pachpadra. Several fire tenders rushed to the spot and brought the blaze under control.

# MHA receives DRDO-developed satellite imaging system 'Prajna' for real-time security support



New Delhi, Apr 21: The Ministry of Home Affairs has received an indigenously developed satellite imaging system, 'Prajna', to enhance the real-time decision support for the security agencies. Secretary of the Department of Defence Research and Development (DRDO) Samir V Kamat handed over the satellite imaging system to Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan on Monday at a ceremony held at the Ministry of Home Affairs, Kartavya

Bhawan-3. The AI-enabled system, developed by the DRDO's Centre for Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (CAIR), will strengthen the country's internal security, playing a key role in monitoring sensitive regions and supporting counter-terrorism operations. Earlier, DRDO and the Indian Navy jointly conducted four successful in-flight release trials of the indigenous Air Droppable Container 'ADC-150' from the P8I aircraft off the coast of Goa between February 21 and

March 1, at different extreme release conditions. As per the release, indigenously designed and developed to deliver a 150 kg payload, the Air Droppable Container enhances the naval operational logistics capabilities for providing quick response to naval vessels under distress, needing critical stores/equipment, medical assistance, etc., at sea, deployed far from the coast. The Naval Science and Technology Laboratory, Visakhapatnam, is the nodal laboratory for the activity. Aerial Delivery Research and Development Establishment, Agra, has developed the parachute system and Centre for Military Airworthiness and Certification, Bengaluru, provided the flight clearance and certification.

# Char Dham Yatra 2026 begins: Dates, routes, registration and new rules explained

New Delhi, Apr 21: The Char Dham Yatra has begun for 2026, with the doors of Gangotri and Yamunotri temples reopening on Akshaya Tritiya after remaining shut through the winter months. Every year, the pilgrimage brings lakhs of devotees to Uttarakhand's high-altitude shrines. The circuit covers Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath and Badrinath, a journey that is as demanding as it is spiritually significant.



The reopening was marked by traditional rituals and Vedic chants, setting the tone for the pilgrimage season that will now run for the next few months before snowfall forces closure again. The Char Dham route and temple opening dates The yatra follows a fixed sequence. Pilgrims begin at Yamunotri, then move to Gangotri, proceed to Kedarnath and end at Badrinath. This year, Yamunotri is open from April 19 to November 11, Gangotri

from April 19 to November 10, Kedarnath from April 22 to November 11, and Badrinath from April 23 to November 13. How pilgrims travel across the four shrines Most journeys start from Haridwar, Rishikesh or Dehradun. From here, the roads narrow, the climbs get steeper, and the travel slows down. Yamunotri requires a final 5 to 6 km trek from Janki Chatti. Ponies and palkis are avail-

able, but many still choose to walk. Gangotri is simpler. It is directly connected by road via Uttarkashi. Kedarnath is where the real test begins. Pilgrims travel up to Gaurikund and then take on a 16 to 18 km uphill trek. A helicopter service is available, but only through IRCTC bookings. Badrinath, the final stop on the route, is also the easiest to get to. The road goes right up to the temple, which makes the journey far

simpler, especially for elderly pilgrims. Shorter options for those with limited time Helicopter packages from Dehradun are also available for pilgrims who want to complete the yatra quickly. These reduce the journey to a few days, compared to the usual week or more. New rules introduced this year There are some changes in 2026. Entry restrictions have been put in place at Kedarnath, Badrinath and Gangotri, where non-Hindus may face certain conditions. Yamunotri, however, remains open to all. Phones and cameras are not allowed inside temple premises this year, in a move aimed at maintaining the sanctity of the shrines.

Health checks and expanded safety systems Authorities are placing a stronger focus on health this year. A medical check-up is mandatory, particularly for those above 55 or with existing conditions like heart disease, asthma.

# Apple Turns To Hardware Veteran Ternus As CEO To Succeed Cook In AI Age

New Delhi, Apr 21: Apple on Monday named longtime hardware boss John Ternus as its next CEO, turning to another insider to steer the iPhone maker after Tim Cook as it navigates a world radically altered by artificial intelligence, a technology it has lagged on. Cook, a supply-chain genius who boosted Apple's market value by \$3.6 trillion in his 15 years at the helm, will stay on as executive chairman when Ternus takes over on September 1, Apple said in a statement.

Ternus, who joined Apple in 2001, has played a central role in reviving products such as the Mac, which has gained market share against PCs. Though he has kept a low public profile, he has been deeply involved in shaping Apple's biggest products



such as iPads and AirPods. The transition comes at a crucial time for Apple. After years on top of the most-valuable company scoreboard, Apple has lost its crown to AI chipmaker Nvidia, as investors have fretted over its lack of innovation in the technology that is changing how people work, create and get information.

Integrating AI into the iPhone - the most successful consumer product in

ing rivals such as OpenAI's ChatGPT have attracted hundreds of millions of users.

In particular, Siri has not yet become an "agent" - the term that AI firms use for systems that carry out complex tasks like a human assistant.

"I expect his biggest challenge and efforts will be focused on getting a better AI story and offering together that relies more on Apple's own capabilities and less on third parties," said Bob O'Donnell, head of tech consulting firm TECHAnalysis Research.

**APPLE GAVE TERNUS AIRTIME RECENTLY**

At 50, Ternus is the same age Cook was when he took over CEO duties from Apple co-founder Steve Jobs.

Apple, which rarely allows its executives to speak pub-

licly, has sought to elevate Ternus' profile in recent years, having him speak with the press about Apple's products.

He showed off the iPhone Air in September, the biggest revamp of the firm's top-selling product in nearly a decade.

Ternus will also have to fend off rivals such as Meta Platforms, whose augmented-reality glasses have become a surprise hit with just a fraction of the capabilities and price tag of Apple's \$3,499-plus Vision Pro headset. Nvidia, too, has announced its own personal computer and is working on chips that can power laptops.

"The promotion of Mr. Ternus indicates the company will focus on new hardware devices such as folding phones, glasses, VR devices.

# Saudi cash lifeline arrives: Pakistan gets final \$1 billion, but pressure on reserves persists



New Delhi, Apr 21: Pakistan's central bank on Tuesday confirmed it has received \$1 billion from Saudi Arabia, completing a previously committed \$3 billion financial support package at a time when the country's external finances remain under strain.

The latest inflow, credited on April 20, marks the final tranche of the Saudi deposit arrangement, following an earlier transfer of \$2 billion earlier this month. The funding comes as Islamabad continues to grapple with tightening

external liquidity and mounting repayment obligations.

The State Bank of Pakistan said, "State Bank of Pakistan has received funds of US\$ 1 billion from Ministry of Finance, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in the value date of 20 April 2026," confirming the completion of the full \$3 billion commitment aimed at stabilising foreign exchange reserves.

Saudi deposit offers temporary relief to reserves. The inflow is expected to provide short-term breath-

ing space to Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves, which have been under sustained pressure due to heavy debt repayments and ongoing balance of payments challenges.

Officials have been working to meet international payment deadlines with significant outflows continuing to weigh on the country's financial position. The latest deposit is seen as a stopgap measure to support reserves rather than a long-term solution.

IMF benchmarks and external obligations keep pressure high.

The support also helps Pakistan stay aligned with fiscal targets under its ongoing programme with the International Monetary Fund. Keeping reserves at a steady level is crucial for Pakistan to stay on track with the IMF conditions that demand tighter financial discipline and ongoing reforms.

# Apple's Tim Cook to step down as CEO in September

New Delhi, Apr 21: Tim Cook will step down as Chief Executive Officer of Apple Inc. and take over as executive chairman of the company's board, with John Ternus set to become the new CEO from September 1, the company announced on Monday.

The decision was approved by Apple's Board of Directors as part of a long-planned leadership transition. Cook will continue as CEO through the summer and work closely with Ternus to ensure a smooth handover.

Currently serving as Senior Vice President of Hardware Engineering, Ternus has been a key figure in developing Apple's major products and will now take charge of leading the company.

After stepping into his new role as executive chairman, Cook will continue to support the company, including engaging with policymakers around the world.

In a community letter to the company, Cook wrote, "For the past 15 years I've started just about every morning the same way. I open my email and I read



notes I received the day before from Apple's users all over the world. You share little pieces of your lives with me and tell me things you want me to know about how Apple has touched you. About the moment your mom was saved by her Apple Watch. About the perfect selfie you captured at the summit of a mountain that seemed impossible to climb. You thank me for the ways Mac has changed what you can do at work and sometimes give me a hard time because something you care about isn't working like it should."

# Iran war-linked energy shock hits region; India projected to lead growth at 6.4%: UN ESCAP

New Delhi, Apr 21: Even as the Iran conflict disrupts global energy flows, India is expected to remain the fastest-growing major economy in the Asia Pacific region, clocking 6.4 per cent growth in the current financial year, a United Nations report has said. The projection, released by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), comes against the backdrop of rising uncertainty triggered by the Strait of Hormuz disruptions and the broader fallout of the Iran war, underscoring India's relative resilience compared to its regional peers. According to the report, India's real GDP growth slowed from 7.4 per cent in the previous fiscal year but is expected to pick up to 6.6 per cent in the next financial year. The estimates for the ongoing year were based on economic conditions as of March



17, when the Iran conflict was already impacting global energy markets.

**India stays ahead as Asia Pacific growth slows**

The Asia Pacific region, which stretches from Japan to Türkiye and remains a key driver of global economic activity, is projected to see overall growth slow from

4.1 per cent last year to 3.5 per cent this year, before a modest recovery to 3.8 per cent next year. China's economy, meanwhile, grew 5 per cent last year and is expected to expand by 4.3 per cent this year and 4.5 per cent next year. In South Asia, Pakistan recorded the weakest growth at 3 per cent last year, with projections

of 2.6 per cent this year and 3.1 per cent in the next.

**Domestic demand, services cushion external shocks**

ESCAP noted that India's strong growth in the previous fiscal year was driven by robust consumption, particularly in rural areas, along with goods and services tax rate cuts. It also highlighted that US importers had front-loaded purchases from India ahead of anticipated tariff hikes. However, the report pointed out that economic momentum weakened in the latter half of 2025. "However, economic activities moderated in the second half of 2025 as exports to the United States declined by 25 per cent following the introduction of 50 per cent tariffs in August 2025", according to the report. Despite these headwinds, "the services sector remained a key growth driver", it added.

# India's economy to grow 6.4% in 2026 and 6.6% in 2027: UN report

New Delhi, Apr 21: India's economy is expected to increase by 6.4 per cent this year and 6.6 per cent in 2027, according to a report released by United Nations. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) highlighted in its report that the economies of South and South-West Asia rose by 5.4 per cent in 2025 compared to 5.2 per cent in 2024, primarily due to robust growth in India.

According to the Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2026 study, India's growth increased slightly to 7.4 per cent in 2025, supported by robust consumption, especially from the rural economy along with goods and services tax rate cuts, and export frontloading ahead of the United States' tariffs. It stated that when 50 per cent tariffs were imposed in August 2025, ship-



ments to the US fell by 25 per cent, causing economic activity in India to slow down in the second half of 2025. The services industry continued to be a major engine of growth. India's growth rate would be 6.4 per cent in 2026 and 6.6 per cent in the next year. The country's inflation rate is expected to be 4.4 per cent this year and 4.3 per cent in 2027, the report

outlined. It added that the trade tensions and geopolitical uncertainties caused a fall in FDI inflows to developing Asian and Pacific economies. Despite a 14 per cent increase in worldwide flows, FDI to the region fell by 2 per cent in 2025 after rising by 0.6 per cent in 2024. Furthermore, India's production-linked incentive programme serves as an

example of how macroeconomic policy can promote green industrial development by providing incentives for domestic production of solar photovoltaic, batteries, and green hydrogen. This reduces reliance on imports while generating new industrial beneficiaries who have a stake in maintaining the transition, as per report. "Across developing economies in Asia and the Pacific, targeted industrial policies are being used to scale clean technology manufacturing and accelerate the energy transition. Initiatives include India's Production Linked Incentive scheme for high-efficiency solar modules, China's strategic subsidies for electric vehicle battery manufacturing," it said.

Interestingly, on 15 April, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) updated India's growth forecast.

# Crude Oil Prices Down Up To 2 Per Cent As West Asia Talks Enter Crucial Negotiations

New Delhi, Apr 21: Global crude oil prices witnessed decline on Tuesday, reversing the previous session's gains, amid expectations that upcoming talks between the United States and Iran could ease tensions.

International oil benchmark Brent crude futures declined as much as 1.31 per cent to \$94.22 per barrel, hitting an intraday low. Meanwhile, US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) traded at \$85.5, down 2.19 per cent from the previous close. However, both crude benchmarks had rallied strongly on Monday, with Brent rising 5.6 per cent and WTI surging 6.9 per cent after Iran again shut the Strait of Hormuz.

On the domestic front, crude oil on the Multi



Commodity Exchange (MCX) was trading 1.75 per cent lower at Rs 8,040, an intraday low. Meanwhile, the United States had seized an Iranian cargo vessel as part of its blockade of Iranian ports. However, Iran's top negotiator and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf reportedly reiterated that Tehran would not engage in talks under pressure. On Monday, shipping activity through the Strait of Hormuz, which handles about one-fifth of global oil supply remained constrained. In addition, US President Donald Trump said he believed a nuclear deal currently being negotiated with Iran would be better than the 2015 international agreement aimed at curbing Tehran's nuclear programme.

# Jaquar IPA Neerathon 2026 Sees Strong Turnout, Amplifies National Water Conservation Movement



New Delhi, Apr 21: The 3rd edition of the Jaquar IPA Neerathon - Run for Water, a large-scale water awareness festival inspired by the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi on water conservation, concluded successfully on April 19, 2026 at the iconic Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium. The event witnessed participation from

over 2,500 runners, all united around the cause of sustainable water use and conservation. Organised by the Indian Plumbing Association, with Jaquar Group as the Title Sponsor, the Neerathon further strengthened the growing momentum of the #SaveWater campaign. The initiative continues to be held in memory of Shri N.L. Mehra, founder of Jaquar Group. The event was supported by key Government of India ministries, including the Ministry of Jal Shakti and the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, underlining the increasing institutional focus on water sustainability. This year marked a significant expansion with the introduction of the Half Marathon (21.1 km), which alone attracted over 700 registrations. In addition, the 3 km fun run, 5 km, and 10 km timed runs saw participation from a diverse mix of runners spanning academia, industry, hospitality, and corporate sectors - positioning the Neerathon.

# PLI scheme for food processing creates 3.39 lakh jobs, disburses Rs 2,162 crore in Incentives

New Delhi, April 21: The Production-Linked Incentive Scheme for the Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI) has generated around 3.39 lakh direct and indirect jobs by February 2026, surpassing its target of 2.5 lakh jobs by 2026-27, while disbursing incentives worth Rs 2,162.55 crore to beneficiaries since its launch, according to government data released on Tuesday.

The scheme, approved by the Union Cabinet on March 31, 2021, with an outlay of Rs 10,900 crore, is being implemented from 2021-22 to 2026-27 and aims to generate processed food output of Rs 33,494 crore.

The data stated that a total of 165 applications have been approved by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries across vari-



ous categories, covering 274 project locations. Beneficiaries have reported investments amounting to Rs 9,207 crore under the scheme, while processing and preservation capacity of 34 lakh

metric tonnes per annum has been created as of February 2026. The scheme has also made significant strides in promoting smaller businesses, with 69 of the 165 approved applicants being

MSMEs. An additional 40 contract manufacturing units associated with approved applicants also fall within the MSME category, indicating their integration across the value chain, data added. The data noted that on the exports front, agricultural processed food products approved under the scheme grew at a compound annual growth rate at 13.23 per cent as of 2024-25, with reference to 2019-20. The cumulative export sales of PLISFPI beneficiaries reached Rs 89,053.44 crore during the period from April 2021 to September 2025. The data highlighted that the scheme is structured around three core components - incentivizing manufacturing of ready-to-cook and ready-to-eat foods including millet-based products.



## JU Law School Organises Extension Lecture on Role of Youth in Heritage Conservation

Jammu, April 21: The Law School, University of Jammu, organized an extension lecture on the theme "Safeguarding Heritage and the Role of Youth" for students of the second semester BA LL.B. programme. The event was deeply rooted in the ethos of the Bharatiya Jñana Parampara (Indian Knowledge Systems), which views heritage not merely as monuments or artefacts but as a living, dynamic continuum of wisdom, ethics, and civilizational memory. Shri Nagendra Singh Jamwal (JKAS), Special Secretary in the office of the Chief Secretary, UT of J&K, served as the resource person. Drawing upon the Indian philosophical understanding of Virasat (heritage) as a sacred trust, he emphasized that youth must embrace heritage as a duty rather than a static inheritance. Citing ancient concepts of Loka Sa'graha (welfare of the community) and Seva (selfless service), Shri



Jamwal shared insights from his administrative and civic experiences, inspiring students to act as torchbearers of cultural continuity. He also linked traditional practices of heritage conservation with contemporary legal frameworks.

Si'ya-Guru Parampara of experiential learning, fostering a sense of Ra?'ya Chintan (national reflection) and civic responsibility rooted in Indic values. The event was coordinated by Dr. Mrinalini Atray, who highlighted how such initiatives bridge modern legal education with the Indic principle of living heritage. She noted that the Indian Knowledge System views law and culture as intertwined, and that youth engagement is essential to uphold this synthesis. The session concluded with an interactive discussion in which students articulated their perspectives on youth-led heritage initiatives, drawing parallels with traditional Yava Ma?'alis (youth collectives) in Indian history that safeguarded art, architecture, and oral traditions. The event reaffirmed that the fusion of Indian Knowledge Systems with legal pedagogy can inspire a new generation of heritage-conscious citizens.

## Indian Army hosts drug awareness debate as part of Nasha Mukti Abhiyan at Harni

Poonch: 21 Apr 2026.

The Indian Army organized a drug awareness debate today at Harni as part of its ongoing efforts to combat drug abuse and promote a culture of healthy, disciplined and responsible living among the youth. The initiative aimed to sensitize students to the growing threat of drug abuse and encourage them to adopt a drug-free lifestyle. The debate, held at Harni, witnessed active and enthusiastic participation from 45 students, who presented their views on the issue of drug abuse. The students displayed remarkable confidence and awareness, addressing issues such as the harmful effects of drugs on health, the breakdown of families, the rise in crime, and the



importance of education, counselling and community support in preventing drug abuse. The interactive session encouraged critical thinking and open dialogue, making the debate both informative and impactful. The initiative, in support of the Nasha Mukti Abhiyan, proved highly effective in spreading awareness and reinforcing the message of a drug-free lifestyle. It also motivated students to act as ambassadors of change within their communities, contributing to the larger goal of a healthier and safer society. The program concluded with motivating remarks, emphasizing the importance of staying away from drugs and actively supporting the vision of a drug-free Jammu and Kashmir.

## DC Samba reviews progress of HPV Vaccination Campaign in the district



SAMBA, APRIL 21: A review meeting of the District Task Force on Immunization (DTFI) was convened today under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Samba Ayushi Sudan to assess intersectoral coordination and review the progress of the ongoing Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Vaccination Campaign in the district. The meeting began with a welcome address by Chief Medical Officer Samba, Dr. Vidhi Bhatial, while a detailed overview of the campaign was presented by District Immunization Officer Dr.

Kamlesh Kumari. The campaign launched on February 28, 2026 aims to vaccinate girls who have attained 14 years of age but are below 15 years, thereby protecting them against cervical cancer through timely HPV vaccination. Emphasizing the importance of awareness, the Deputy Commissioner directed the strengthening of IEC (Information, Education and Communication) activities. She called for wide publicity through banners, posters and pamphlets at schools, health institutions.

## MLA Haveli Reviews Developmental Progress, Issues Key Directives in High-Level Meeting

POONCH, 20 April 2026\* – The Hon'ble MLA of Haveli Jenab Ajaz Ahmed Jan today chaired a comprehensive review meeting with senior functionaries of key development departments at the District Headquarters. The meeting assessed the performance of the Rural Development Department, Public Works Department (PWD), Jal Shakti, PMGSY, PDD, Forest, Agriculture, and Horticulture departments. The meeting commenced with a formal welcome of the Hon'ble MLA. Senior officials present included: Shakeel Ahmed Malik, Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD), Poonch Rakesh Sharma, Assistant



Commissioner Panchayat (ACP), Poonch Executive Engineers of various development departments, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Poonch Other district officers. During the session, the Hon'ble MLA reviewed the progress achieved during the last financial year and commended all departments for their diligent work and timely completion of projects. All departments were instructed to work with compassion, dedication and hard work. Officers were urged

to initiate early planning and tendering processes for the current financial year to ensure timely execution. The PWD was specifically directed to begin the black-topping of Chandak Mandi Road at the earliest. The PWD and Horticulture Department were jointly instructed to conduct field visits and expedite the process of granting compensation to farmers for fruit trees lost during road construction. Several other major and minor instructions were issued to the respective departments to accelerate public service delivery. The meeting concluded with a formal vote of thanks, reaffirming the administration's commitment to transparent and efficient governance.

## DC reviews anti-drug measures at district-level NCORD meeting awareness Campaign to be Intensified

Poonch, Apr 21: Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Ashok Kumar Sharma today chaired a meeting of the district-level committee under the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) to review the action taken for the prevention of the drug menace in the district. The meeting was attended by Senior Superintendent of Police, Shafkat Hussain Bhat; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Tahir Mustafa Malik, besides concerned district officers, college principals, and all Tehsildars, SDMs, and SDPOs, who joined through virtual mode. During the meeting, detailed reports were presented by the SDMs and Tehsildars regarding the prevailing situation in their respective jurisdictions. The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need to strengthen the



feedback system regarding drug peddlers to ensure timely and effective action. He stressed the importance of public participation in awareness rallies and urged officers to motivate citizens to actively join such initiatives so that awareness about the harmful effects of drugs reaches every sector of society. The Senior Superintendent of Police assured that the police department is actively working to curb drug abuse and that strict action will be taken against offenders. The Drug Inspector presented a detailed report on enforcement actions taken, while the Forest Department

informed that strict surveillance is being maintained on illegal poppy cultivation and necessary preventive measures are being implemented. Highlighting the role of educational institutions, the DC directed college professors to conduct random awareness activities in markets and public places. Similar instructions were issued to SDMs, SDPOs, and Tehsildars to organize awareness drives to sensitize the public. The Deputy Commissioner further called upon all officers to ensure the successful implementation of the three-month drug awareness campaign. He directed them to work with full dedication and coordination to make the campaign effective and contribute actively towards making the district, the Union Territory, and the nation drug-free.

## JKAACL releases three Notable Dogri Books, Celebrates Literary Excellence in Jammu



JAMMU, APRIL 21: The Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) organized an impressive literary function to release three significant Dogri books, marking a meaningful contribution to the enrichment of Dogri literature. The books released over by Prof Lalit Magotra, a distinguished senior Dogri writer, while the Chief Guest on the occasion was Krishna Krishan Sharma; "Do

Ghatt Teraan Kahaniyan", originally written in Punjabi by Jang S. Varman and translated into Dogri by Dr. Nirmal Vinod and "Kharh-Khakhar", a short story collection authored by Sumit Khajuria, marking his debut contribution to Dogri literature. The event was presided over by Prof Lalit Magotra, a distinguished senior Dogri writer, while the Chief Guest on the occasion was Krishna Krishan Sharma; "Do

figure. Their gracious presence added dignity and grandeur to the programme. The proceedings commenced with a warm welcome address by Secretary Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL), Harvinder Kour, who greeted the dignitaries and participants. She highlighted the importance of such literary initiatives, stating that book release programmes are regularly.

## Bhalla, Sawhney review preparations for Massive Protest tomorrow Slams BJP Over Delay in Women's Reservation Implementation

### Raman Bhalla accuses Centre of "betraying women" by linking quota to delimitation

Jammu, April 21: Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) Working President Raman Bhalla, along with former Minister Yogesh Sawhney on Monday addressed a workers' meeting at the party headquarters in Jammu to review preparations for a grand protest scheduled for tomorrow against the BJP-led Central government. The meeting witnessed enthusiastic participation from party cadres, reflecting strong grassroots mobilization ahead of the protest. Raman Bhalla, in his address, launched a sharp attack on the Centre, accusing Prime Minister Narendra Modi of misleading the country by linking

the implementation of the 33% Women's Reservation Bill to the census and delimitation process. He termed the move as a deliberate attempt to delay women's political empowerment until 2029 or beyond, thereby depriving them of immediate representation in Parliament. Bhalla further alleged that the BJP government is indulging in "double game politics," protecting itself as a champion of women's rights while creating procedural barriers to stall the actual implementation of the legislation. He said the use of delimitation as a precondition is nothing but a "political tool" to manipulate electoral equations in favour of the ruling party rather than genuinely



empowering women. Reiterating the Congress party's stand, Bhalla demanded that the reservation be implemented immediately on the basis of the existing 543 Lok Sabha seats. He described the proposed linkage with delimitation as a "fraud political move" aimed at increasing seats to suit political interests, and called upon party workers to intensify their struggle to ensure justice for women across the country. Quoting senior AICC members and party spokespersons, Bhalla said that the national leadership of the Congress has taken a firm and united stand against what it describes as an "undue and unjustified

delay" in implementing the Women's Reservation Bill. He noted that senior leaders at the All India Congress Committee have consistently maintained that linking the quota to future delimitation undermines the very spirit of the legislation and dilutes its immediate impact. Bhalla further conveyed

that AICC has strongly criticized the BJP for what they termed as a "cosmetic commitment" to women's empowerment, arguing that the government's approach reflects a lack of political will. According to him, party representatives at the national level have reiterated that women across India deserve immediate representation, not assurances tied to uncertain timelines. Highlighting the broader political message, Bhalla said that Congress leaders across the country are mobilizing public opinion to expose what they call the Centre's "diversionary tactics" on critical issues. He added that the party will continue to raise its voice both inside and outside Parliament until the

reservation for women is implemented without delay, asserting that the fight is not just political but a matter of constitutional rights and gender justice. Former Minister Yogesh Sawhney, while addressing the gathering, echoed similar concerns and termed the delay in implementation as a "betrayal of women's trust." He said the failure to ensure timely enactment of the Constitution (131st Amendment) Bill is its true spirit exposes the government's lack of sincerity towards women's empowerment. Sawhney also criticized the Prime Minister's recent national address, stating that it was used to target the opposition rather than addressing the core issue of women's representation. He urged party workers to ensure maximum participation in the protest, emphasizing that sustained democratic pressure is essential to compel the government to act in the interest of women. Chief spokesperson Shri Ravinder Sharma, Ex MLC I/C HQ Ved Mahajan, and newly nominated Assembly Constituencies incharges of Jammu District S/Shri Mangal Bral, Kuldeep Sharma, Rajinder Bhagat, Romal Singh, Satish Sharma, Dwarka choudhary, Pawan Bhagat, Surinder Kumar, Rajesh Sharma, Sohni Sharma, Sonu Dogri and Jatia vashisht attended the meeting.

**CM unveils 'Six Seasons'- Shishur magazine of Tourism Department**



**JAMMU, APRIL 21:** Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today unveiled the January-March 2026 edition of the 'Six Seasons' - Shishur (Severe Cold) magazine of the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department at the Civil Secretariat here. The issue, themed Shishur, captures the winter essence of J&K and highlights a range of tourism initiatives undertaken during the period. The magazine has been compiled by the Directorate of Tourism

Kashmir. The event was attended by Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary Tourism Ashish Chandra Verma, Director Information Shreya Singhal, Directors Tourism Kashmir Syed Qamar Sajjad and Director Tourism Jammu Vikas Gupta besides other senior officers. The magazine features curated stories on prominent tourist destinations, coverage of international events organised by the department, annual conventions of travel, trade and hospitality bodies, participation in major travel fairs, and outreach programmes led by the Chief Minister. Appreciating the efforts of the Tourism Department, the Chief Minister commended the initiative, noting that such publications play an important role in showcasing the rich tourism potential of Jammu and Kashmir and strengthening its global outreach.

**Deputy Chief Minister calls for enhanced connectivity through 4-Lane Domel-Katra-Reasi-Bambala road project**

**Chairs review meeting to assess progress**

**JAMMU, APRIL 21:** Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary today emphasized the need to strengthen connectivity across Katra, Reasi and Pouni regions through the proposed Domel-Katra-Reasi-Bambala road project. Chairing a high-level review meeting, the Deputy Chief Minister assessed the progress of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) preparation and examined the proposed alignment of the project. He described the initiative as a vital infrastructure development, saying that



the proposed four-lane road will significantly improve connectivity, reduce travel time, and enhance overall mobility in the region. The meeting was attended by Chief Engineer PMGSY, Purshottam Kumar, Director Planning and other senior officers. The Deputy Chief

**10th class Summer Zone results declared 88.85% students declared qualified**

*Sakeena Itoo lauds students for outstanding results*

**JAMMU, APRIL 21:** Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) today declared the results of Annual/Regular 10th Class (Summer Zone) areas of Jammu division. A total of 50,754 candidates appeared in the examination, out of which 45,094 candidates have qualified, making overall pass percentage of 88.85%, which is much better than the last year's percentage of 79.94. Among the candidates, 27,486 boys and 23,268 girls appeared in the examination. Of these, 24,054 boys and 21,040 girls qualified. The pass percentage of boys stood at 87.51%, whereas girls have recorded a higher pass percentage of 90.42%. The examination was conducted

smoothly across 527 centres. Notably, 26,706 candidates from Government schools appeared in the examination with 22,283 qualifying, making pass percentage of 83.44%. From Private Schools, 24,048 candidates appeared with 22,811 qualifying, making pass percentage of 94.86%. Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo extended her heartfelt greetings to the students of 10th Class (Summer Zone) for passing the examination with flying colours. The Minister commended the students for their hard work, dedication, and perseverance, stating that the results are a testament to their commitment and the collective efforts of teachers, parents, and the education system at large. She added that the pass percentage of 83.44 for Government schools is very encouraging and highlights the improvement of educational standards in Government institutions. "These outstanding results reflect the Government's sustained focus on strengthening the education sector and ensuring quality learning outcomes across Jammu and Kashmir", she stated. Highlighting the achievements of girl students, the Minister lauded their outstanding performance in the examinations. She noted with pride that girls have once again outshined boys, showcasing their determination, resilience, and academic excellence. "This achievement is not only a matter of pride but also a clear

indication of the positive impact of various government initiatives aimed at empowering girls through education," she said. Encouraging students to remain focused and motivated, the Minister urged them to pursue their future academic and career goals with confidence and determination. She also advised those who could not perform as expected to remain hopeful and work harder, emphasizing that success is a continuous journey. The Minister further reiterated the Government's commitment to providing an inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education system. She assured that continuous efforts are being made to improve infrastructure, enhance teaching standards, and create a conducive learning environment for all students.

**Satish Sharma releases Coffee Table Book on IEC activities, unveils S&T deptts' annual IEC calendar 2026**

**JAMMU, APRIL 21:** Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Science & Technology, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, Satish Sharma, today released the Coffee Table Book on Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Activities and unveiled the annual IEC Calendar 2026 of the Department of Science & Technology, Jammu & Kashmir government, at a formal function held here.



The Coffee Table Book offers a comprehensive documentation of IEC initiatives undertaken across Jammu & Kashmir, showcasing the outreach, impact and diversity of science and technology interventions at the grassroots level. It reflects the department's sustained efforts to promote scientific temper, strengthen innovation

ecosystems and foster meaningful engagement between institutions and communities. The annual IEC Calendar 2026 outlines a detailed, month-wise roadmap of awareness campaigns, outreach programmes and thematic activities aimed at ensuring continuous public engagement with science and technology. By integrating key observances, innovation-driven events

and awareness drives, the calendar institutionalises a structured and sustained approach to science communication across the Union Territory. Addressing the gathering, the Minister emphasized that science and technology must act as a catalyst for inclusive growth and social transformation. He stated that the real measure of scientific progress lies in its ability to positively impact the lives of common citizens. He highlighted that IEC initiatives play a crucial role in bridging the gap between laboratories and society, ensuring that innovations are effectively communicated, understood and adopted at the grassroots level. Satish Sharma observed that Jammu & Kashmir is steadily progressing towards becoming a knowledge-driven and innovation-oriented Union Territory, where scientific awareness and technological interventions are increasingly integrated into governance and development frameworks. He appreciated the department's efforts in making science accessible, relevant and people-centric and stressed the need to further expand outreach in rural and remote areas, particularly among youth, students and marginalized communities. Underscoring the importance of strategic communication, the Minister noted that the annual IEC Calendar would serve as an effective tool for planning, coordination and implementation of outreach initiatives. He expressed confidence that such structured efforts would contribute significantly towards fostering innovation, enhancing awareness of government programmes and promoting sustainable practices in areas such as renewable energy, digital technologies and scientific research. Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner Secretary, Science & Technology, Babila Rakwal, stated that the Coffee Table Book reflects the Department's evolving approach towards inclusive and impact-driven science communication.

**Shantmanu inspects Special Revision camps in Kathua; stresses 100% enrolment of eligible voters**

**KATHUA, APRIL 21:** State Election Commissioner, Jammu and Kashmir, Shantmanu, today conducted an extensive tour of Kathua district to inspect the Special Summary Revision camps being organised for updation of Panchayat Electoral Rolls-2026. District Panchayat Election Officer (Deputy Commissioner) Kathua, Rajesh Sharma and Secretary, State Election Commission J&K, Sushel Kumar also accompanied the State Election Commissioner during the visit. The visit was aimed at reviewing the progress of the revision exercise on the ground and ensuring that the electoral rolls are comprehensive, accurate and inclusive. The ongoing revision process, which commenced on March 27, 2026, provides for filing of claims and objections pertaining to new enrolments, deletions and transpo-



sition of voters across the Union Territory. During the inspection of special camps at GDC Hiranagar and GMS Badala, the State Election Commissioner reviewed the functioning of special camps and assessed the pace of enrolment of newly eligible voters. He examined the status of forms received for inclusion, deletion, correction and transposition in the Panchayat electoral rolls. Interacting with the Panchayat Secretaries and field functionaries, he emphasised the need for expeditious disposal of claims and objections and called for ensuring 100 percent registration of all eligible voters. He also sought identification of bottlenecks, if any, in the enrolment process and directed for

their timely redressal. The State Election Commissioner stressed the importance of transparency and accessibility in the revision process and directed the concerned officers to intensify awareness campaigns across all Panchayat Halgas so that every eligible citizen is facilitated to get enrolled without any hindrance. DEPO (DC) Kathua, Rajesh Sharma, assured that the District Election Cell, along with field functionaries, will strive to make Kathua the best performing district in the ongoing revision exercise. He emphasised the crucial role of BLOs and Panchayat Secretaries in achieving this objective and informed that special camps are being organised in colleges and across all Panchayats, including on Saturdays and Sundays, to maximise outreach.

**Javid Dar meets delegation of FICCI Ladies Organisation**

**JAMMU, APRIL 21:** Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar on Tuesday met a delegation of the FICCI Ladies Organisation at the Civil Secretariat here. The delegation raised a range of issues concerning promotion of women-led enterprises, skill development and greater economic participation of women across Jammu and Kashmir. They also suggested measures to enhance the institutional support and improve market access for women entrepreneurs. The Minister assured



the delegation that their concerns would be addressed in a time-bound manner. He said the government is focused on creating an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs through the targeted initiatives, improved access to finance and capacity-building programmes. Emphasising inclusive growth, Javid Dar said women are key drivers of economic development and their active participation is essential for sustainable progress, particularly in rural areas. He also highlighted the ongoing efforts aimed at boosting the entrepreneurship and livelihood opportunities adding that the Omar Abdullah government is committed to ensure that women receive adequate support to expand and sustain their enterprises.

**NZATI, RIHFW organise training session on BLS for JKAS Probationers**

**JAMMU, APRIL 21:** Northern Zonal Accountancy Training Institute (NZATI), Jammu in collaboration with Regional Institute of Health and Family Welfare (RIHFW), Nagrota organized a training session on Basic Life Support (BLS) for JKAS (Accounts) probationers of Phase-II training programme

(SAC-II). The programme was presided over by Director General Accounts & Treasuries, Fayaz Ahmad Lone and conducted under the able guidance of Director Finance/ Principal, NZATI, Jammu, Rajesh Talwar. Among others Principal, Regional Institute of Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Manoj

Bhagat; Master Trainer, Dr. Shelly Mahajan; Dr. Kapil Sharma (Public Health), In-charge Skill Lab Coordinator at RIHFW Nagrota, Rajesh Gupta; Director, Accounts & Treasuries, Jammu, Rajesh Kotwal and Joint Director (Central), Directorate General of Accounts & Treasuries,

J&K, Ishfaq Ahmad Pandith were also present. Addressing the gathering, Fayaz Ahmad Lone emphasized the importance of such capacity-building initiatives, stating that officers must be equipped not only with domain knowledge but also with essential emergency response skills. The session

was organized with the objective to equip the probationers with essential life-saving skills and enhancing their preparedness to respond effectively in emergency situations. The technical and practical sessions were conducted by Dr. Shelly Mahajan, Dr. Kapil Sharma and Rajesh Gupta. The team pro-

vided hands-on practice sessions wherein participants performed Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and airway management techniques for both adult and neo-natal resuscitation under Basic Life Support protocols, aimed at saving lives during emergency situations. They emphasized on

the importance of such training programmes in building first-response capabilities among officers. The training was delivered through a simulation-based and interactive approach, enabling participants to gain practical exposure and confidence in handling real-life emergencies.

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