

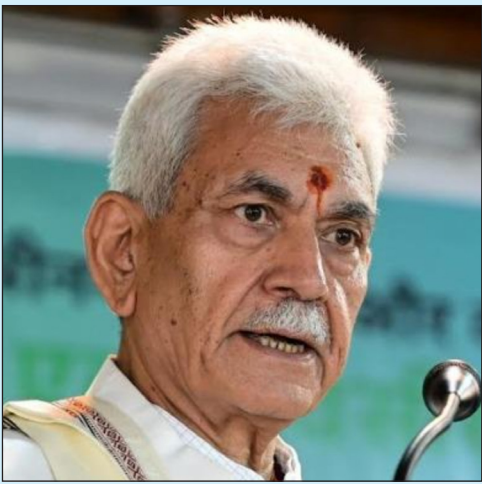
Srinagar
Saturday
April 25 | 2026
8 Dhul Qadah, 1447 AH
Issue No: 100
Volume: 16
Pages: 12
Price: Rs 02/-

16TH YEAR OF PUBLICATION
HEADLINES TODAY
Voice To The Voiceless

LUBAAB PUBLICATIONS
ONE STOP SOLUTION FOR ALL PRINTING NEEDS
NEWSPAPER | BOOKS | FLYERS | LOGO | FLEX | MAGAZINES
VISING CARDS | BROCHURES | 3D BOARDS | COVER PAGES
WEDDING CARDS | CALLIGRAPHY | WALL PAINTINGS
9999038812
9419008414
Radio Colony,
Gund Hassibhat, Lawaipora Srinagar-190017

Historic People's Movement Needed to Eradicate Drugs: LG Manoj Sinha

LG Launches Nasha-Mukt J&K Campaign in Reasi



HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 24: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday launched the 'Nasha-Mukt J&K' campaign in Reasi, urging a united, society-wide movement to combat drug abuse, which he said is eating into the very fabric of society.

Addressing the event, the Lieutenant Governor said that over the past 12 days, a strong

LG chairs J&K Higher Education Council meeting

HT NEWS NETWORK

Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today chaired a high-level meeting of Jammu Kashmir Higher Education Council, at Lok Bhavan.

The meeting was attended by Prof. Dinesh Singh, Vice Chairman, J&K Higher Education Council; Shri Shailendra Kumar, Additional Chief Secretary, Finance Department; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Shri Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, Administrative Secretary, Skill Development; Shri Ram Niwas Sharma, Commissioner Secretary; Higher Education Department; Prof. Umesh Rai, Vice Chancellor, University of Jammu; Prof. Nilofer Khan, VC Kashmir University; Prof.

Turn on Page 2

No More Toll Queues: Nitin Gadkari Announces Barrier-Free Highways by December

AI-powered ANPR and FASTag to enable seamless travel on NHs

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, APR 24: India is set to usher in a new era of seamless highway travel, with Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Friday announcing that barrier-free tolling will be introduced on several national highways across the country by December this year.

Speaking at the Logistics Shakti Summit & Awards 2026, Gadkari said the



initiative will deploy integrated technologies such as Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) with artificial intelligence and RFID-based FASTag systems, allowing vehicles to pass toll points without stopping.

Under the new system, toll charges will be automatically deducted based on vehicle identification through high-performance cameras and FASTag readers. Authorities will issue e-notices to

Turn on Page 2

Workers' Dignity Key To Nation's Progress: Mansukh Mandaviya



HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, APR 24: Emphasising that respect for workers is fundamental to national growth, Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on

Turn on Page 2

India To Be Top 10 Sporting Nation By 2036, Top-5 By 2047: Mandaviya

HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, APR 24: Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Friday said India would emerge among the top 10 sporting nations by 2036 and break into the top five by 2047.

Turn on Page 2

Railway Team Reviews Damaged Ravi Bridge, Orders Monsoon Readiness

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

JAMMU, APR 24: A high-level team of Indian Railways on Friday conducted a detailed safety and technical inspection of rail bridges over the Ravi river on the Kathua-Madhupur section of the Jammu division, with a focus on restoration work and operational readiness.

The inspection was led by Divisional Railway Manager Vivek Kumar, Commissioner of Railway Safety Dinesh Chand Deswal, and Chief Administrative Officer of the Udhampur-Srinagar-

Turn on Page 2

Bengal's Phase-1 Voting Seals Wave of Change: Narendra Modi

HT NEWS DESK / AGENCIES

KOLKATA, APR 24: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday claimed that the first phase of polling in West Bengal has confirmed a "wave of change" in the state, asserting that the support in favour of the Bharatiya Janata Party has signalled its victory in the ongoing assembly elections.

Addressing a rally at Panihati in North 24 Parganas, Modi alleged



that the ruling All India Trinamool Congress had "crushed the temple of democracy" through dictatorship, but said the electorate has begun restoring it through its mandate.

"The wave of change that had been visible in Bengal for a long time — the first phase of voting has put its seal on it. The support shown in favour of the BJP has sounded the conch shell of its

Turn on Page 2

J&K Speeds Up Framework for Private Universities, Eyes Expansion in Higher Education

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 24: The government of Jammu and Kashmir has initiated the process of framing rules for the implementation of the Jammu and Kashmir Private Universities Act, 2026, in a move aimed at expanding the Union Territory's higher education capacity.

Minister for Education Sakina Masood Itoo said the rules are being finalised at the earliest to facilitate the establishment of private universities, stressing that the government is keen to

Turn on Page 2

J&K ACB Busts Custodian Land Scam; 3 FIRs Filed

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

JAMMU, APR 24: The Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) has exposed another major land scam involving Custodian land in Jammu district, officials said here on Friday.

In a statement, a spokesperson said the Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau again achieved a major success in extracting one of the major land scams in Jammu and Kashmir, wherein Custodian land in Asarwan, Mishriwala, Bhalwal and R.S. Pura area of Jammu district has been found usurped by the land mafia in connivance with Form Alf Holders and the officers/officials of Custodian / Revenue department.

He said, inputs were received that Custodian

Turn on Page 2

All-weather direct Jammu-Srinagar Vande Bharat to be launched on April 30

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, APR 24: The direct Jammu-Srinagar train service is set to commence with an inaugural run on April 30, with Indian Railways introducing a specially designed Vande Bharat train equipped to operate in extreme weather conditions.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that all necessary arrangements have been put in place for the inaugural journey, while the regular schedule and additional halts will be notified separately.

They said the train will run with a 20-coach Vande Bharat rake and cover a distance of around 266.66 kilometres during the inaugural run. The train will also halt at Bijbehara,

Turn on Page 2

Rare Himalayan Musk Deer rescued along LoC in Gurez

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

BANDIPORA, APR 24: A rare male musk deer was rescued by the Wildlife Department from a village near the Line of Control (LoC) in the Gurez Valley of north Kashmir's Bandipora district, officials said on Friday.

The animal, locally known as "Roose Kat", was spotted in Wanpora village, prompting locals to alert the department, they said.

A wildlife team rushed to the area and launched a rescue operation, successfully

Turn on Page 2

MEET THE EMINENT WRITER

جموں اینڈ کشمیر ایڈیٹیو آف آرٹ، کچھ اینڈ لینگویجس

نامور شاعر و ترجمہ کار

ڈاکٹر رفیق مسعودی

سے

ملاقات

تاریخ: 25 اپریل 2026، سینچر وار

وقت: 11:00 بجے دن

مقام: کے، ایل، سہگل ہال۔ رائٹرز کلب، جموں

آپ کو بصدِ خلوص و احترام کے ساتھ شرکت کی دعوت ہے۔

ہر وندر کور (JKAS) سیکریٹری

sec-jkaaci@jk.gov.in | twitter.com/jkaacofficial | www.jkaaci.jk.gov.in

youtube.com/@jkulturalacademy | facebook.com/jkaacofficialpage | Instagram.com/jk4423

CONTINUE FROM FRONT PAGE.....

Historic People's.....

and collective resolve has emerged across the Union Territory against narcotics, with people committing themselves to the goal of making Jammu and Kashmir drug-free. He stressed that the campaign must grow into a sustained people's movement driven by communities, institutions and families.

Highlighting the impact of the drive, Sinha said that between April 11 and April 22 in the Jammu division, authorities registered a large number of cases and arrested several drug smugglers. Narcotics valued at nearly Rs. 3 crore were seized, while properties worth around Rs. 1 crore, both movable and immovable, were attached.

He said properties of drug smugglers have been demolished, 187 driving licences and four vehicle registrations cancelled, and financial investigations initiated against 48 drug peddlers. Inspections of drug and chemist shops led to the cancellation of 15 licences, while users were referred to de-addiction and rehabilitation centres with counselling support.

The Lieutenant Governor said 1,947 women committees have been constituted across districts in the Jammu division since the launch of the campaign, underscoring the role of women in leading the fight against the menace.

"We must build a historic movement rising from homes, schools and mohallas, with open dialogue in towns and villages. Mothers and sisters are the moral bedrock of society, and with their support, this battle can be won," he said.

Sinha said over two dozen drug traffickers have already been identified and will be brought to justice, while thousands of peddlers remain under surveillance. Security checks have been intensified around educational institutions and other vulnerable areas.

He warned that those involved in drug trafficking would face the harshest action under law and pointed to the nexus between drug traffickers and terrorists, directing enforcement agencies to treat them as allied threats.

Calling the initiative a historic step to break the long silence around drug abuse, the Lieutenant Governor urged NGOs, social organisations, educators and spiritual leaders to join the campaign in both urban and rural areas.

"Drugs are a deep wound in society. To heal it, we need a collective voice and a determined people's movement to eliminate this menace from its roots," he said.

LG chairs....

Shakil Ahmad Romshoo, VC, IUST; Shri Pragati Kumar, VC SMVDU; Prof BN Tripathi, VC SKUAST Jammu; Prof. A. Ravinder Nath, VC Central University of Kashmir; Prof. Sanjeev Jain, VC Central University of Jammu; Prof. Jawaid Iqbal, VC BGSBU; Prof. Mohammad Mobin, VC Cluster University Srinagar; Prof Manoj Singh Gaur, Director IIT Jammu; Prof Kavi Arya from IIT Bombay; Ms Shobha Bagai, Director, Cluster Innovation Centre Delhi University and other members.

The Council, under the leadership of the Lieutenant Governor, deliberated on comprehensive strategies aimed at driving the holistic transformation of the education sector across the Union Territory.

The key agendas included implementation of the 'Design Your Degree' (DYD) program and the adoption of its official manual across universities, integration of IT and Artificial Intelligence into the curriculum, strategies to promote entrepreneurship, knowledge-based skills and develop human capital for Viksit Bharat.

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

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

Prof. Dinesh Singh, Vice Chairman, JKHEC emphasized that the core mission must remain the realization of human potential, ensuring that higher education directly fosters societal service and enhances student productivity.

The Council also deliberated on setting up a regular mechanism to ensure cooperation and collaboration between various institutions of Jammu & Kashmir for engineering of Joint Degree Programmes and a common technology-based platform for sharing of practices, ideas and programmes of various institutions; increasing the Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER), special initiatives such as 'The Riverine College' and the AI Competition, JKHEC budget utilization for 2025-26 and budget allocations for 2026-27.

Vice Chancellors and members of the Council shared their insights on the way forward for the DYD program and further interventions in higher education with the implementation of NEP 2020.

Prof Sheikh Ajaz Bashir, Director of Colleges, J&K; Dr Seema Naz, Nodal Principal, Government College of Education; Dr Ravinder Kumar Tickoo, Principal, GCW Parade Jammu also attended the meeting.

No More.....

violators, with continued non-payment potentially leading to suspension of FASTag services and other penalties linked to the VAHAN database.

Highlighting the broader economic impact, Gadkari stressed that improving infrastructure and reducing logistics costs are critical for India's global competitiveness. He noted that recent studies by premier institutions indicate that investments in expressways and economic corridors have already brought down logistics costs to about 10 per cent from 16 per cent earlier.

Comparing global benchmarks, he said logistics costs stand at around 12 per cent in the United States and Europe, and between 8 and 10 per cent in China, underlining the need for further efficiency gains in India.

The minister also flagged concerns over India's heavy dependence on imported fossil fuels, stating that nearly 87 per cent of the country's oil requirement is met through imports, costing about 22 lakh crore annually and contributing to pollution. He called for greater emphasis on alternative and biofuels, describing green hydrogen as a key energy source for the future.

Reiterating India's strong economic trajectory, Gadkari said the country is on course to achieve the vision of becoming a \$5-trillion economy under the leadership of Narendra Modi, with infrastructure development playing a central role.

Workers' Dignity.....

Friday said a nation that upholds the dignity of its workforce remains unstoppable on the path of progress, as he inaugurated the first Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) hospital in Kashmir.

The 30-bedded hospital, established at Ompora in Budgam district, marks a significant milestone in extending worker-centric healthcare services to the Valley and strengthening the social security framework in the region.

Addressing a gathering at the inauguration, the Minister for Labour & Employment and Youth Affairs & Sports highlighted the Centre's sustained push towards expanding social security coverage, noting that it has risen from 19 per cent in 2015 to 64.3 per cent in 2025, citing International Labour Organization data. He added that India's efforts in this domain were also recognised by the International Social Security Association last year.

Referring to the four Labour Codes implemented recently, Mandaviya said the reforms ensure critical protections for workers, including mandatory appointment letters, minimum wages and annual health check-ups, thereby institutionalising welfare measures.

He underlined that regular health screenings through ESIC facilities would enable early detection of diseases and promote preventive healthcare, safeguarding the long-term well-being of workers.

The Minister further said that the integration of ESIC with the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana has broadened access to cashless treatment at empanelled hospitals across the country.

Built at a cost of Rs 165 crore, the hospital has the capacity to be expanded to 100 beds and is expected to directly benefit more than 50,000 workers and their families, marking a major step in deepening healthcare access in Jammu and Kashmir.

India To Be Top.....

Speaking to reporters after inaugurating a 30-bedded Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) hospital at Ompora in the central Kashmir district here, Mandaviya credited the Narendra Modi-led government for streamlining sports governance and creating a more structured system.

"It (the government) is providing opportunity to the youth to perform in the sports arena. I am sure that in the days to come, in the next ten years by 2036, India will be among the 10 best sporting nations in the world and by 2047, India will emerge among the top five sporting nations," Mandaviya said.

The minister added that the government's sustained push has strengthened the sporting framework across the country.

"The country has won the bid for hosting the Commonwealth Games in 2030 and has also bid for hosting the 2036 Olympic Games. The process is going on to meet all the demands and expectations of the International Olympic Committee.

"The sports ecosystem has been improved in the country, and with programmes like Fit India, Khelo India move-

ment, the country's youth are getting opportunities," Mandaviya added.

About the hospital, Mandaviya said that the facility, built at a cost of Rs 165 crore, will serve over 50,000 workers and their families and provide them free treatment.

He added a nursing college will also be added to the facility in the future to impart training to the youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

Railway Team.....

Baramulla Rail Link Alok Mishra, officials said.

The team examined a key bridge spanning the Ravi between Kathua in Jammu and Kashmir and Madhopur in Punjab, particularly rail bridge number 17, which was damaged during heavy rainfall in 2025. Officials carried out an in-depth assessment of structural components, including pillars and foundations, while evaluating the bridge's load-bearing capacity and long-term stability.

Given the strategic importance of the route linking Punjab with Jammu and Kashmir, the inspection also covered track geometry, the condition of sleepers in and around the bridge, and the functioning of modern signalling systems to ensure safe train operations.

The Commissioner of Railway Safety reviewed emergency response mechanisms and equipment at the site and directed engineers to remain fully prepared for the upcoming monsoon season and other weather-related challenges.

Bengal's Phase-1.....

victory," he said.

Nearly 92 per cent of the 3.60 crore voters turned out in the first phase of polling on Thursday, a figure the Prime Minister cited as evidence of strong public participation.

He claimed that the ruling party was "rattled" following the initial phase and alleged that its cadre had been mobilised overnight. Modi further asserted that the first phase marked the end of what he termed "maha jungle raj" in the state.

Stepping up his attack on the All India Trinamool Congress, Modi accused it of failing to ensure women's safety and described it as an "anti-women party," while highlighting the BJP's focus on a "women-led development model."

Referring to candidates fielded by the BJP, he said the party had given representation to individuals who had faced injustice, including the mother of the RG Kar rapemurder victim and a survivor from Sandeshkhali.

"The people of Bengal have begun reconstructing the temple of democracy. In the next phase, they must unfurl the victory flag over it," Modi added. (Agencies)

J&K Speeds Up.....

promote private participation in view of the limited number of public institutions in the region.

The legislation, passed during the recent budget session of the J&K Assembly, received broad support from both treasury and opposition benches and was subsequently accorded assent by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, bringing it into force.

The Act lays down a comprehensive framework for the establishment, regulation and governance of private universities, including provisions to maintain academic standards and institutional management. It also provides for the constitution of an Expert Committee, headed by the Administrative Secretary of Higher Education, to examine applications from sponsoring bodies.

As per the provisions, only entities registered for at least three years, with education as their primary objective, sound financial backing, clean credentials, and lawful possession of adequate land and infrastructure will be eligible to establish private universities.

Officials said the framing of rules will operationalise the Act and pave the way for new institutions, potentially widening access to higher education and strengthening the academic ecosystem in Jammu and Kashmir.

J&K ACB Busts.....

land in thousands of Kanal situated at Asarwan, Mishriwala, Bhalwal and R.S. Pura Jammu, has been fraudulently grabbed by the land grabbers/gangsters in connivance with the Revenue officers/officials. The revenue records have been tampered and land has been sold to various persons.

"On the basis of the inputs received by ACB a verification was initiated and on the basis of the verification conducted earlier it was found that more than 1000 kanals of Custodian land was shown allotted to the displaced persons on the basis of fake orders, who were otherwise not entitled for the allotment of additional land through fraudulent means by the land grabbers / Form Alaf holders in connivance with the officers /officials of Revenue department and others."

"Accordingly, 24 case FIRs were regis-

tered by the ACB in which the investigation is still in progress. Again, during the course of verification it has been found that displaced persons of Pakistan (PAK / POK Refugees) were already allotted land in their favour but even then kith and kin of these families although not entitled being Form Alaf holders in connivance with the concerned Patwaries / Girdawars / Naib Tehsildars / Tehsildars of Revenue Department got mutations of additional land at R.S. Pura and Domana area of District Jammu attested in their favour either without any Govt. / Provisional Rehabilitation Office (PRO) order or on fake Govt. / PRO order," said the spokesperson.

He said, during verification it has also been found that no such orders of allotment of land were issued by the office of the PRO. These persons after getting mutation of lands in their favour alienated the said land directly or through their attorney holders / conduits to various persons by resorting to fraudulent means, thereby causing a huge loss to the Govt. Exchequer.

"Owing to the establishment of, prima facie, nexus of the criminal elements/land grabbers/ Form Alaf holders and the Revenue officers/officials in alienation of about 20 kanals 09 Marlas of Custodian land through fraudulent means, ACB has now registered another 03 formal case FIRs in P/S ACB Central J&K for in-depth investigation under the provisions of J&K Prevention of Corruption Act, criminal conspiracy, cheating, forgery and fraud against the accused persons namely (1) Waryam Singh S/O Sh. Shalo Ram R/O Village Kotli Bhagwan Singh (Kuttu Chack) Tehsil R.S. Pura District Jammu then Patwari, (2) Balak Ram S/O Late Sh. Buti Ram R/O Village Tootray Tehsil R.S. Pura, Jammu then Naib Tehsildar, (3) Mohan Singh S/O Sh. Bhagwan Singh R/O Nanak Nagar Jammu, (4) Prem Singh S/O Sh. Churu Ram R/O Baggan Tehsil Bilawar, Kathua, then Patwari, (5) Bharat Bushan Mehra S/O Harbans Lal R/O Mamka, R.S. Pura, Jammu, (6) Rahul Kai S/O Late Sh. Deep Raj R/O H. NO. 39, New Company Bagh Canal Road, Jammu, then Patwari, (7) Saqib Saleem S/O Sh. Saleem Ahmed R/O 54 Majheer Thana Mandi Rajouri then Tahsildar, (8) Sat Pal S/O Sh. Nanak Chand R/O Gadi Garh, Jammu and others". (KNO)

All-weather....

which will remain operational for the cross-run of the service.

In view of the challenging terrain and sub-zero temperatures in Jammu & Kashmir, the train has been fitted with advanced "winterisation" features to ensure uninterrupted operations.

For the first time, self-regulating heating cables have been installed to prevent freezing of water pipelines, while 1800W silicon heating pads have been fitted in water tanks. Additional heating systems have been integrated into bio-toilets and auxiliary tanks to maintain sanitation functions during extreme cold.

Officials said warm air ducts connected to the air-conditioning system

will supply heat to restrooms, while heaters and thermal insulation have been added to ensure proper functioning of vacuum-based toilet systems.

The train is also equipped with a water-draining mechanism to prevent freezing when stabled, and an embedded heating element in the driver's windshield to prevent fogging and ensure visibility during snowfall and fog.

Heating systems have also been installed in the air dryer mechanism to maintain efficient braking, while critical components near water tanks have been shielded with stainless steel covers to prevent damage.

The Vande Bharat train will operate at a speed of up to 160 kmph and is equipped with modern passenger amenities, including fully air-conditioned coaches, automatic doors, LED lighting, CCTV surveillance and an energy-efficient regenerative braking system.

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager Uchit Singhal said, "The operation of this specialised Vande Bharat in the Jammu & Kashmir region fulfils a long-standing demand of both passengers and local residents."

"Our objective is not merely to provide faster travel, but also to ensure all-weather connectivity—even amidst the biting cold of the Valley. This train will serve as a strong and reliable bridge connecting devotees travelling to Vaishno Devi with the Kashmir Valley, while simultaneously boosting tourism in the region," Singhal added—(KNO)

Rare Himalayan.....

capturing the deer alive without causing any harm, officials said.

Wildlife official Tanveer Ahmad told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the species is rarely sighted along the LoC belt in Gurez, making the rescue significant.

The animal was shifted to the Ajas range for initial care and later referred to the Dachigam Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre for treatment and observation, he said.

The Kashmir musk deer (*Moschus cupreus*) is an endangered and elusive mammal found in the high-altitude Himalayas. Despite its name, it is not a true deer but belongs to a separate family, Moschidae.

Males are known for their elongated, tusk-like canines and a musk gland, which has made the species a target for poaching.

Officials said severe winters often push the animal to lower altitudes, leading to occasional sightings in human habitations.

They said illegal hunting for the musk pod remains the biggest threat, as it is used in perfumes and traditional medicine and fetches high prices on the black market.

Habitat degradation due to deforestation, livestock grazing and human expansion has further added to the pressure on the species.

Officials urged people to inform the department immediately in case of wildlife sightings to enable timely intervention and prevent conflict—(KNO)

SR pixels Pvt. Ltd
EXCELLENCE WITH PERFECTION

Branding • Designing • Printing • Web • Event • Advertising

LARGE SCALE PRINTING

ONE STOP SHOP FOR ALL YOUR BRANDING NEED

DESIGN

SR pixels

Check Out All of Our Services:

Logo Design	Business Card	Letter Head	Screen Printing
Brochure Design	Website Design	Embroidery	Offset Printing
Stationery Design	Signage Design	Supply of Office Stationery	Printing Photocopying
Corporate Identity	Graphic Design	Vinyl Cutting	Scanning
Product Photography	Screen Printing	Branding	Binding Lamination

Room No 12, Huda Ash Central Market, Abi Guzar Lalchowk, Srinagar
email: srpixels2021@gmail.com

TRANSFORM YOUR GROWING BUSINESS IN TO A LEADING BRAND

OUR SERVICES

CALL OR WHATSAPP
7006618090 | 9858086898



Div Com Kashmir reviews various Revenue Matters, Development Initiatives

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 24: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, today chaired a meeting to review a range of revenue-related matters, including migrant properties, construction of houses for terror victims, digitization of land records, Digital Crop Survey, and development of urban revenue-generating assets.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners, the Additional Commissioner Central, and the Officer on Special Duty to the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir.

While reviewing progress on the construction of houses for terror victims, the Divisional Commissioner directed Deputy Commissioners to ensure that all eligible beneficiaries possess the requisite land, with a minimum of five marlas, to facilitate timely assistance.

Regarding the updation of Girdawari records of religious and heritage sites, he instructed the Deputy Commissioners to



ensure that all structures of cultural and historical importance are properly documented and their records duly updated and

certified. The Divisional Commissioner also assessed the status of migrant properties, including



the quantum of land, district-wise progress in removal of encroachments, and the disposal of grievances submitted

by migrants.

Reviewing progress under the SVAMITA Scheme and Digital Crop Survey, he urged Deputy Commissioners to intensify efforts to achieve timely implementation and broader coverage.

Further, the Divisional Commissioner directed Deputy Commissioners to prepare Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) under the Urban Challenge Fund in consultation with Municipal Executive Officers to focus on the development of public utility and revenue-generating infrastructure in urban areas, including parking facilities, bus stands, and other convenience assets.

Also, he called for ensuring active participation of public representatives and citizens in the ongoing Pad Yatra organized under the Nasha Mukht Campaign, aimed at promoting a drug-free society.

The meeting concluded with directions to all concerned officers to ensure timely and effective implementation of the reviewed initiatives.

Muqam-e-Bahar Soofiyan Music Programme Enthralls Audience at GHSS Gogji Patheri Badgam

HT NEWS NETWORK

BADGAM, APR 24: A Soofiyan Music Programme "Muqam-e-Bahar" organized by Alamdar Sofiyana Theatre Hanjigund Chadoora at Govt. HSS Gogji Patheri under the Scheme Culture Fiction & Production Grant Scheme Approved by Ministry of Culture Govt. of India New Delhi. The program kicked off with a traditional Soofiyan Music performed by Alamdar Sofiyana Theatre Artists, their energetic beats and soulful voice



captivating the crowd. A large number of students, teachers local public and Artists Participated in the event. Principle GHSS Gogjipathri Mehraj-ul-Din Paul and Chairman All Kashmir Folk Artists Association Shah-e-Jahan Ahmad Bhagat attended the event as the chief guest and Guest of Honor. President Alamdar Sofiyana Theatre Ustad Mohammad Ismail Bhat Formally welcomed the Chief Guest, Guest of Honor and other dignitaries. This Programme is Hosted By Shah-e-Jahan Ahmad Bhagat. General Secretary All Kashmir Folk Artists association & Programme Co-Ordinator Fayaz Ahmad Rather extended heartfelt thanks to all participants and guests for their presence and support.

Day 3: Search continues for UP youth who jumped into Jhelum from Budshah Bridge

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, APR 24: Rescue teams on Friday continued an extensive search operation in river Jhelum to trace an 18-year-old youth who had jumped into the water from Budshah Bridge in Srinagar's Lal Chowk area late Wednesday night, officials said. They said that in another incident, another man was rescued after a fresh jump attempt at the same spot within 24 hours.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the search for missing youth was continued for the third straight day in Jhelum.

They said teams of State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) carried out searches throughout the day at multiple locations along the river stretch, but the youth could not be traced.

An SDRF official said the operation was suspended in the evening due to low visibility and will resume on Saturday morning with the first light of day.

The missing person was later identified as Mohd Qurash Sadaqi (18), son of Nawab Sadaqi, a resident of Uttar Pradesh, presently staying at Chattabal, Srinagar.

The incident had occurred late Wednesday when the youth allegedly climbed the railing of Budshah Bridge and jumped into the river, prompting an immediate rescue response. CCTV footage of the incident later surfaced on social media. Meanwhile, in another incident on Thursday, a major tragedy was averted after SDRF personnel rescued a 27-year-old man who had jumped into the Jhelum from the same bridge.

Officials said the rescue teams were already deployed at Budshah Bridge for the ongoing search operation when they noticed the man jumping into the river and swiftly pulled him out alive. He was later handed over to the police for further legal formalities. It was the second such incident reported from Budshah Bridge within 24 hours, raising concern and prompting calls for stronger safety measures and surveillance around the area.

Police have taken cognisance of both incidents, saying the investigation is underway—(KNO)

Farmers Across Kupwara Benefit from Mega Awareness Programme by SKUAST-K

220 Quintals of Potato Seed Distributed Among Kupwara Farmers Under ICARS

DR. AB QAYOOM

KUPWARA, APR 24: In a major boost to agricultural development in north Kashmir, a large-scale Farmers' Awareness-cum-Seed Distribution Programme was organized today by the Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir in collaboration with Krishi Vigyan Kendra Kupwara. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation of more than 300 farmers from across the district, including Langate, Lolab, Rajwar, Teetwal, Machil, Budnambal, Mawar, and Bramri. The programme aimed at educating farmers on modern vegetable cultivation practices, scientific interventions, and improved farm management techniques to enhance productivity and sustainability. Experts stressed the need for adopting climate-resilient technologies, quality planting material, and integrated crop management practices to boost yield and income. Deputy Superintendent of Police Kupwara, who attended as the Chief Guest, lauded the efforts of agricultural institutions in empowering the farming community. He underlined the significance of awareness and institutional support in building a self-reliant and progressive rural economy.

A team of scientists from the Division of Vegetable Science, including Prof. Ishfaq Abidi and Prof. Syed Faeema, shared expert insights on advanced vegetable production, pest and disease management, and the



use of improved seed varieties. On the occasion, 220 quintals of scientifically developed potato seed were distributed among farmers under the Tribal Sub Plan (TSP) programme sponsored by Indian Council of Agricultural Research, Shimla. The initiative is expected to significantly enhance crop productivity and improve farmers' livelihoods in the district. Farmers and local participants expressed gratitude for the continued support and guidance of Vice Chancellor Prof.

Nazir Ahmad Ganai, Director Extension Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, and the entire team of KVK Kupwara. Special appreciation was extended to Head KVK Kupwara, Prof. G.M. Bhat, for his leadership in organizing such impactful programmes.

The event concluded with an interactive session, where farmers raised field-level concerns and received practical solutions from experts, making the programme both informative and beneficial.

South Kashmir farmers seek urgent desilting of canals ahead of sowing season

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, APR 24: As the agricultural season approaches, residents and farmers across several parts of south Kashmir have raised concerns over the deteriorating condition of irrigation canals and streams, urging authorities to carry out immediate desilting and restoration work to prevent disruption to farming activities.

Residents from areas including Pulwama, Tral, Kakapora, Pampore, Awantipora, Litter, Rajpora, Bijbehara, Srigufwara, Mattan, Pahalgam, Dooru, Kokernag, Dialgam, Qazigund, Khudwani, Kund, DH Pora, Yaripora, and

Zainapora alleged that many canals have turned into dumping sites and have been encroached upon through illegal constructions.

"These canals were once lifelines for our fields, but today they resemble garbage dumps. In several places, their original paths have been blocked or narrowed due to unchecked construction," a farmer from Tral told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO). "If timely desilting is not carried out, we fear severe water shortages during the peak sowing period."

They said irrigation canals are crucial for sustaining the region's agriculture-depend-

ent economy, particularly for paddy cultivation and horticulture. Locals expressed frustration over what they described as a recurring pattern of delayed action by the concerned departments.

"Every year, desilting work begins when the irrigation demand is already at its peak. By then, the damage is done. Crops suffer due to the lack of timely water supply," said another resident from Bijbehara. "The authorities must complete the cleaning process well before the start of the season."

In addition to canal restoration, locals have also called for a thorough inspection and trial run of irrigation pump

stations and associated infrastructure.

The residents said ensuring the functionality of machinery in advance would help avoid last-minute breakdowns that often leave farmers struggling.

"We request that the department check all pump stations and equipment beforehand so that everything is operational when needed. Farmers cannot afford uncertainty during such a critical period," a resident from Pampore added.

The repeated issues over the past few years, residents said, have already impacted agricultural productivity and added to the hardships faced

by farmers in the region.

Responding to the concerns, an official from the Irrigation Department acknowledged the issue and assured that necessary measures are being taken. "We have already forwarded a list of canals requiring desilting to the Rural Development Department. The process will be initiated and completed before the agricultural season begins," he said.

The official added, "We are committed to ensuring improved irrigation facilities this year and will also review the readiness of pump stations and infrastructure to avoid inconvenience to farmers."—(KNO)

Cloudy weather, light rain likely across Kashmir; heatwave in Jammu region

ADVISORIES ISSUED FOR FARMERS, PUBLIC

HT NEWS NETWORK / KNO

SRINAGAR, APR 24: The India Meteorological Department on Friday forecast partly to generally cloudy weather with spells of light rain and thundershowers across Kashmir over the next few days, while warning of heatwave conditions in parts of the Jammu region.

According to the Meteorological Centre Srinagar, scattered to many places are likely to receive light rain or thundershowers with gusty winds during the afternoon and evening hours on April 25. The weather is expected to remain largely dry on April 26 and 27, with brief spells of light rain at isolated places.

The MeT office, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said generally cloudy conditions with light rain and gusty winds are likely at scattered locations on April 28, followed by brief spells of rain at a few places between April 29 and May 2, mainly during late afternoon hours.

Temperature data released by the department showed that most parts of Kashmir recorded above-normal day temperatures. Srinagar recorded a maximum of 28.1°C, 6.1 degrees above normal, and a minimum of 13.0°C. Qazigund registered a high of 27.2°C, while Pahalgam settled at 25.0°C and Kupwara at 25.4°C.

Gulmarg recorded a maximum temperature of 18.6°C, while Kokernag saw 26.6°C. Night temperatures also remained above normal, with Gulmarg recording a minimum of 8.0°C and Pahalgam 6.8°C.

In the Jammu region, Jammu city recorded a maximum of 39.3°C, nearly five degrees above normal, while the minimum settled at 22.8°C. Katra recorded 36.0°C, Banihal 29.0°C, and Batote 29.2°C.

The MeT department said hot and dry weather is likely to persist in Jammu, Kathua, Samba, Reasi and Udhampur districts over the next four days, with heatwave conditions expected at isolated places on April 24.

The department has advised farmers to suspend farm operations on April 24 and 25 due to the possibility of gusty winds and thundershowers.

It also urged people to avoid heat exposure during peak hours and to stay hydrated by consuming adequate fluids—(KNO)

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

Addresses Poshan Pakhwada celebrations at Jammu

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 24: Minister for Social Welfare, Education, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo today said that Anganwadi Workers (AWWs) and Helpers are the backbone of grassroots child welfare and community development, adding that their role extends far beyond service delivery.

The Minister was speaking at the concluding ceremony of 8th Poshan Pakhwada celebrations held at Government Polytechnic College, Jammu.

Mission Director ICDS, Sajad Hussain Ganie; Secretary in Social Welfare department, Bashir Ahmad Khan; Director Social Welfare Jammu, Ranjeet Singh; Director Health Services Jammu, Dr. Abdul Hamid Zargar; Programme officers, CDOs, Supervisors and large number of Anganwadi workers and Helpers were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister appreciated the dedication and tireless efforts of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers, describing them as the backbone of grassroots child welfare and nutrition services. She said that their role extends far beyond service delivery, as they serve as the first point of contact for mothers, children and families in rural as well as urban areas.

"Anganwadi Workers are the real change-makers at the grassroots. Their commitment towards early childhood care, nutrition, pre-school education and child welfare is laying the foundation for a healthier and empowered future generation," the Minister stated.



She highlighted that ICDS sector is very big sector and more than 28,000 of our sisters work in this sector. "As far as the ICDS or social welfare sector is concerned, some other departments are connected to this sector like education, health and others. Our Anganwadi workers and Helpers perform duties in these departments during awareness programmes or other events, apart from their parent department", she said.

The Minister stressed the need for collective efforts from all stakeholders, including families, communities, and government departments, to ensure that every

child receives proper nutrition and every mother has access to essential healthcare and support. She underscored the importance of Poshan Pakhwada as a people-centric initiative focusing on combating malnutrition, improving health outcomes for women and children, and creating awareness about balanced nutrition and early childhood care.

Giving background of ICDS sector, Sakeena Itoo said that in the year 1996, the then Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah brought this project into Jammu and Kashmir and implemented it.

Sakeena Itoo stressed the

importance of integrating hygiene awareness with child development initiatives and urged field functionaries to continue educating families about sanitation, nutrition and preventive healthcare. She noted that a clean environment plays a significant role in reducing disease burden and improving the quality of life for children and women.

Highlighting various achievements of the Government, the Minister said that the Government led by Omar Abdullah increased the Marriage Assistance from Rs. 50,000 to Rs. 75,000, besides the qualification bar for

availing the scheme has been removed.

The Minister also underlined the government's commitment towards strengthening the Anganwadecosystem by improving infrastructure, ensuring better service delivery and providing necessary support to frontline workers. She assured that the concerns and welfare of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers remain a priority for the government, adding that Chief Minister is very keen about their welfare.

The Minister also announced that the department has already been asked to make a policy regarding appointment of dependents of Anganwadi workers and Helpers who die while in service.

In his welcome address, Mission Director ICDS spoke about the large scale of activities carried during the Poshan Pakhwada. He informed that around 7,32,000 events were held and uploaded on Jan Andolan portal by the department. He also expressed gratitude to Minister for increasing the Capex Budget of the department, adding that new Anganwadi centres will be made functional.

Earlier, the Social Welfare Minister also distributed appointment orders among newly recruited Anganwadi Workers and Helpers. She also distributed Vidayambh certificates among children who completed pre-schooling at Anganwadi centers.

During the programme, Anganwadi Workers and Helpers also presented different cultural programmes highlighting importance of nutrition in children and mothers.

DDMA Baramulla conducts Civil Defence Mock Drill to strengthen Emergency Preparedness

HT NEWS NETWORK

BARAMULLA, APRIL 24: District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) Baramulla today conducted a comprehensive Civil Defence Mock Drill at Showkat Ali Stadium to strengthen disaster preparedness, improve inter-agency coordination, and enhance emergency response systems across the district.



The drill witnessed active participation from multiple agencies including Police, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), NCC cadets, CRPF, CISF, Home Guards, and civil administration officials, reflecting a coordinated and multi-disciplinary approach to disaster management.

The primary objective of the exercise was to streamline coordination among various departments, ensure effective response during emergencies, and prepare teams for real-life situations while minimising risks to life and property.

During the drill, key aspects such as rescue operations, evacuation procedures, response time, and adherence to public safety protocols were thoroughly tested.

The exercise also simulated emergency scenarios, including blackout situations, aimed at enhancing preparedness among students, staff, and the general public.

Participants were trained in evacuation protocols, crisis communication, and coordinated response strategies, providing them with practical insights into managing emergency situations efficiently. The drill emphasized the importance of timely intervention and collective action in reducing risks during disasters.

The mock exercise recreated real-time emergency conditions, including search and rescue operations, evacuation drills, and emergency medical response. Students and staff actively participated in the programme, contributing to a realistic and impactful training experience.

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

HT NEWS NETWORK

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

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

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

By highlighting the importance of physical fitness and mental well-being, the yoga session served as a powerful demonstration of how meditation and outdoor activities can act as an effective tool in combating substance abuse and encouraging a disciplined way of life.

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

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

PARENT TEACHER MEETINGS ON NASHA Mukht HELD ACROSS SCHOOLS IN SHOPIAN

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, APRIL 24: As per the scheduled activities under the ongoing Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) were organized across various schools in District Shopian, including HS Vehil, HS Kanjullar, and Springdales School Batapora Shopian among others.

The meetings were conducted with the objective of sensitizing parents about the growing concerns of drug abuse and the importance of early awareness and preventive measures.



During the sessions, participants were informed about the harmful effects of substance abuse on physical, mental, and social well being, and the crucial role families and schools play in guiding children towards a healthy and disciplined lifestyle.

Teacher councellors emphasized the need for strong communication between parents and educators to identify early signs of substance abuse and to provide timely support and guidance to students.

Parents were encouraged to remain vigilant, foster a supportive home environment, and actively participate in awareness efforts.

District Shopian holds Civil Defence Air Raid Mock Drill to enhance disaster preparedness

HT NEWS NETWORK

SHOPIAN, APRIL 24: In a concerted effort to strengthen disaster preparedness and emergency response systems, the District Administration Shopian, under the aegis of the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA), successfully conducted a comprehensive Civil Defence Air Raid Mock Drill.

The mock drill commenced at Government Degree College Shopian, designated as the primary site for the simulated air raid scenario.

The operation witnessed

coordinated participation of Civil Defence personnel, SDRF, Jammu & Kashmir Police, Fire & Emergency Services, Health Department, and trained volunteers.

Key components of the exercise included activation of early warning systems through sirens and public address mechanisms, evacuation drills, emergency first aid response, and coordinated movement of rescue teams and vehicles.

The rescue and search phase was executed through a structured multi team mechanism involving specialized units.

The AST Party conducted sweeps for detection of potential



threats, while search teams assessed the area for hazardous materials. The cordon and control team secured the site, and the

instruments party carried out debris clearance and victim rescue operations.

The tagging team, assisted by medical personnel, conducted triage of victims based on severity, while the lifting and stretcher teams ensured safe evacuation and transportation of the injured. A final assessment team also carried out a comprehensive survey of the affected area and documented the response.

The operation was conducted under the supervision of Incident Commander, Lateef Ahmad (ASI SDRF), with overall guidance and coordination by DySP, Tanveer

Ahmad, (Nodal Officer SDRF).

The District Administration reiterated that such exercises are part of routine preparedness initiatives aimed at strengthening coordinated response mechanisms and enhancing community resilience in the face of emergencies.

Among others present were Additional District Development Commissioner Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, Principal GDC Shopian, Prof. Tariq Hussain Mir, DySP Headquarter, Imtiyaz Ahmad Mir, DYSSO Shopian, Sunail Kumar, Tehsildar Shopian, Anjum Bashir Khan, BDOs, and other district officers.

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

HT NEWS NETWORK

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

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

administration.

Speaking during the meeting, the Commissioner Secretary, who also serves as District Mentor for Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) for Bandipora district, stressed on the need to build public confidence to encourage voluntary reporting, called for complete eradication of poppy cultivation, and directed sustained engagement of youth through structured programmes.

He emphasised on grassroot outreach programmes with people driven response and hoped that with consistent enforcement and sustained public engagement

and awareness we would be able to eradicate the drug menace and substance abuse from the society.

Appreciating the district administration's efforts, the Commissioner Secretary described the action plan as comprehensive and well-articulated, and lauded the proactive role of the Deputy Commissioner.

He also emphasised on the importance of addressing stigma associated with addiction and treatment, underlining that coordinated and collective efforts of all stakeholders would be key

to achieving lasting impact.

During the meeting, Deputy Commissioner presented a detailed report outlining the district's strategy, progress achieved so far and the roadmap ahead. It was informed during the meeting that the Lieutenant Governor had earlier launched a 100-day campaign under the Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan, following which the District Administration Bandipora rolled out a district-level campaign backed by a structured action plan.

The Deputy Commissioner highlighted the administration's

outcome-focused approach and emphasised that the initiative must continue beyond the stipulated period and become a permanent feature of the district's functioning. She noted that gaps in inter-departmental coordination had been identified in November and that concerted efforts had since been made to strengthen coordination, particularly with law enforcement.

She elaborated that the district strategy rests on sustained awareness campaigns, the Maa Se Guftagu series engaging frontline workers and self-help

groups, outreach through Friday sermons in coordination with religious leaders, proactive media engagement, and consistent enforcement measures. She also pointed out the emerging trend of women being involved both as peddlers and users, underscoring the need for targeted interventions. Progress reports from multiple departments were also presented during the meeting.

The Senior Superintendent of Police outlined the policing strategy, focusing on intelligence generation, drug seizures, reduction of hotspots, strict

monitoring and eradication of poppy cultivation, and ensuring accountability at all levels.

The Chief Education Officer and the Youth Services and Sports Officer reported encouraging behavioural changes among youth, alongside increased participation in constructive and sports-related activities. The Chief Medical Officer presented the status of testing in identified hotspots, with positive outcomes reported.

On the occasion, a pledge against drug abuse was also administered by the Commissioner Secretary.

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

HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, APRIL 24: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana today chaired a high-level review meeting at the Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex, here, to evaluate the progress of key developmental initiatives across the district.

Legislators Shakti Raj Parihar, Daleep Singh Parihar, Deputy Commissioner, Krishan Lal, Chief Engineer, I&FC Jammu Manoj Gupta, Chief Engineer PHE, Hanief Choudhary and all District level Officers participated in the meeting.

While reviewing the progress across key sectors, Javed Rana underscored the need for strict adherence to timelines, enhanced inter-departmental coordination to ensure that development effectively reaches the grassroots with transparency and efficiency.

The Minister reviewed the progress under AMRUT 2.0, CAPEX, irrigation, flood control and rural development works. He stressed expediting these initiatives to boost agricultural productivity and strengthen irrigation infrastructure for farmers.

While emphasising the need



for timely resolution of forest-related issues, the Minister called for strict verification processes before project execution and decisive action against obstructions

affecting development works.

He also called for strengthening monitoring process through the PARIVESH portal and promoting projects related to ecological

conservation, check dams, and public recreation.

Special attention was given to improving water supply and irrigation potential in Assar and

adjoining areas to boost vegetable cultivation and local livelihoods.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on tribal welfare initiatives, Forest Rights Act (FRA), development of tribal hostels, implementation of Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan, and provision of mobile medical services in remote areas.

The Minister instructed concerned departments to prepare detailed project reports (DPRs) focusing on road connectivity, lift irrigation, power supply, and water infrastructure in tribal regions. He further emphasized timely completion and effective utilization of funds allocated for tribal hostels.

The Chief Medical Officer Doda was directed to operationalize mobile medical units in tribal belts at the earliest.

Javed Rana emphasised upon the officers to gear up their efforts for timely completion of important projects and improving public service delivery in the district.

Earlier, Deputy Commissioner gave a comprehensive PowerPoint presentation outlining sector-wise physical and financial achievements under CAPEX, NABARD and other key programmes in the district.

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

HT NEWS NETWORK

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

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



collective display of energy, discipline, and social awareness.

Students drawn from 15 schools across Ganderbal participated in the Cyclothon, reflecting a strong sense of commitment towards physical fitness and social responsibility.

The event culminated at Government College of Physical Education Gadoora with Haris Hameed of Qamria Model Higher Secondary School, Ganderbal bagging the first position, while Mohammad Faizan of Sultania English Medium School, Saloora Ganderbal and Hanzil Imtiyaz of Islamia Hanifia Model School, Haran Ganderbal secured the second and third positions respectively.

The officers of District Administration present on the occasion appreciated the active participation of students and commended the efforts of the organising team.

Emphasising the broader purpose of such events, they noted that initiatives of this nature play a vital role in channelling the energy of young people towards constructive pursuits, encouraging them to embrace a healthy lifestyle and steer clear of substance abuse.

Nasha Mukh Pledge was also taken on the occasion, reaffirming the participants' commitment towards building a drug-free society.

Concluding on a purposeful note, the event sent out a strong and unambiguous message that fitness, discipline, and a drug-free way of life are not just ideals but a shared responsibility of every citizen, especially the youth who represent the future of society.

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

HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, APRIL 24: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, on Friday convened a convention during which the people apprised him the issues concerning their respective areas.

During the interactive session, the Minister engaged extensively with the general public, who raised a wide range of pressing issues and developmental concerns affecting different parts of the Chenab Valley.

The participants highlighted the grievances such as lack of compensation for the flood-affected families, drinking water shortage in Doda town, delay in regularisation and wage disbursement of daily wage workers, need for repair and desilting of irrigation khuls, delay in forest clearances for development works and slow pace of implementation of water supply schemes under the Jal Jeevan Mission.

The participants stressed that timely intervention in these areas is essential for improving the quality of life in the district.

Responding to the concerns, Rana assured that the government led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is committed towards addressing the genuine public issues with urgency and accountability. He said that all the matters raised during the convention would be taken up for prompt and time-bound resolution in coordination with the concerned departments.

It is pertinent to mention that the Minister is currently on an extensive tour of the Chenab Valley and, as part of the outreach, will hold public meetings, interact directly with the citizens and chair the district-level review meetings to monitor the developmental works and ensure effective implementation of key government schemes.

The Minister further underscored the importance of responsive governance and said efforts are being made to bridge the developmental gaps across the regions and sub-regions of Jammu and Kashmir.

Calling upon the stakeholders to play a proactive role at the grassroots level, Rana urged them to maintain close contact with the public and act as a vital link between the government and the people.

Rana reviews Gujjar & Bakerwal hostels in Doda, pushes for quality education and infrastructure upgrade

HT NEWS NETWORK

DODA, APRIL 24: Minister for Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, today visited the Girls & Boys Gujjar and Bakerwal Hostels at Doda to take stock of the facilities being provided to the resident students.

During the visit, the Minister inspected various sections of the hostels and reviewed the availability of essential amenities, academic support systems and overall living conditions of the inmates.

He emphasized the need to ensure quality educational facilities and a conducive environment to enable the students to excel in their academic pursuits.

Rana directed the concerned officers to take necessary steps for the upgradation of infrastructure and further strengthening of facilities at the hostels. He stressed that providing better educational and residential support to tribal students remains a priority of the Government.

The Minister also interacted with the students, enquired about their academic progress and listened to their feedback and suggestions regarding the facilities.

He assured them that their genuine concerns would be addressed on priority to ensure improved standards of accommodation and learning.

Legislators Shakti Raj Parihar, Daleep Singh Parihar, senior officers of the District Doda accompanied the Minister during the visit.

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

HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 24: Drug Controller J&K Rajesh Kumar today flagged off a bike rally (Group ride) here from Church Lane-Residency Road to Sonmarg Kashmir. The rally has been organised by 'We Care Team' led by President Kelvin Bhatti in collaboration with the Drug & Food Control Organization J&K as part of the 100 day Nasha Mukh Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan.

The primary objective of the rally is to raise awareness about the growing menace of drug abuse. A large number of volunteers are participating in the expedition with the aim to sensitize the public and promote a collective responsibility towards building a drug-free society.

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



models in spreading awareness about the harmful effects of drug abuse among the masses and to share collective responsibility in combating this serious issue.

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

He appealed the general public to report any incidents of unethical trade practices involving the sale or misuse of habit forming drugs to the department's helpline at 104 or via email at jk.drugscontroller@jk.gov.in.

JKBOSE notifies dates for submission of Bi-Annual exam forms

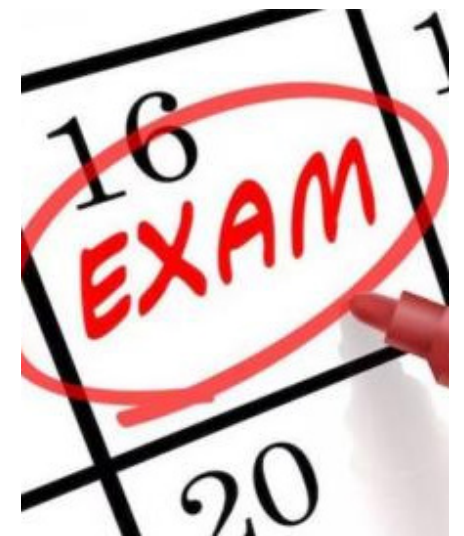
HT NEWS NETWORK

JAMMU, APRIL 24: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) has notified the schedule for the submission of online permission cum examination forms for Class 10 and 12 Annual (Private)/Bi-Annual 2026 session.

The schedule applies to all eligible candidates across the UTs of J&K and Ladakh including both winter and summer zone areas.

As per the notification, re-appear and failure candidates of class 10 can submit their examination forms in online mode whereas the fresh private candidates can submit their forms in offline mode from April 27 to May 09 on payment of normal prescribed fee of Rs 1300 and with a late fee of Rs 2150 from May 11 to 16.

Likewise, re-appear and failure candidates of class 12 can submit their examination forms in online mode whereas the fresh private candidates can submit their forms in offline mode from April 27 to May 09



on payment of normal prescribed fee of Rs 1510 and with a late fee of Rs 2360 from May 11 to 16.

The detailed notification along with necessary guidelines, fee structure and instructions are available on the official website of Board jkbose.jk.gov.in

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

HT NEWS NETWORK

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

During the meeting, various issues regarding forest land, status of installation of boundary pillars & encroachments removal procedures and action plan were discussed.

The DC reviewed the progress of demarcation works and installation of boundary pillars across forest areas in the district and took stock of ongoing efforts aimed at safeguarding forest land.

Emphasising the importance of preserving



forest resources, the DC called for close inter-departmental coordination among Revenue, Forest, and Wildlife departments to ensure smooth and effective implementation of the process on the ground.

Officers of revenue department were directed to ensure complete coordination and cooperation for completion of exercise.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Divisional Forest Officer Awantipora; Tehsildars of Rajpora, Tral and Aripal, and officials from Forest and Wildlife Departments.

DDC Budgam reviews progress on key projects in district

Instructs timely preparation of DPRs of balance & additional components

HT NEWS NETWORK

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

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



additional block.

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

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

The status of construction of Additional block and advanced lab at Khansahib was also reviewed, the bottlenecks.

HT EDITORIAL

Jal Shakti department confuses thousands of Srinagar residents

Last week the Jal Shakti department came out with a public notice asking the residents of multiple areas of Srinagar district to store water since it had to carry out some works in the Rangil and Alasteng water plants. People were asked to store water since the process was to be completed on April 22 and 23. For reasons best known to the department higher-ups the programme was shelved and as such works were not taken up.

The department has now come up with a new schedule and the works are expected to be carried out on April 25 and 26. So far so good but there is a twist to the whole story. The department came out with two public notices in this regard and the same were published in some of the local newspapers of Srinagar. The interesting part of the story is that there is a variation in the duration of water curtailment and timings are also different.

One of the notices points out that the water supply would remain suspended for 48 hours from 4:00 AM of April 25. The other notice makes it clear that there would be no water supply for 36 hours from 6:00 AM of April 25. This comedy of errors has created confusion among the ranks of people especially among those who are at the receiving end. The people are confused as to which public notice and which one to leave it. At this point of time there is no clarity.

Going by the different timings of water disruption and duration of the same it comes out that the officers and officials of the Jal Shakti department seem to be unsure about which schedule to be followed. It would have been prudent for the department to fix the schedule first and then only they should have gone to the press. This confusion makes it clear that there is a communication gap at the different levels in the department and the people have to suffer due to the same.

As far as the works are concerned it goes without saying that such things are necessary for posterity. However, at the same time it is important that minimum trouble is given to the people and the works are completed in the shortest possible time. This would ensure that the water supply is disrupted for minimum possible time and people need not to store water for a longer period of time.

Chief Patron Of Lubaab Publications Group: Syed Sad Ud Din Bukhari (Saidi), Printer Publisher, Owner And Editor: Syed Jahangir Bukhari, Printed At: Lubaab Publications, Radio Colony Gund Hassibhat Lawaipora Srinagar -190017, Gen. Manager: Sheikh Mushtaq Ahmad Cell No - 9697071471, Editorial Section: 7006846797, Multimedia Section: 9419008414, Advertisement Section: 9697071471 RNI No: Jkeng/2011/39231 dailyheadlinestoday@gmail.com headlinestoday2024@gmail.com

Teaching as a Social Service: A Critical and Practical Perspective



JAMEEL ANSARI

Human society rests upon several fundamental pillars for its survival and progress, and among them, education holds a central place. At the heart of this educational system lies the teacher, who can rightly be described as its soul. Teaching is not merely a means of livelihood; rather, it is a profound social service that plays a pivotal role in shaping generations, building values, and maintaining social balance. This is why, in civilized societies, teachers are accorded great respect and significance. Teaching is considered a social service because its impact extends far beyond the boundaries of the classroom. A teacher, through knowledge, character, and conduct, contributes to the intellectual and moral development of students. The role of a teacher is not limited to delivering information; it also involves nurturing critical thinking, encouraging inquiry, and developing the ability to distinguish between right and wrong. In doing so, a teacher shapes individuals who are capable of playing a constructive



role in society. The progress of any society depends largely on competent and principled individuals, and the formation of such individuals is deeply rooted in the efforts of teachers. When a teacher fulfills their responsibilities with sincerity, dedication, and integrity, they have the power to transform an ordinary student into an extraordinary personality. History bears witness to the fact that behind many great leaders, scientists, and thinkers, there has always been the guidance and influence of a devoted teacher. It is therefore rightly said that teachers are the true architects of nations. Teaching is a profession that demands patience, tolerance, and

selflessness. Despite facing challenges such as limited resources, modest salaries, and demanding working conditions, teachers continue to perform their duties with commitment. They identify the weaknesses of their students, help them overcome their limitations, and guide them from failure toward success. These qualities elevate teaching from a profession to a noble mission. In the modern era, where technology has transformed the methods and means of education, the role of the teacher has become even more crucial. While digital tools have made access to information easier, the ability to analyze, interpret, and apply that information

effectively still depends on the guidance of a teacher. Thus, rather than diminishing, the importance of teachers has grown with time. Teachers also play a vital role in promoting social harmony and moral values. A good teacher instills qualities such as tolerance, honesty, empathy, and mutual respect in students. These values not only shape an individual's character but also contribute to building a peaceful and progressive society. Moreover, teaching goes beyond academic instruction; it serves as a powerful means of fostering social awareness. A conscious and responsible teacher not only develops the intellectual abilities of students but also makes them aware of their rights and responsibilities. They encourage students to reflect on pressing social issues such as poverty, inequality, environmental degradation, and moral decline, and inspire them to contribute positively toward solutions. In this way, teachers help shape responsible and conscientious citizens. In conclusion, teaching is a sacred duty that is synonymous with the service of humanity. Without the dedication and sacrifices of teachers, neither a well-ordered society can be built nor a bright future envisioned. It is therefore essential that we honor this profession, appreciate the contributions of teachers, and accord them the respect and recognition they truly deserve.

Earth Day 2026: Collective action in focus as environmental challenges intensify



MOHAMMAD HANIEF

The observance of Earth Day this year witnessed widespread participation, reflecting a growing global awareness of environmental issues. From large-scale marches in cities to grassroots campaigns in smaller towns and rural communities, the day brought together governments, institutions, and citizens in a collective expression of concern. In India, schools, universities, and civil society organizations played an active role in mobilizing youth through eco-clubs, awareness drives, and community outreach programmes. In ecologically sensitive regions, including parts of the Himalayan belt, plantation drives and conservation efforts highlighted the urgency of protecting fragile ecosystems. Record-breaking heatwaves, rapidly melting glaciers, worsening air quality, and increasingly erratic weather patterns are defining the global environmental landscape in 2026. Across continents, the effects of climate change and ecological degradation are no longer distant warnings but immediate, lived realities affecting millions. It is against this backdrop of intensifying crises that Earth Day 2026 was observed on April 22, with its theme of collective action and shared responsibility serving less as a symbolic message and more as an urgent call to confront a deepening planetary emergency. The central message of Earth Day 2026—collective responsibility—resonated strongly across platforms. It emphasized that environmental challenges transcend national boundaries and require coordinated global action. Digital platforms further amplified this call, enabling millions to participate virtually by sharing ideas, pledges, and sustainable practices. However, even as the world united in purpose, the stark reality remained that environmental degradation continues to outpace global efforts to contain it. Air pollution remains one of the most immediate and visible threats, particularly in South Asia. Many urban centers continue to experience dangerously high levels of particulate matter, with PM2.5 concentrations frequently exceeding safe limits. Rapid urbanization, rising vehicular emissions, industrial activity, and construction dust have significantly degraded air quality. Seasonal agricultural burning further exacerbates the situation, often resulting in dense smog that disrupts daily life. The health consequences are severe and far-reaching, contributing to respiratory illnesses, cardiovascular diseases, and a growing number of premature deaths. Climate change, driven by persistent greenhouse

gas emissions, continues to intensify despite global commitments to reduce carbon footprints. Atmospheric carbon dioxide levels remain at record highs, reinforcing the greenhouse effect and accelerating global warming. The early months of 2026 have already witnessed extreme weather events across various regions, underscoring the escalating instability of the Earth's climate system. Prolonged heatwaves have affected large parts of Asia and Europe, pushing temperatures to dangerous levels and placing immense strain on public health systems and energy infrastructure. At the same time, unseasonal rainfall and flash floods have caused widespread destruction in several regions, displacing communities and damaging critical infrastructure. In contrast, drought conditions in other parts of the world have disrupted agricultural cycles, threatening food security and livelihoods. These contrasting extremes highlight the unpredictable and increasingly volatile nature of climate patterns. The Himalayan region offers one of the most alarming indicators of climate change. Glaciers, often referred to as the "water towers of Asia," are retreating at an accelerated pace. This poses significant risks for millions of people who depend on glacial-fed rivers for water. In the short term, the melting increases the risk of glacial lake outburst floods, while in the long term it threatens water availability. The consequences of this dual risk are particularly concerning for countries like India, where large populations rely on these critical water sources. Water stress is emerging as a defining challenge of the current decade. Groundwater levels in many regions are declining rapidly due to over-extraction, while surface water bodies are increasingly polluted by industrial discharge, untreated sewage, and agricultural runoff. This combination of scarcity and contamination is limiting access to safe drinking water and placing additional pressure on already stressed ecosystems. Plastic pollution continues to escalate, particularly in marine environments. Despite increased awareness and policy measures, millions of tonnes of plastic waste still enter oceans every year. Marine life is severely impacted, with many species ingesting plastic or becoming entangled in debris. Over time, plastics degrade into microplastics, which have now been detected in food chains, drinking water, and even human tissues. The long-term implications of this widespread contamination remain uncertain but deeply concerning. Deforestation and land degradation further compound the environmental crisis. Forests, which play a critical role in carbon sequestration and biodiversity conservation, are being cleared at an alarming rate to accommodate agriculture, infrastructure, and urban expansion. This not only contributes to climate change but also results in habitat loss and declining biodiversity. Soil degradation, driven by unsustainable agricultural practices and excessive chemical use, threatens long-term agricultural productivity and food security.

Despite the scale of these challenges, Earth Day 2026 also highlighted areas of progress and cautious optimism. Renewable energy continues to expand rapidly, with solar and wind power emerging as viable alternatives to fossil fuels. Several countries have announced ambitious climate targets, including commitments to achieve carbon neutrality in the coming decades. Advances in green technologies, sustainable agriculture, and waste management are providing practical solutions to reduce environmental impact. At the community level, a gradual shift toward sustainable living is becoming increasingly evident. Individuals are adopting eco-friendly practices such as waste segregation, recycling, and reducing the use of single-use plastics. Educational institutions are integrating environmental awareness into their curricula, while youth-led movements continue to play a pivotal role in advocating for climate action and holding decision-makers accountable. However, experts caution that these efforts, while encouraging, are not sufficient to match the scale and urgency of the crisis. The gap between commitments and implementation remains significant. What is needed is not incremental change but systemic transformation—rethinking economic models, altering consumption patterns, and embedding sustainability into every aspect of governance and development. For developing nations like India, the challenge lies in balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability. Development remains essential for improving living standards, but it must be pursued in a manner that does not compromise ecological integrity. This requires innovative policy approaches, effective governance, and enhanced international cooperation to ensure access to resources, technology, and financial support. As the world reflects on Earth Day 2026, the message is clear and uncompromising. Environmental degradation is no longer a distant threat; it is a present reality shaping the future of humanity. The interconnected nature of these challenges demands coordinated, sustained, and collective action at all levels. Earth Day must therefore be seen not as a symbolic observance, but as a continuous call to action. The responsibility to protect the planet lies with governments, institutions, and individuals alike. Every decision—whether related to energy use, consumption, or lifestyle—has consequences for the environment. The planet continues to sustain life, but its capacity is not limitless. The defining challenge of our time is to ensure that collective intent is translated into meaningful and lasting change. In the face of escalating environmental crises, one truth stands above all: the future of the Earth depends on what humanity chooses to do next.

The author is a senior analyst and can be mailed at m.hanief@gmail.com Twitter/ X: @haniefmha



BOOK REVIEW



MOHAMMAD ARFAT WANI

The author is a writer, social activist, and nursing student from Kuchmulla, Tral. He writes on social issues, culture, and public concerns with the aim of raising awareness and inspiring positive change. Email: wania6817@gmail.com

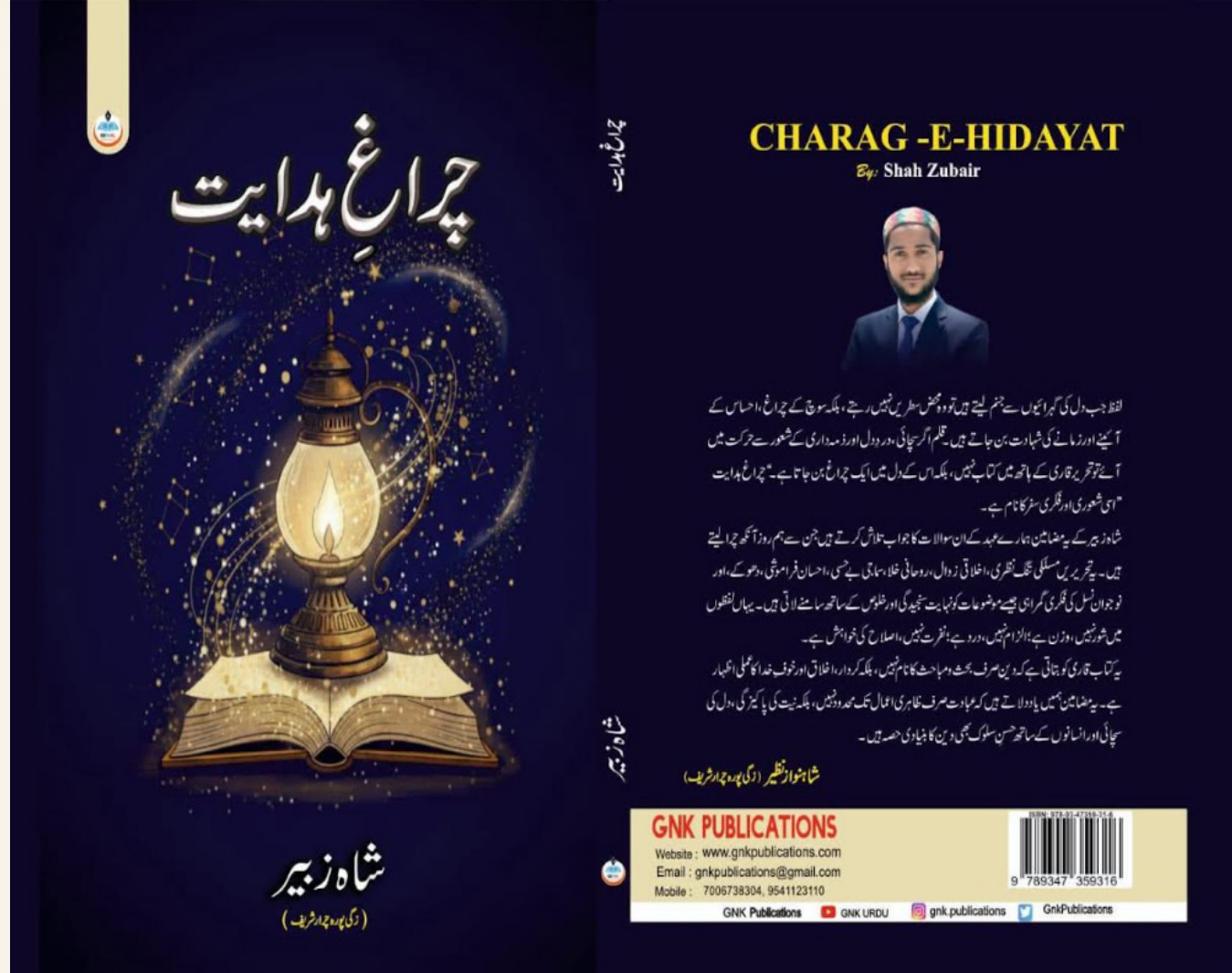
A Critical Literary Review of "Charag-e-Hidayat", a Collection of Essays by Shah Zubair

Literature in Urdu is not just the arrangement of words or beauty of sentences. It is a deep reflection of human awareness, social truths, and inner emotions where a person can see the complete picture of their time. When an essay writer or storyteller picks up the pen, they are actually expressing the conscience of their era. Urdu literature has always been enriched by such writers who turned words into feelings, thought, and truth. In this intellectual tradition, Shah Zubair appears as a young writer who presents the problems, emotions, and thoughts of his time in a very simple but powerful way. His book Charag-e-Hidayat is an important part of this journey, highlighting the social and religious awareness of modern times.

Whenever I used to read the newspaper in the morning, one name kept appearing again and again, Shah Zubair. At first, it felt like just a name, but with time it became a feeling, a presence of thought that touches the reader's heart through words. His essays had a special attraction, honesty, and emotional depth that made them different from ordinary writing. Whenever I saw his picture, the dignity on his face, the respect in his eyes, and the simplicity in his style showed the depth of his personality. This feeling encouraged me to contact him, and in the very first conversation it became clear that this connection would not remain limited to introduction, but would turn into a sincere literary friendship based on respect and words.

Belonging to Zegipora Charar-e-Sharief in Budgam, a spiritual region, this young writer is quietly emerging in the field of Urdu and Kashmiri literature. Shah Zubair is currently a first-year BA student and has chosen Urdu as his subject, but he is already known not just as a student but also as a poet and essay writer. His words show maturity beyond his age, and his writing reflects seriousness and awareness that makes him different from his peers. His literary journey started in 8th grade when he first expressed his feelings in words. Then, his writings were simplistic, but there was a spark in his writing that gradually developed into a powerful flame. In the tenth grade, his writing became fluent, deep, and forceful.

Shah Zubair's main strength lies in his mastery of language and commu-



nication skills. From the beginning, he used the Kashmiri language, which is his native language. It is evident from his writings that he loved Kashmiri immensely and has successfully managed to portray its charm and beauty in his writings. Later, he also adopted Urdu so that his thoughts could reach a wider audience. Still, he remains deeply connected to his mother tongue, which reflects his cultural identity. His creative work is surprisingly vast. He has written more than 150 poems, over 20 short stories, more than 10 plays, and many essays published in newspapers and magazines. His writings reflect Kashmiri society, human psychology, social issues, and moral values. Apart from writing, he is also very active in religious work. For the past three years, he has been tutoring the Holy Quran in a nearby madrasa and works as an Imam at the local mosque.

Such activities have made him a serious, disciplined, and morally strong individual. He regards gaining knowledge not just for self-benefit but for sharing with others as well. Similarly, one can observe such qualities reflected in his writings wherein religion coexists in harmony with social life. Though he has many talents, it hasn't been an easy road for him. The financial constraints have made him take a step back from writing but couldn't stop him from being motivated and determined to continue his writing career. Finally, all his efforts were rewarded, and he managed to complete his first book, Charag-e-Hidayat, which is going to be published very soon. It's not only an essay collection; it reflects all his patience and struggles. He has won over 20 prizes in different categories. Charag-e-Hidayat is an intellec-

tual book containing essays on contemporary social and religious problems, written in 2026, and having 104 pages. Its editing and arrangement are done with great care. The literary insight of Shah Nazakat Nazir and opinions of writers like Majid Masroor and Iqra Parwaz further increase its value. The book is dedicated to the author's parents, showing that he considers family upbringing the foundation of social reform. Regarding themes, this book is very diverse and even-handed. Themes such as religion, society, morals, and education are all addressed. The concerns about fearing God, importance of prayers, life of Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), and life after death show that how religious-oriented the writer is. Sectarian strife and diversity amongst scholars indicate that he is a man of wide vision, who values the unity of Muslims.

On the social side, the book addresses important issues like ingratitude, dishonesty, and lack of truthfulness with courage and honesty. According to the author, the solution to these problems lies in moral values and Islamic teachings. For the youth, the book includes important messages as well. Topics like "Create a New Path," "False Fame," and "Harm of Mobile Phones" highlight modern challenges and guide young people toward reality and purpose. Issues like drug abuse are also discussed as serious threats to society. In the context of women, the essay "Veil Does Not Define a Woman's Role" presents a balanced viewpoint, where the author explains the difference between outer appearance and inner character. Historical and religious awareness is also present in the book, where important religious days are explained in their true spirit rather than just rituals. From a literary point of view, Charag-e-Hidayat is an important work. Its style is simple, effective, and heart-touching. It not only informs the reader but also creates awareness and reflection, which is its greatest success. The book does not just provide knowledge, it encourages thinking and self-improvement.

Overall, Charag-e-Hidayat is a book that motivates people towards introspection, reformation, and improvement. The most important thing about Shah Zubair's first effort is that it proves the reality that sincerity, honesty, and aimfulness of someone can make a difference in society. The book is not merely a set of essays but a sort of intellectual movement that transforms the reader into an active person. In the end, I sincerely congratulate Shah Zubair and his parents on this achievement and pray that this light always remains bright and continues to illuminate the world of knowledge and literature. I believe this book will find a special place in the hearts of serious readers and will become a guiding example for future generations.

The author is a writer, social activist, and medical student from Kuchmulla, Tral. He writes on social issues, culture, and public concerns with the aim of raising awareness and inspiring positive change. Email: wania6817@gmail.com

SPORTS ACTIVITIES: THE BEST ALTERNATIVE TO ERADICATE THE DRUG MENACE



SAHIL MANZOOR BHATTI

Being involved in sports activities can reduce the number of health-related issues. Sports support your health and keep your fitness at its best. When we are not physically fit, we must be ready to face several problems like stress, excessive belly fat, high cholesterol, the risk of heart-related diseases, weakness of body parts, fatigue, insomnia, and many more health issues.

If you ask me, what is exercise? My answer is that every body movement is exercise. Then what is the need to engage in other activities? Being involved in different activities engages our whole body, which feels delightful and uplifting. There are hundreds of sports played around the world, and the same sports are played in our country as well. In India, a few games are very popular, and most people like to take part in them. Cricket is one of the most prominent sports in India. It is very pleasing that India has the richest cricket board in the world. The BCCI (Board of Control for Cricket in India) has a net worth of around 18,000 crores. The BCCI conducts the IPL (Indian Premier League), in which top-class cricket players participate. About ten teams take part in the mega league every

year. This shows that sports are now becoming a profession. In sports, you can earn name, fame, and success. India has great records in different sports at the international level, and the country has produced many renowned sports personalities like Kapil Dev, Sunil Gavaskar, Rahul Dravid, Sachin Tendulkar (cricket), Sania Mirza and Mahesh Bhupathi (tennis), and Bai-chung Bhutia (football). Many more athletes have represented India internationally and won prestigious awards. Every country has a separate sports budget for the fiscal year and promotes sports at the district, state, and national levels. Only a lucky few reach the international stage. Promoting sports activities sends a clear message to the peo-

ple: participate, stay healthy, and always smile no matter what comes your way. It is impressive that the government is taking interest in sports. National Sports Day is celebrated every year on 29th August to commemorate the birth anniversary of hockey legend Major Dhyan Chand. On this day, students and teachers in schools, colleges, and universities participate in various sports activities and spread awareness about the importance of sports. The government is focusing on sports infrastructure and promoting it among the youth. Sports stadiums are being constructed at the panchayat level with adequate facilities such as ground levelling and fencing. This is an appreciable step and an important part of sports development. Every year, many play-

ers from different sports are selected at the national and international levels. In Kashmir, many leagues are being organised by sports departments and other agencies, helping produce talented sportspersons. Benefits of Sports Activities Sports activities are interesting, and everyone wants to participate in them. They keep us healthy, strengthen our bodies, and make us happy and stress-free. Sports are the best alternative to drug addiction among the youth because they reduce the tendency to use drugs. Sports are a healthy gift for your loved ones, as they provide many health benefits and keep children away from drug addiction and other harmful activities.

sahilmanzoor411990@gmail.com

Higher Doses of Semaglutide More Effective for Weight Loss, Study Finds

A significantly higher dose of weight-loss drugs containing the active ingredient semaglutide can be more effective in helping people lose weight.

That's according to two new studies published on September 14 in *The Lancet Diabetes & Endocrinology* journal.

In both clinical trials, participants who received a triple dose of semaglutide medication achieved slightly more weight loss than people taking a standard dose.

The weight loss was more significant when compared to study participants who were given a placebo.

In both trials, participants were advised on lifestyle factors such as diet and exercise. Novo Nordisk, the manufacturer of semaglutide medications like Ozempic and Wegovy, funded both trials.

Higher doses of Ozempic, Wegovy led to greater weight loss

The first study *Trusted Source* involved 1,407 people with obesity who did not have type 2 diabetes. About 73% of the participants were female. They had a mean age of 47 and a mean body mass index (BMI) of almost 40.

The participants were followed between January 2023 and November 2024 at 95 medical facilities in 11 countries.

The majority of the participants were prescribed to a regimen involving 7.2 mg weekly doses of semaglutide medication, triple the standard dose. The other subjects were given either 2.4 mg doses or a placebo.

In that study, researchers reported that people taking the 7.2 mg dose achieved an average weight loss of 19% compared to an average 16% weight loss for those taking the 2.4 mg dose and nearly 4% for those given the placebo.

The researchers added that about half of the participants on the 7.2 mg dose lost at least 20% of their body weight while a third lost at least 25% of their body weight.

They also reported that the higher dose group showed more benefits in:

- waist circumference
- blood pressure
- blood sugar levels
- cholesterol readings

Higher semaglutide doses improved blood sugar, waist size

The second study *Trusted Source* involved 512 people diagnosed with obesity and type 2 diabetes. About 52% of these participants



were female.

The participants had an average age of 56, a mean BMI measurement of 38, and a mean HbA1c blood sugar level of slightly more than 8. They were studied at 68 medical facilities between January 2023 and May 2023.

In that study, researchers reported participants on semaglutide doses of 7.2 mg achieved an average weight loss of 13% compared to 10% for participants given 2.4 mg doses and close to 4% for those getting a placebo.

Researchers also reported that people on the 7.2 mg doses experienced more significant reductions in waist size and blood sugar levels.

In both studies, researchers said participants on the higher 7.2 mg doses reported some gastrointestinal side effects but that those health issues were manageable.

The scientists said further studies are warranted to determine long-term risks as well as benefits.

Higher doses of GLP-1s are not ideal for long-term use

Experts not involved in the new studies say GLP-1 weight loss drugs and bariatric

surgery can be highly effective in helping people manage their weight.

"These drugs are the most effective medication available at this time for weight loss. However, if someone meets the criteria for surgery, that is even more effective than the medications," said Mir Ali, MD, a general surgeon, bariatric surgeon, and medical director of MemorialCare Surgical Weight Loss Center at Orange Coast Medical Center in California.

"They result in significant weight loss and improvement in many health conditions related to obesity," Ali told *Healthline*. "They do require long-term use as studies show a high incidence of weight regain if discontinued."

Dan Azagury, MD, an associate professor of surgery and chief of the Section of Minimally Invasive and Bariatric Surgery at Stanford University in California, said the new studies are encouraging news.

"This new dosing of semaglutide offers a new more effective option for weight loss, compared to the current maximal dose," he told *Healthline*. "Essentially more effective while maintaining a side effect profile that isn't significantly worse for the typical [gastrointestinal] side effects that most patients experience."

However, Azagury said there was one troubling side effect he saw in the research.

"The concern here at this new dose is the significant increase in dysaesthesia (which includes things like skin sensitivity, skin 'pain' or 'burning sensation')," he said. "This was significantly more frequent than the lower dose (22.9% vs. 6%)."

"The upside of most side effects for these drugs is that they disappear when you discontinue," Azagury added. "In this study, 18.7% (nearly 1 in 5) patients who had these issues still had not recovered by the end of the study (it is unclear how many of those had stopped the medication or not), so that is something that will require further studies to be better characterized."

Ali noted that the recommended dose—*Trusted Source* by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for a semaglutide drug is 2.4 mg taken weekly, so a higher dose would be outside those boundaries.

"These medications, like all medications do have side effects, some of which can be serious. If a patient is on a much higher dose, they have an increased risk for more significant side effects with long term use," he said.

"Furthermore, this [higher dose] would be considered 'off-label' use of these med-

ications, and they are already difficult to get coverage for through insurance, so there could be a significant out-of-pocket cost for the patient," he added.

What to know about GLP-1 drugs

Glucagon-like peptide-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1s) medications work by mimicking a hormone in the body that helps regulate blood sugar levels and reduces hunger pangs.

One class of the GLP-1 medications uses the active ingredient semaglutide. They are sold under different brand names.

Ozempic and Rybelsus have been approved to treat type 2 diabetes. Wegovy is approved for use in weight management. Semaglutide drugs are available as both oral tablets and injections.

Another commonly used weight loss medication uses the active ingredient tirzepatide. Mounjaro is approved to treat type 2 diabetes. Zepbound is approved for use in weight management. These medications are available only as injections.

Previous studies have highlighted the effectiveness of these drugs in helping people lose weight.

Past research has also indicated that these weight loss drugs can help lower a person's risk of cancer as well as provide benefits to heart health and brain health.

Ali stressed that weight loss medications and surgery are simply tools to help someone in their weight loss journey.

He said if they don't adopt a healthier lifestyle that includes a balanced diet, daily exercise, and adequate sleep, then they won't be able to meet their weight loss goals.

"The goal of any weight loss intervention, whether it's medications, surgery, or just counseling, is to provide tools to change to a healthier lifestyle and diet," Ali explained. "If patients do not make these significant, long-term changes, then no intervention will remain effective for an extended period of time."

Azagury said it's important for patients to discuss weight loss strategies with their physician.

"Weight loss drugs are most effective as part of a comprehensive management," he said. "In our center, for example, patients prescribed these medications will also see our dietitians and be given access to resources and recommendations for diet change, exercise, etc. It is also important to have [a] follow-up to adapt treatment along the way."

Courtesy *Healthline*

How drinking the right amount of water can lower risk of stroke and heart disease, according to studies

TOI Lifestyle Desk

Chronic illnesses like stroke and cardiovascular disease continue to rank among the leading causes of death worldwide. Medical advancements have brought in better treatment, researchers are turning their attention to more simpler, everyday habits that could potentially play a powerful role in prevention.

Recent scientific studies are shedding light on a common drink that may do more than just quench thirst, it appears to support blood pressure, protect heart tissue and even lower the most life-threatening vascular conditions, and it is none other than, Water!

Two studies are landmarks in understanding this relationship. One is an extended view of how hydration might influence cardiovascular death. The other looks at short-term blood pressure and cardiac function variability following water consumption. Together, they offer an optimistic but still developing picture of how hydration might benefit the heart and brain.

What long-term research suggests

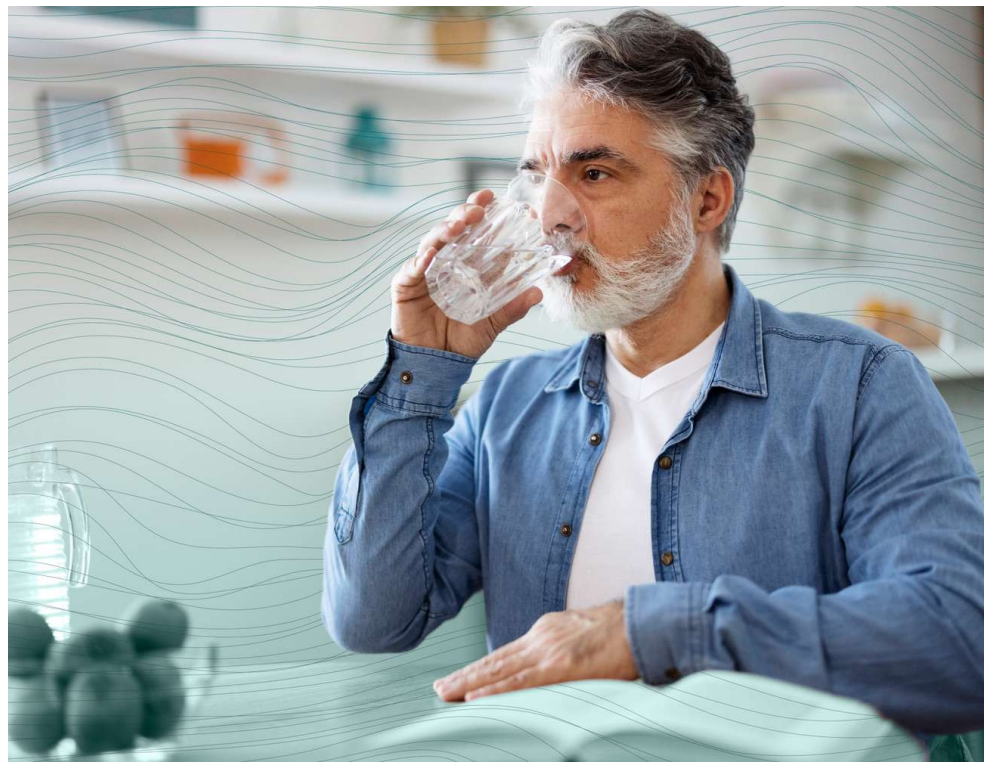
A recent systematic review and dose-response meta-analysis examined the long-term effects of total water and drinking water intake on mortality from all causes and cardiovascular disease (CVD). The study combined data from seven prospective cohort studies, covering over 116,000 participants followed for up to 19 years.

While simply drinking more water may not directly reduce the overall risk of death, higher total water intake appears to play a protective role against cardiovascular disease mortality. This supports the idea that staying hydrated could be an important part of maintaining heart health over time

The short-term cardiovascular effects of water

Additional direct evidence comes from a 2025 study reported in *National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey*. This experiment tested for immediate cardiovascular responses in healthy adults after being given one glass of water (355 mL).

Results showed a major decrease in systolic blood pressure and decrease in heart rate



shortly after consumption. The effects were observed in an hour and reflected an increased regulation of the autonomic nervous system. Though the effects were temporary, they reflect on the role of hydration in facilitating support of heart function under everyday living conditions.

Temporary reductions in blood pressure, even minimal ones, decrease the heart's workload. For people susceptible to hypertension or cardiovascular stress, this daily habit might offer daily relief. The study also gives validity to the belief that water is not only harmless but actually beneficial.

Why staying hydrated is important Virtually all major body systems benefit from proper hydration. From a cardiovascular and neurological perspective, it helps with:

- Supporting the normal blood volume and viscosity
- Increasing circulation and nutrient

transport

- Reducing the workload on the heart
- Preventing clotting by smoothing blood flow
- Supporting kidney function, which helps regulate blood pressure

Dehydration reverses all of these, causing the blood to become more viscous, raising heart rate, and potentially increasing the risk for vascular strain. It may also induce headache, fatigue, and light-headedness, which indirectly lead to lifestyle choice that impacts long-term health.

Water as a better alternative

While sweetened drinks, excessive caffeine, and alcohol place other stresses on the body, water is calorie-free, anti-inflammatory, and metabolically inert. Replacing these drinks with water improves hydration but also reduces other cardiovascular disease risk factors such as weight gain, insulin resistance, and inflammation.

'Nightmare bacteria' cases are increasing in the US

Mike Stobbe

Infection rates from drug-resistant "nightmare bacteria" rose almost 70% between 2019 and 2023, according to a new report from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention scientists.

Bacteria that are difficult to treat due to the so-called NDM gene primarily drove the increase, CDC researchers wrote in an article published Monday in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. Only two antibiotics work against those infections, and the drugs are expensive and must be administered through an IV, researchers said.

Bacteria with the gene were once considered exotic, linked to a small number of patients who received medical care overseas. Though the numbers are still small, the rate of U.S. cases jumped more than fivefold in recent years, the researchers reported. "The rise of NDMs in the U.S. is a grave danger and very worrisome," said David Weiss, an Emory University infectious diseases researcher, in an email.

It's likely many people are unrecognized carriers of the drug-resistant bacteria, which could lead to community spread, the CDC scientists said.

That may play out in doctors' offices across the country, as infections long considered routine and easy to treat—like urinary tract infections—could become chronic problems, said Dr. Maroia Walters, one of the report's authors.

Antimicrobial resistance occurs when germs such as bacteria and fungi gain the power to fight off the drugs designed to kill them. The misuse of antibiotics was a big reason for the rise—unfinished or unnecessary prescriptions that didn't kill the germs made them stronger.

In recent years, the CDC has drawn attention to "nightmare bacteria" resistant to a wide range of antibiotics.

That includes carbapenems, a class of antibiotics considered a last resort for treatment of serious infections.

Researchers drew data from 29 states that do the necessary testing and reporting of carbapenem-resistant bacteria.

They counted 4,341 cases of carbapenem-resistant bacterial infections from those states in 2023, with 1,831 of them the NDM variety. The researchers did not say how many of the infected people died.

The rate of carbapenem-resistant infections rose from just under 2 per 100,000 people in 2019 to more than 3 per 100,000 in 2023—an increase of 69%. But the rate of NDM cases rose from around 0.25 to about 1.35—an increase of 460%, the authors said.

A researcher not involved in the study said the increase is probably related to the COVID-19 pandemic. "We know that there was a huge surge in antibiotic use during the pandemic, so this likely is reflected in increasing drug resistance," said Dr. Jason Burnham, a Washington University researcher, in an email.

The CDC's count is only a partial picture.

Many states are not fully testing and reporting cases. Even in states that do, cases tend to be among hospital patients sick enough to warrant special testing. Many hospitals also aren't able to do the testing needed to detect certain forms of genetic resistance.

The CDC researchers did not have data from some of the most populous states, including California, Florida, New York and Texas, which means the absolute number of U.S. infections "is definitely underestimated," Burnham said.

This is not the first study to report a rise. A CDC report published in June noted an increase in NDM cases in New York City between 2019 and 2024. (Associated Press)

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

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 24: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma today held a detailed meeting with Union Minister for Youth Affairs & Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, on the sidelines of the upcoming Chintan Shivir being hosted in Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier, the Minister warmly welcomed the visiting dignitaries and extended his appreciation for their presence in Jammu and Kashmir for the important deliberations aimed at strengthening the sports landscape across the country.

During the meeting, Satish Sharma discussed in detail a comprehensive roadmap for

giving a significant fillip to sports development in Jammu and Kashmir, with particular emphasis on expanding outreach to border and far-flung areas. He underscored that youth residing in remote and underserved regions possess immense untapped potential, which can be channelized effectively through targeted interventions and improved access to sports infrastructure.

The Minister highlighted the ongoing efforts of the Jammu and Kashmir Government to promote a vibrant sports culture, including the organization of local tournaments, talent identification programmes, and initiatives aimed at engaging youth in constructive and nation-building activities. He stressed the need for strengthening grassroots-level



infrastructure to ensure that aspiring athletes, irrespective of their geographical location, have access to quality training and facilities. Satish Sharma also sought

liberal financial assistance from the Government of India for upgrading existing sports infrastructure and establishing modern, state-of-the-art facilities across Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized the importance of developing multipurpose indoor stadiums, playfields, and high-performance training centres equipped with advanced coaching support and sports science facilities.

The discussions further focused on enhancing collaboration between the Union Ministry and the Jammu and Kashmir Government in organizing national-level sporting events in Jammu and Kashmir, which would not only provide exposure to local talent but also position the region as a prominent sporting destination.

Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya appreciated the proactive initiatives being undertaken by the Jammu and Kashmir Government and lauded the focused approach towards youth engagement and sports development. He assured full support and cooperation from the Government of India in strengthening the sports ecosystem in the region, particularly in underserved and border areas.

Satish Sharma reiterated the commitment of the Government towards harnessing the energy and potential of youth through sports, innovation, and inclusive development.

He expressed confidence that the outcomes of the upcoming Chintan Shivir would pave the way for new strategies and collaborative efforts to further accelerate sports development in Jammu and Kashmir.

DYSS Baramulla engages thousands in Multi-Zonal Sports Revolution

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

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

The competitions, organized at respective zonal venues, witnessed enthusiastic participation from students of various government and private institutions, thereby fostering a spirit of sportsmanship and healthy competition among the youth.

In Zone Wagoora, an inter-school zonal level Chess competition for Under-14 and Under-17 boys was conducted at HS Watergam, witnessing the participation of 64 students from different schools. Similarly, Zone Nehalpora organized a Chess competition for Under-14 boys and girls at BMS Waripora, where 30 students actively took part.

Zone Singpora Pattan conducted inter-school zonal level Volleyball competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 boys under the banner of Nasha Mukta Abhiyan J&K, promoting both sports and social awareness. In another significant event, Zone Dangiawacha hosted inter-school zonal level Badminton competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 girls, attracting participation from 70 students.

Zone Rohama organized inter-school zonal level competitions for Under-14 and Under-17 girls at HS Tragpora under the Nasha Mukta Abhiyan J&K, where 87 students showcased their sporting skills. Additionally, Zone Pattan conducted a Badminton competition for Under-17 girls at HSS Pattan, with 38 participants demonstrating commendable talent.

Zone Singpora Kalan conducted inter-school zonal level competitions for Under-17 boys and girls at BHS Singpora Kalan, while Zone Dangerpora organized Under-14 Badminton competitions at HSS Dangerpora, witnessing a remarkable participation of 100 students.

Zone Tangmarg conducted inter-school zonal level Badminton competitions for Under-17 boys, with 40 students participating, alongside organizing Kabaddi and Cricket matches under the Nasha Mukta Abhiyan J&K banner. Meanwhile, Zone Uri conducted awareness programmes for both boys and girls under the campaign, emphasizing the importance of a drug-free and healthy lifestyle.

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

DYSSO Baramulla appreciated the efforts of all Zonal Physical Education Officers, field staff, and participating institutions for the successful conduct of these competitions and reiterated the department's commitment towards holistic youth development through sports and allied activities.

District Administration Kishtwar organizes mega awareness program under Nasha Mukta JK Abhiyan

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KISHTWAR, APRIL 24: As part of the ongoing 100-day "Nasha Mukta JK Abhiyan," the District Administration Kishtwar today organized a Mega Awareness Program here at the Government Degree College Auditorium.

The program witnessed the participation of more than 300 individuals including district officers, teachers, students and staff from different departments, reflecting strong community commitment towards eliminating drug abuse from the district.

Managing Director JKPDCL Rahul Yadav, who is the District Mentor for Nasha Mukta JK Abhiyan, for Kishtwar, attended the program as the Chief Guest.

The program commenced with the lighting of a ceremonial lamp by the Chief Guest.

Addressing the gathering, the District Mentor Rahul Yadav appreciated the District Administration for effectively implementing the Nasha Mukta JK Abhiyan. He emphasized the crucial role of education in prevention efforts and stressed the importance of capacity building of teachers to strengthen long-term awareness

and behavioural change among the youth.

He also highlighted the need to address drug abuse with seriousness and sensitivity. He said suspected drug-related deaths should not be ignored due to social stigma, as it prevents proper understanding of the issue. "Post-mortem is important to determine the actual cause of death and detect possible drug overdose, which also helps in tracing the source and taking preventive action," he noted. He urged society to stay united, act responsibly and support efforts to build a drug-free Jammu and Kashmir.

Earlier, in his welcome address, Deputy Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Sharma informed the District Mentor and other participants about the awareness activities being conducted as part of the ongoing campaign. "District Kishtwar remains relatively less affected by the menace due to strong family bonds and a vigilant community system" he noted and added that schools and colleges are actively monitoring students, with prompt reporting of any suspicious signs to the administration and police.

However, he said extensive



awareness drives have been conducted in the last 13 days, covering more than 760 schools, 136 panchayats and 11 municipal wards. "Activities are being carried out daily across the district with active participation of all stakeholders," he added, expressing confidence that coordinated efforts

would lead to the elimination of the drug menace.

The Deputy Commissioner also highlighted rehabilitation initiatives, stating that Kishtwar has taken lead in this area. "Under Mission YUVA, two de-addicted individuals have been successfully rehabilitated and provided financial

assistance to support their reintegration into mainstream society," he informed.

District Social Welfare Officer Tariq Parvez Qazi gave a PowerPoint presentation, highlighting the initiatives undertaken under the Abhiyan. It was also informed that National Panchayati Raj Day is being observed today across the district as per the notified schedule.

The programme featured yoga demonstration, Nukkad Natak by school students and thematic dance performance by artist Tavishi Anand, all aimed at promoting a drug-free society.

At the end, the District Mentor administered the "Nasha Mukta JK Pledge" to the participants, who collectively reaffirmed their commitment towards building a drug-free Kishtwar.

The program was attended by the ADC Pawan Kotwal; PO ICDS Rishi Kumar Sharma; ACR Mohammad Idrees Lone; ACD Manoj Kumar; ALC Mamta Sudershan; Tehsildar HQA to the DC; Rafiq Naik; AD Handicrafts & Handloom Pardeep Shan; DYSSO Jaffer Haider Sheikh; ExEn PWD R&B; Dy. CEO, other officers and officials from various departments.

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

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

KUPWARA, APRIL 24: A comprehensive one-day awareness programme on Road Safety and Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) was today organized at the Auditorium of BHSS Kupwara, witnessing enthusiastic participation from officers, officials, students, and members of the general public.

The programme was graced by Additional District Development Commissioner Kupwara (ADDC), Mufti Fareed. Among others present were ASP Kupwara, Chief Education Officer (CEO) Kupwara, Chief Planning Officer (CPO), DEPO, Principal BHSS Kupwara,

President Transport Union Kupwara, members of the Sumo Owners Association, students, and general public.

At the outset, Principal BHSS Kupwara, Reyaz Ahmad Kirmani, highlighted the importance of collective awareness and responsible citizenship in ensuring safer roads and a healthier public.

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

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

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

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

Bandipora witnesses extensive Anti-Drug Awareness Activities

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 24: Continuing the 100-Day Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, the District Administration Bandipora on Friday carried forward an intensified awareness campaign across multiple educational institutions, with a special focus on strengthening parent-student engagement and community participation to combat substance abuse.

At GHSS Gadakhud, Sonawari, a purpose-driven Parent-Teacher Meeting (PTM) was convened, focusing on sensitising parents about early warning signs of substance abuse, preventive strategies, and their crucial role in fostering a vigilant and value-based home environment. The session witnessed constructive dialogue, reinforcing the home-school partnership and a shared commitment towards safeguarding youth.

Similar Parent-Teacher interactions were organised at PM SHRI HSS Shadipora, HS Ketson, and other institutions, where discussions centred on students' academic progress, behavioural development, and the importance of parental guidance in ensuring a drug-free lifestyle.

Awareness activities were also conducted at PM SHRI GHS Odina, where a PTM focusing on parent awareness was held alongside a debate competition on drug abuse. Students and parents actively participated, highlighting the harmful effects of substance abuse and emphasising collective responsibility in shaping a healthier future.

At High School Achoora and HSS PTL Gurez, peer awareness talks formed a key component of the day's activities. Students actively led sessions, including a talk on "How Drugs Destroy Future," which effectively conveyed the long-term consequences of substance abuse.

Similar awareness initiatives were carried out at HS Jurnial and other institutions.

In addition, GDC Gurez, in collaboration with the Police Department, organised a quiz competition and awareness lecture under NMBA, promoting knowledge-based engagement among youth. A cleanliness drive was also conducted in coordination with the NSS unit to instil a sense of responsibility and community participation.

Pledge-taking ceremonies reaffirmed the commitment of students and staff towards building a drug-free society.

The programmes witnessed active participation from students, teachers, parents, and community members, reflecting a unified and determined approach towards eradicating drug abuse.

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

■ HT NEWS NETWORK

BUDGAM, APRIL 24: As part of the ongoing 100-day intensive Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, District Budgam today carried forward a series of awareness and preventive activities across multiple sectors, reaffirming its commitment towards building a drug-free society.

A plantation drive was organized at ASYM District Hospital Budgam under the campaign, symbolizing collective responsibility towards promoting a healthy environment and a drug-free future. Health officials, staff members, and participants actively joined the initiative.

An awareness session was also held at GDC Budgam, where students and faculty participated in sensitization programmes highlighting the harmful effects



of substance abuse and the importance of adopting healthy lifestyle practices.

As part of enforcement measures, the Excise Department Budgam conducted a survey at Hajibal Kothipora in Tehsil B.K. Pora to check illicit cultivation of narcotic crops such as poppy

and cannabis. No illegal cultivation was found during the inspection.

Community outreach was strengthened through a special Friday sermon at Jamia Masjid Chattergam, where the Imam highlighted the dangers of drug

abuse and urged farmers to refrain from cultivating illicit narcotic crops. Awareness posters on drug abuse and provisions of the NDPS Act were also distributed and displayed at prominent locations.

Under health sector initiatives, awareness programmes were conducted across Medical Block

Magam and other medical blocks of the district, involving medical officers, paramedical staff, and experts. Sessions focused on the physical, psychological, and social consequences of addiction, early identification, counseling, and referral services.

IEC material was widely distributed to encourage community participation and promote preventive behaviour.

The coordinated efforts of health departments, educational institutions, enforcement agencies, and community stakeholders reflect sustained commitment towards achieving the goals of the 100-day Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan.

The District Administration Budgam reiterated its resolve to continue awareness drives and community engagement initiatives to realize the vision of a drug-free Budgam.

Trump claims Iran leadership is 'fractured', but experts see strategic consistency

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, APR 24: US President Donald Trump has claimed that Iran's leadership is "seriously fractured," but many experts strongly dispute Trump's claim arguing the situation is far more nuanced. The White House pointed to Iran skipping a second round of talks with Vice President JD Vance as evidence of a divided government. However, Iran has maintained that negotiations cannot resume until the US lifts its blockade of Iranian ports, suggesting a consistent position rather than disarray. CNN quoted Mehran Kamrava as calling it "a serious misreading of the Iranian leadership," adding that "the leadership has been quite cohesive, and we've seen this in the conduct of the war and the nego-

tiation."

Iran's governance has undeniably grown more complex after the deaths of key leaders, including former supreme leader Ali Khamenei. A smaller group of officials, now operating under new supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei, is steering the country through war and diplomacy, balancing internal hard-line pressure with external demands from Washington.

Despite internal differences, experts say this leadership circle is presenting a united front. Trita Parsi noted that "different factions of Iranian leadership are more aligned now than before the war," emphasizing that the smaller decision-making circle is "more united about the strategy they use in the war," CNN reported.

Tehran has consistently re-



fused talks under current conditions, accusing Washington of lacking "seriousness in pursuing a diplomatic solution." Of-

icials have also pushed back on claims of infighting. Presidential aide Mehdi Tabatabai dismissed such reports as "a tired political

and propaganda ploy," adding that "unity and consensus... have been exceptional and noteworthy." "Talk of divisions among

senior officials is a tired political and propaganda ploy by Iran's adversaries," Mehdi Tabatabai, the Iranian president's deputy spokesman, wrote Wednesday on X. "Unity and consensus between the battlefield, the public, and diplomats at this time have been exceptional and noteworthy."

To reinforce that image, Iran has elevated figures like Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, who led negotiations with a broad, cross-factional team, seen as a deliberate show of cohesion.

Even so, disagreements exist. As Parsi put it, "are there differences? Of course there are," but blaming failed negotiations on Iranian disunity rather than mixed signals from Trump is "detached from reality." The mixed messages by Trump shows inconsistent position or policy

being treaded by Trump.

Behind the scenes, Iran has shifted into a wartime governing model. Rival power centers have been consolidated into a tighter structure coordinating military and diplomatic strategy, while hard-line factions exert strong domestic pressure against any deal that could be seen as conceding to the US.

According to Hamidreza Azizi, "the system is now operating in a different manner," and reduced access to the supreme leader "means other officials have more room to maneuver" on decisions of war and peace.

While Iran's leadership structure has changed but experts believe Iran structure is maintaining unity and navigating properly to a far more complicated political and wartime landscape. UNI

QatarEnergy's Golden Pass LNG facility in US begins exports

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

DOHA, APRIL 24: QatarEnergy, the state-owned energy company of Qatar, announced on Thursday that its joint venture with ExxonMobil has begun exporting liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the Golden Pass LNG facility in Texas.

The company said the first LNG export cargo from the project was successfully loaded at the Sabine Pass terminal in the United States.

Production at the facility began on March 30, and the inaugural shipment was carried aboard QatarEnergy's LNG vessel AI-Qaiyyah, which has a capacity of 174,000 cubic meters.



Qatar's Energy Minister and QatarEnergy CEO Saad Sherida Al-Kaabi called the project one of the largest investments in the history of the US LNG industry.

QatarEnergy holds a 70% stake in the facility, while ExxonMobil owns the remaining 30%. The partners invested more than \$10 billion in the project in 2019, with QatarEnergy Trading expected to take 70% of the planned 18 million tonnes of annual output.

Golden Pass LNG confirmed that the first cargo left the Sabine Pass terminal in Texas, marking the start of exports from the site.

The shipment's destination was not immediately disclosed, though earlier reports suggested it could be headed to Italy.

The facility is still ramping up operations, with only one of its three processing units currently active. Once fully operational, the project is expected to become a major supplier of U.S. LNG to global markets. UNI

Asian currencies slide as oil prices surge and Iran tensions persist

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

WASHINGTON/NEW DELHI, APR 24: Asian currencies in emerging markets came under renewed pressure as US-Iran second round of talks are in a limbo as the deadline for Tehran to send a peace proposal to the US remains unsettled and persistently high oil prices unsettled the investors.

The Indonesian rupiah dropped sharply to a record low of 17,315 per US dollar, weighed down by elevated energy costs linked to the ongoing Iran conflict. The situation has been particularly challenging for net energy importers across the

region, including Indonesia, India, the Philippines, and Thailand, as the closure of the Strait of Hormuz and continued uncertainty around a ceasefire have kept oil prices high for an extended period.

Indonesia's central bank on Wednesday pledged aggressive measures to support what it described as an "undervalued" currency, saying it stands ready to adjust policy to stabilize the rupiah and contain inflation.

Since the conflict began in late February, the rupiah has weakened by more than 3 per cent, making it one of the worst-performing Asian currencies this



year, second only to the Indian Rupee.

Elsewhere, regional currencies also slipped. The Philippine peso fell to 60.524 per dollar, its weakest level in more than two weeks, while the Thai baht declined to 32.44 per dollar, the lowest since April 8.

The broader market reaction

highlights how prolonged geopolitical tensions and supply disruptions in key energy routes continue to ripple through emerging Asian economies.

With US President Donald Trump asserting that there is "no time frame" for the conflict, Trump extended the ceasefire, after diplomatic efforts with Tehran stalled, and has pushed back on assumptions that political considerations are influencing his approach.

A spokesperson for Trump said he doesn't view Iran's assertion that it seized two ships in the Strait of Hormuz as a ceasefire violation.

US blockade is still intact as

US Central Command on late Wednesday said that it redirected 31 vessels to return to port, or turn around, as part of the ongoing US Navy blockade against Iran. Most vessels have been oil tankers.

Meanwhile, US Navy Secretary John Phelan has been fired in the midst of the war.

Meanwhile, Pentagon officials are believed to have briefed lawmakers on an intelligence assessment that found it could take up to six months to fully clear the Strait of Hormuz of mines after the war with Iran ends. A Pentagon spokesman said a six-month closure would be "unacceptable." UNI

Lebanon to call for one-month extension of ceasefire with Israel

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

WASHINGTON APRIL 24: Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said negotiations are ongoing to extend the ceasefire, warning that no party will be permitted to obstruct security measures or undermine stability.

"Preserving civil peace at this stage of our country's history is a red line," Aoun said on X, adding that he would "spare no effort to end the abnormal situation in Lebanon".

Lebanon's ambassador to the US, Nada Haddad Maaouad, will represent Lebanon at a preparatory meeting at the US State Department on Thursday, where she will raise the extension of the ceasefire and demand that Israel stop demolition operations in southern Lebanese villages and towns.

Aoun said negotiations are anchored on four conditions: stopping Israeli aggression, achieving an Israeli withdrawal, agreeing the return of prisoners and deploying the

Lebanese army.

Lebanon will require that the ceasefire with Israel be prolonged for at least one month, CNN reported on Tuesday, citing a political source familiar with the matter.

"Lebanon will demand an extension for a ceasefire by one month or more." The US State Department told RIA Novosti that Lebanon and Israel would hold a second round of talks in Washington at the ambassadorial level on Thursday.

Lebanese President Joseph Aoun said earlier this week that Lebanon's willingness to negotiate with Israel does not mean that Beirut has caved in and is ready to make concessions, but rather that it is seeking a lasting end to the armed conflict.

US President Donald Trump announced that Lebanon and Israel had agreed to a 10-day ceasefire starting April 17. Despite this, the Israeli army has been accused of routinely violating the ceasefire by launching air and artillery strikes and drone attacks. Lebanese movement Hezbollah said on Tuesday that

its fighters carried out their first combat operation since the ceasefire began, attacking Israeli army positions. On April 15, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced his intention to destroy Bint Jbeil, labeling it a bastion of the Hezbollah movement in southern Lebanon.

Meanwhile, the Israeli military said it intercepted a Hezbollah drone as the fragile ceasefire with Lebanon was further tested one day before a second round of direct talks between the two countries.

In a statement, the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said the "hostile aircraft" was flying toward Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon. It was intercepted before it crossed into Israeli territory. The IDF said they viewed the incident as a "blatant violation of the ceasefire."

Hezbollah said the target was what they called a new artillery encampment in the town of Bayyada in territory occupied by Israeli forces and accused Israel of repeatedly violating the temporary ceasefire agreement. UNI

Peace talks with Iran "possible" within the next 36 to 72 hours: Trump

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

WASHINGTON/ TEHRAN, APRIL 24: Giving a limited timeframe to Iran to come up with a unified proposal to get diplomatic negotiations back on track, US President Donald Trump said on Wednesday that peace talks with Iran are "possible" within the next 36 to 72 hours.

Trump said that the United States has extended the ceasefire with Iran to give Tehran time to come up with "a unified proposal."

"It's possible!" Trump told the New York Post when asked about the prospect of negotiations.

The administration does not want to indefinitely extend the ceasefire and does not want to give Iran time to drag out talks further.

It reflects that the administration's wants to settle the conflict diplomatically.

The president believes the US blockade of the Strait of Hormuz will keep pressure on Iran while negotiations continue. However, there is also recognition within Trump's team that the longer the blockade persists, the greater the potential damage to the global economy, US media reports.

Meanwhile, at least two container ships were hit by gunfire in the Strait of Hormuz today, according to the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations (UKMTO). The first was approached by a gunboat belonging to Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), which gave no radio warning before it "fired upon the vessel," the maritime authority said.

The IRGC said that two vessels were seized in the Strait of Hormuz and transferred to Iranian waters for "allegedly operating without proper authorization, repeatedly violating regulations, and manipulating



navigation systems," according to Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting (IRIB).

Iranian media also reported that a third vessel, a Greek-owned ship, was targeted by the IRGC and is "now disabled off Iran's coast."

President Donald Trump has extended the ceasefire with Iran after an American negotiating team led by Vice President JD Vance delayed plans to travel to Pakistan for a second round of peace talks, as diplomatic efforts stalled amid un-

certainty over Tehran's participation.

"I have therefore directed our military to continue the blockade and remain ready and able, and will extend the ceasefire until such time as their proposal is submitted and discussions are concluded, one way or the other."

Iranian officials, however, remain divided. Mahdi Mohammadi, an adviser to Iran's parliament speaker, dismissed the ceasefire extension as a tactic and warned of retaliation, while Iran's UN representative said Tehran is ready for talks if the blockade on its ports is lifted.

Vance, Witkoff, and Kushner previously held marathon talks with Iranian officials in Islamabad earlier this month but left without a breakthrough. Following those talks, Trump imposed a blockade on Iranian ports, demanding an end to uranium enrichment as a core condition for any deal. UNI

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that my Name DOB Address has been wrongly mentioned in adhar regards bearing aadhar no 8574 8463 4822 Fahmeeda Begum DOB 16/11/1973 W/O Javid Iqbal Bhat R/O Malik Mohallah Handwara instead of Fehmida Bano DOB 12/12/1973 W/O Javid Iqbal Bhat D/O Abdul Majid as for regards now I have applying for it's correction of the same if any person have any objection in this regards may file the same to the office of the Block Development Office Kralgund, Tehsil office Kralgund concerned authority /Adhar seva within the period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice After that no objection shall be entertained.

FEHMIDA BANO
DOB 12/12/1973
W/O JAVID IQBAL BHAT D/O ABDUL MAJID
R/O MALIK MOHALLA MARATGAM TEHSIL
HANDWARA DISTRICT KUPWARA

Public Notice

It is hereby notified that my Name spelling has been wrongly mentioned in my Driving license bearing Driving Licence no JK09 2016008158 Naseer Ahmad Sofi S/O Gulam Ahmad Sofi instead of Naseer Ahmed Sofi S/O Gh Ahmad Sofi as for regards now I have applying for it's correction of the same if any person have any objection in this regards may file the same to the office of the ARTO office Drugmulla Kupwara within the period of seven days from the date of publication of this notice After that no objection shall be entertained.

NASEER AHMED SOFI
S/O GH AHMAD SOFI
R/O HANDWARA TEHSIL HANDWARA
DISTRICT KUPWARA

Public Notice

I, Ajaz Ahmad Marazie, S/o Abdul Rahman Marazie, hereby declare that my particulars have been wrongly recorded in my Driving Licence No. JK-0120130080228.

Incorrect particulars recorded:
Name: Ajaz Ahmad Marazi
Father's Name: Ashiq Ahmad Marazi
Date of Birth: 01-04-1994
Correct particulars:
Name: Ajaz Ahmad Marazie
Father's Name: Abdul Rahman Marazie
Date of Birth: 03/03/1994

This notice is issued to rectify the above errors for all official and legal purposes.

If anyone has any objection to this correction, he/she may contact the undersigned within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. Thereafter, no objection shall be entertained.

Stellantis India brings Jeep® and Citroën dual-brand retail experience to Srinagar

HT NEWS NETWORK

SRINAGAR, APR 24: Stellantis India today announced the opening of a new Stellantis Brand House (SBH) in Srinagar. Established in partnership with ARSH Automobiles Pvt Ltd the new SBH brings Jeep® and Citroën together under one integrated retail destination, offering end-to-end sales, service and genuine spares (3S) support.

A spokesperson of the company in a press said that at the inauguration, Shailesh Hazela, CEO and Managing Director, Stellantis India said, "Srinagar is an important, high-potential market with customers who are increasingly seeking comfort, safety, reliability, and capability—especially given the region's terrain and all-weather driving needs. With this new Stellantis Brand House in Srinagar, we are strengthening our commitment to Jammu & Kashmir and ensuring customers have seamless access to our offerings—whether they seek the comfort-first approach of Citroën



or the adventure DNA of Jeep. We are delighted to partner with ARSH Automobiles, whose strong local credibility and customer-first focus align with Stellantis core philosophy of remaining Customer First."

Mohammad Anwar Khan, Dealership Principal, ARSH Automobile added, "We are proud to bring the Stellantis Brand House to Srinagar, offering customers in the region access to two globally respected brands—Jeep® and Citroën—under one roof. Jammu & Kashmir is a market with growing aspiration and very specific

mobility needs, and this integrated facility allows us to deliver both capability and comfort, backed by reliable service support. With Stellantis' strong brand vision and our deep understanding of the local market, we are confident of building ARSH Automobiles in Srinagar as a world class destination for Jeep and Citroën customers offering trusted service, and an exceptional ownership experience."

Designed as a modern, experience-led retail space, the Srinagar Stellantis Brand House combines digital discovery with personal-

ized in-person engagement. The facility enables customers to explore products, receive expert consultations and complete their purchase journey in a transparent and convenient environment—backed by robust after-sales support, for both the storied brands - Jeep® and Citroën.

The dealership will cater not only to Srinagar but also to customers across nearby districts including Ganderbal, Budgam, Pulwama, Anantnag, Baramulla, Bandipora, Sopore and Kupwara, significantly enhancing accessibility to Stellantis brands in the region.

The dual-brand SBH model gives customers in Jammu & Kashmir a wider choice through a single, unified experience—bringing together the distinct strengths of Stellantis' iconic brands. With both brands available at one destination, customers in Srinagar and the wider region can access a wide portfolio—from rugged SUVs to comfort-oriented family cars—supported by dedicated sales and after-sales teams.

RBI cancels Paytm Payments Bank licence, initiates winding-up process

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APR 24 : The Reserve Bank of India on Friday cancelled the banking licence of Paytm Payments Bank Limited with immediate effect, citing serious regulatory and governance concerns, and said it will initiate winding-up proceedings before the High Court.

The central bank, in an order dated April 24, 2026, said the licence has been revoked under the provisions of the Banking Regulation Act, effectively barring the entity from carrying out any form of banking business, including accepting deposits or offering other permitted services.

The RBI said the action was taken as the affairs of the bank were conducted in a manner detrimental to the interests of depositors, while the overall management was found to be prejudicial to public interest.

It also noted that the bank had failed to comply with licensing conditions and regulatory requirements, leaving no justification for its continued operations.

Further, the regulator observed that allowing the bank to continue would not serve any meaningful public interest,



reinforcing its decision to revoke the licence.

Despite the strict action, the RBI assured that the bank currently has sufficient liquidity to repay all its depositors in full upon liquidation, providing some relief to customers.

The development follows a series of regulatory curbs imposed over the past few years. The bank had been barred from onboarding new customers since March 2022.

Subsequently, in early 2024, the RBI imposed additional restrictions, including a ban on fresh deposits, credits, and top-ups in customer accounts and wallets. UNI

Shriram Finance Q4 PAT jumps 41pc; FY26 profit nears Rs 10,000 cr

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APR 24: Shriram Finance Limited on Friday reported a strong financial performance for the fourth quarter and full year ended March 31, 2026, driven by robust growth in net interest income and expansion in its loan book.

For the January–March quarter (Q4 FY26), the company's standalone net interest income (NII) rose 15.58 per cent year-on-year to Rs 6,994.08 crore, compared to Rs 6,051.19 crore in the corresponding period last year.

Profit after tax (PAT) surged 40.86 per cent to Rs 3,013.57 crore from Rs 2,139.39 crore a year ago, reflecting improved operating performance.

Earnings per share (EPS) for the quarter also saw a sharp increase of 40.77 per cent to Rs

16.02, up from Rs 11.38 in the year-ago period.

For the full financial year FY26, the company posted a 14.09 per cent rise in NII to Rs 26,051.44 crore, as against Rs 22,835.09 crore in FY25.

PAT grew 20.87 per cent to Rs 9,998.15 crore, compared to Rs 8,271.61 crore in the previous year, excluding a one-time gain from stake sale in its housing finance subsidiary.

Including the exceptional gain recorded in FY25, net profit showed a marginal increase from Rs 9,761.00 crore to Rs 9,998.15 crore in FY26.

Annual EPS rose 20.80 per cent to Rs 53.15 on a comparable basis, while growth stood at 2.37 per cent when adjusted against the previous year's exceptional gains.

The company's asset base continued to expand steadily,



with Assets Under Management (AUM) increasing 14.85 per cent to Rs 3,02,273.75 crore as on March 31, 2026, compared to Rs 2,63,190.27 crore a year earlier. Sequentially, AUM rose from Rs 2,91,709.03 crore as of December 2025.

The Board of Directors has recommended a final dividend of Rs 6 per equity share (300 per cent on face value of Rs 2) for FY26, subject to shareholder approval at the upcoming Annual General Meeting. This is in addition to the interim dividend

of Rs 4.80 per share declared earlier in the fiscal, taking the total dividend payout for the year to Rs 10.80 per share.

The company said the final dividend, if approved, will be paid by August 9, 2026, with the record date falling in early July.

Shriram Finance Limited, the flagship entity of the Shriram Group, remains one of India's largest retail-focused non-banking financial companies, with a diversified lending portfolio spanning commercial vehicles, MSME loans, gold loans, personal finance and farm equipment financing.

Founded in 1979, the company has built a strong presence across the country with over 3,200 branches, serving more than 9.7 million customers, and continues to focus on financing small road transport operators and small businesses. UNI

Sensex, Nifty loss over 1pc, extending losses for third session

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 24 : Indian stock market on Friday came under significant selling pressure, extending losses for a third consecutive session. Nifty slipped below the 23,900 mark amid weakness across sectors led by IT stocks.



At close, the Sensex was down 982.71 points or 1.27 percent at 76,681.29, and the Nifty was down 275.10 points or 1.14 percent at 23,897.95. For the week, Sensex and Nifty down 2 percent each, snapping two-week gaining streak.

Among the sectors, IT stocks were among the worst performers with IT index fell 5%, hitting lowest level since June 2023. Nifty Metal, Nifty Pharma, Nifty Media, Nifty Auto and Nifty Private Bank were also the key losers. On Nifty, the key losers were Infosys, HCL Tech, TCS, Tech Mahindra and Sun Pharma, while gainers included Hindalco, Coal India, Nestle, SBI, Trent.

More than 100 stocks touched their 52-week high on the BSE. These included Himadri Speciality, ABSL AMC, Nestle, AU Small Finance Bank, Glenmark Pharma, Adani Ports, Hitachi Energy, Torrent Power, CG Power, among others.

Shares of LTIMindtree fell 6 percent after the company's March quarter earnings missed analysts' estimates. Shares of InterGlobe Aviation, which operates IndiGo, declined about 3 percent

Global markets traded mixed with the US futures showed a muted trend after Wall Street retreated from record highs, with S&P 500 futures inching up 0.1% while Dow futures slipped 0.2%. In Europe, Germany's DAX declined 0.2%. France's CAC 40 fell 1%, and the UK's FTSE 100 dropped 0.6%, reflecting cautious sentiment.

Japan's Nikkei 225 rose 1%, supported by strong buying in technology stocks after hitting a record intraday high above 60,000 earlier. Hong Kong's Hang Seng edged up 0.2%, while China's Shanghai Composite slipped 0.1%. UNI

Wendt FY25-26 Standalone sales is Rs 20,652 lakhs, PAT Rs 2,275 lakhs

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI, APR 24 : Wendt (India), part of the Murugappa Group conglomerate, on Thursday announced that its standalone sales in FY 25-26 stood at Rs 20,652 lakhs and the PAT at Rs 2,275 lakhs.

The Board of Directors of the company met on Friday and approved the audited financial results for the year ended 31st Mar 2026.

On a Standalone basis, the Company achieved sales of Rs. 20,652 lakhs during the year which is 3% lower than the previous year. The domestic sales recorded Rs. 16,465 lakhs which is lower by 2% than the previous year. The drop in sales is due to delay in customer clearance for dispatch of some machines.



Exports was Rs. 4187 lakhs, lower by 4% and accordingly, the Profit After Tax (PAT) for the current year is Rs. 2,275 lakhs, which is 41% lower than the previous year. The decrease in profit is primarily due to change in product mix and increase in cost. On a Consolidated basis, Company's sales stood at Rs. 23,394 lakhs for the current year, which is similar to the previous year with the PAT of Rs. 1,455 lakhs, which is 63% lower than the previous year. The Board has recommended final dividend of Rs. 10/- per share (100% on face value of equity shares of Rs 10/- each) out of the current year's profits. The payment of dividend is subject to the approval of shareholders in ensuing Annual General Meeting to be held on 24th July 2026.

With the Company having declared an interim dividend of Rs. 20/- per share (200% on face value of equity shares of Rs 10/- each) at its Board Meeting held on 21st January 2026, the total dividend for the year ended March 31, 2026 is Rs 30/- per share (300% of the face value of equity shares of Rs 10/- each). UNI

India's seafood exports cross all time high of Rs 72,000 cr in industry history

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

CHENNAI, APR 24 : India's seafood exports rose to a record Rs 72,325.82 crore (USD 8.28 billion) in FY 2025-26, with volumes reaching 19.32 lakh metric tonnes, according to provisional data released by Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA).

The exports reached all time high in the history of marine products exports from the country. Frozen shrimp remained the primary growth driver, contributing Rs 47,973.13 crore (USD 5.51 billion), accounting for over two-thirds of total export earnings, while shipments of shrimp grew 4.6% in volume and 6.35% in value, reinforcing its dominance in India's marine products export basket.

The United States retained its

position as the largest export destination, with imports totalling USD 2.32 billion.

However, shipments to the US declined by 19.8% in volume and 14.5% in value, reflecting primarily the impact of reciprocal tariffs, according to a PIB release.

This decline was offset by robust growth in alternative markets such as China, EU and Southeast Asian countries. Exports to China, the second-largest destination, rose 22.7% in value and 20.1% in volume.

The European union posted strong gains, with exports increasing by 37.9% in value and 35.2% in volume. Southeast Asia also recorded significant expansion, with growth of over 36.1% and 28.2% in value and volume, respectively, while exports to Japan grew 6.55% by value, and those to West Asia

showed a marginal decline of 0.55%, due to the turmoil in the region during the fag end of the financial year.

Several individual markets registered strong double-digit growth, underscoring a clear shift towards diversification amid trade headwinds in traditional markets.

On the product side, exports of frozen fish, squid, cuttlefish, dried items, and live products showed positive momentum, while chilled products declined. The export of the surimi, fishmeal and fish oil reported improved performance.

In terms of logistics, the top five ports—Vizag, JNPT, Kochi, Kolkata and Chennai—accounted for nearly 64% of total export value, highlighting their continued importance in India's seafood export supply chain. UNI

Meta layoffs, Microsoft buyouts put 23,000 jobs at risk

UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, APR 24 : A wave of layoffs in the Information Technology sector is set to come as Meta Platforms and Microsoft are planning cuts or announcing buyouts that could affect as many as 23,000 jobs. The move comes as part of an effort to streamline operations and offset heavy spending on artificial intelligence.

Meta plans to cut 10 per cent of workers, or roughly 8,000 employees, starting on May 20. Microsoft issued its own memo offering voluntary buyouts to thousands of its US employees. About 7 per cent of the US workforce will be eligible for the buyouts.

Notably, Microsoft has never

previously done buyouts of this scale. Microsoft had 125,000 employees in the US as of June 2025. That would make about 8,750 workers eligible for the programme.

A key reason for the layoffs is Meta's increased spending in other areas of the company, including AI, for which it will spend USD 135 bn this year. This is roughly equal to the amount it has spent on AI in the previous three years combined.

Meta chief Mark Zuckerberg has, over the past year, repeatedly emphasised the company's ambition to become a leader in artificial intelligence, from generative tools to infrastructure that powers large-scale machine learning systems.



Janelle Gale, Meta's chief people officer, said, "We're doing this as part of our continued effort to run the company more efficiently and to allow us to

offset the other investments we're making. This is not an easy trade-off, and it will mean letting go of people who have made meaningful contributions to Meta

during their time here."

On the buyout, Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella said his firm would offer benefit-eligible employees six months of health care and stock vesting and 60 days of notice in addition to severance. If a 20-year employee whose salary totaled USD 180,000, their severance package would offer USD 180,000, though it's likely this would be larger for higher-level workers.

A slowdown in IT hiring and ongoing layoffs are beginning to weigh on India's housing market, especially in technology-led cities such as Hyderabad, Pune, and Bengaluru, where software professionals account for a significant share of homebuyers. UNI



Starc Cleared to Travel to India, Hopeful of playing for DC in Early May

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

VISAKHAPATNAM: Premier Australia fast bowler Mitchell Starc has been cleared to travel to IPL 2026 after overcoming shoulder and elbow issues and is hoping to be available for Delhi Capitals (DC) ahead of their game against Rajasthan Royals (RR) on May 1.

Starc, 36, has not played any cricket since late January. He had a monstrous workload in the Ashes, where he was the Player of the Series for taking 31 wickets at 19.93, and bowled 153.1 overs across the five Tests. He then played five BBL matches for Sydney Sixers in late January, helping them to the final, but in one of those matches against Perth Scorchers, he fell heavily on his left shoulder and elbow in the field while diving for a catch.

After a break in February, he experienced some soreness when he returned to bowl, which delayed his arrival at the IPL.

There was confusion initially about why he was not in India for the start of the IPL, which led Starc to detail his injury on social media and express frustration at "heavily misinformed opinions" about his unavailability.

It is understood that Starc has had a good week of pain-free bowling at home in Sydney and is due to fly to India on Friday. He will require a period of acclimatisation and a ramp-up in bowling intensity before likely being available for the May 1 contest in Jaipur. Barring any setbacks, he should be available for the remainder of the IPL season.

The news comes as Australia Test and ODI skipper Pat Cummins appears set to play his first game of the IPL season for Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) on Saturday, also against RR in Jaipur.

Cummins has not played any cricket since mid-December, when he played his lone Test of the Ashes. That Test is also the only game he has played since early July 2025 owing to a lumbar stress injury in his lower back.

The return of Starc, Cummins and Josh Hazlewood to full fitness is a relief for Cricket Australia, who have been understandably cautious about the management of their star trio of quicks ahead of an unprecedented international schedule over the next 18 months. Australia are set to play 20 Tests, possibly 21 if they qualify for the WTC final next June, between August 2026 and August 2027 before the ODI World Cup in October-November 2027.

Jeremiah Louis released from hospital but will continue to be monitored

■ UNITED NEWS OF INDIA

BASSETERRE: Jeremiah Louis has been discharged from hospital after scans returned clear results on Wednesday, but the Leeward Islands medical team, which has been in communication with Cricket West Indies (CWI), will continue to monitor him closely over the next 48 hours.

Louis, the Leeward Islands seamer and No.9 batter, was struck on the helmet by Trinidad & Tobago fast bowler Jayden Seales on the third morning of the West Indies Championship match at Sir Vivian Richards Stadium in North Sound, Antigua, and the game was abandoned soon after owing to a "dangerous pitch" and recorded as a draw. The umpires - Leslie Reifer



and Zahid Bassarath - took the decision to abandon the match in which 27 wickets had fallen across the first 147 overs of the four-day match, one of only 12 fixtures in a reduced domestic first-class season.

Leeward Islands were 96 runs ahead with three second-innings wickets in hand when Louis was struck by a ball that reared sharply from a good length. He was felled and slapped the pitch in frustration, before jumping to his feet and booting his helmet towards square leg. He then received medical attention before being stretchered off and taken to hospital in an ambulance. After a lengthy delay, which involved consultation with ground-staff and match referee Johnathan Blades, the umpires informed captains Joshua Da Silva and Justin Greaves that the match was being stopped.

Leeward Islands coach Wilden Cornwall told CWI's live stream that he had "had my doubts" about the pitch conditions from the first morning and suggested that the pitch was under-prepared. "To me, it wasn't given the preparation of a four-day wicket, hence we see so many players get damaged... The pitch has been misbehaving throughout the entire three days," he said.

Seales had taken all seven wickets to fall in Leeward Islands' second innings, in addition to the three he had taken in their first innings. In his first over of the third morning, Seales had Jahmar Hamilton caught at second slip with a ball that reared to hit his glove, three balls after striking the towering Rahkeem Cornwall on the shoulder with a bouncer.

Asiya Iqbal Felicitated by Affarwaat XI Cricket Club in Baramulla

■ HT SPORT DESK

BARAMULLA, APR 24: President Women's Wing JKECC Baramulla, Asiya Iqbal, was invited as the Guest of Honour by Affarwaat XI Cricket Club during a local cricket event held today.

She was felicitated by the cricket team and respected members of the club in recognition of her outstanding work as District President of the Women's Wing of the Jammu and Kashmir Employees Coordination Committee (JKECC), Baramulla.

On the occasion, Asiya Iqbal also played a few shots to encourage the young

players and boost their morale.

While addressing the gathering, she spoke about the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, a mission run by the Government of India to eradicate drug abuse. She urged the players to actively contribute towards making society drug-free.

She further appealed to the youth, especially cricketers, to take responsibility and work collectively for a drug-free India, Jammu & Kashmir, and Baramulla.

The event concluded with appreciation from participants, who praised her efforts and commitment towards social causes.



LUBAAB PUBLICATIONS

ONE STOP SOLUTION FOR ALL PRINTING NEEDS

NEWSPAPER | BOOKS | FLYERS | LOGO | FLEX | MAGAZINES
VISITING CARDS | BROCHURES | 3D BOARDS | COVER PAGES
WEDDING CARDS | CALLIGRAPHY | WALL PAINTINGS

9999038812
9419008414



Radio Colony,
Gund Hassibhat, Lawaipora Srinagar-190017

HEADLINES TODAY INVITES CONTRIBUTIONS

Are you a writer, poet, storyteller, columnist, or feature writer with a passion for literature or health writings? Headlines Today offers a platform to share:

Literature Section: Well-crafted essays, literary articles, reflections, and creative writings.

Health Section: Well-researched articles, expert columns, and in-depth feature reports from professionals and specialists.

Send your contributions to:

Dr Basharat Khan
Honorary Editor: Literature & Health
Sections (HT) at
chogalwriter76@gmail.com

YOUR WORDS CAN INSPIRE,
INFORM, AND IGNITE; LET
THEM BE HEARD.

