



Nasha Mukht Jammu Kashmir Abhiyaan

'Our neighbour' funding terrorism through narcotics smuggling: LG Sinha

Elements attempting to destabilize society won't be spared

Drugs smuggled into J&K biggest threats to youth, ruining our future

No innocent will be harassed, no guilty will be spared

Passports, driving, arms licenses, Aadhaars of smugglers to be revoked

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Jammu, Apr 11: Asserting that our neighbour under well-thought-out conspiracy is funding terrorism through narcotics smuggling, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said that elements attempting to destabilize the society would be dealt with sternly.

Addressing the launch function of 100-day "Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir" campaign, here, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Elements attempting to destabilize society will not be spared."

He said, "Our neighbour is engaged in a "well-thought-out conspiracy" to fund terrorism through drug smuggling. These activities are part of a larger effort to undermine peace and stability in the



region."

"Those who destroy society will face the full and uncompromising weight of the law. Our neighbor is using cross-border smuggling to poison our communities and undermine our nation's future. Every officer carries one obligation: this must stop. The full force

of the law is now directed at smugglers. Their networks will be dismantled without delay," the Lieutenant Governor said.

LG Sinha said, "The drugs being smuggled into Jammu and Kashmir are emerging as one of the biggest threats to the lives of our youth. Narcotics not only finance terror networks

but also destroy families and communities."

Highlighting the dual impact of the menace, the Lieutenant Governor noted that the inflow of drugs is both a security challenge and a social crisis. He called upon security forces to remain vigilant and resolute in tackling the issue.

LG Sinha urged the forces to take a firm pledge to eradicate drug smuggling and ensure that such activities are not allowed to succeed "at any cost," reaffirming the administration's commitment to safeguarding the future of the region's youth.

In a stern warning, the Lieutenant Governor stated that Drug Smugglers' assets will be seized, ringleaders prosecuted, and punishment will be delivered swiftly. "We have issued a new SOP against drug traffickers. Under this SOP, we have taken a crucial decision to | More on P6



Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha flags off Padyatra from MA Stadium Jammu on Saturday as he launches historic mass movement for drug-free Jammu & Kashmir

Pic: DIPR J&K

Local body polls in J&K unlikely in near future

Govt not keen on early Panchayat elections

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Apr 11: Even though the State Election Commission has initiated the process of revising Panchayat electoral rolls, the chances of holding local body elections in the near future appear bleak. Sources told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the elected government is not keen on conducting Panchayat polls anytime soon.

"There are no chances of the polls in the near future. The earliest window for any such exercise would be between September and December this

year," sources disclosed.

A minister in the NC-led government, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the polls would be held at an appropriate time. "The matter has not been discussed yet," he added.

Sources further said the government is also averse to hold direct elections for the third tier of the Panchayati Raj system, i.e., district development councils (DDCs). "No decision has been taken yet to disband direct elections for the third tier of the Panchayati Raj system, but there is a view among MLAs of both | More on P6

More! Mushroom research

Breakthrough reflects SKUAST-K's commitment to scientific excellence: CM

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Apr 11: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has extended his heartfelt congratulations to Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology of Kashmir (SKUAST-K) for achieving a significant scientific breakthrough in the research and advancement of Morel (Guchhi) mushrooms.

The Chief Minister, who is also Pro-Chancellor of the university, lauded the university's remarkable accomplishment, stating that the breakthrough reflects SKUAST-K's unwavering



commitment to scientific excellence and the promotion of high-value natural resources.

Highlighting the broader impact of the research, the Chief Minister | More on P6

Viral video pushes authorities to make new school building functional

Umair Gull Ganie

Kulgam, Apr 11: A viral video showing students crossing a stream to attend school at Nandimarg in South Kashmir's Kulgam district led to authorities throwing open a completed school building within a day.

Residents of two villages while talking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said the building, whose construction began in 2018, had remained unused, resulting in congestion in the existing school and inconvenience for students who had to walk

nearly two kilometres and cross the stream daily.

They said making the building functional will have a positive impact on the ground and ease the hardships faced by students.

Officials said that, taking cognisance of the circulating video, the Chief Education Officer (CEO) Kulgam, on the directions of the Education Minister, visited the area to assess the situation.

During the visit, it was found that nearly 90 students from the upper areas of Nandimarg were forced to | More on P6

Delegations call on LG Sinha

KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 11: A delegation led by Reasi MLA Kuldeep Raj Dubey called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday and projected various issues pertaining to the augmentation of

pilgrim-centric facilities at the holy Shiv Khori Shrine.

Ramesh Hangloo, Founder and Managing Director of Radio Sharda, also called on the Lieutenant Governor. He was accompanied by Prof B. L. Zutshi and Avtar Jotshi. | More on P6

Army's White Knight Corps joins 100 days-long anti-drug campaign in J&K

PTI

Jammu, Apr 11: The White Knight Corps of the Army on Saturday joined the 100-day 'Nasha Mukht Abhiyan' led by Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha which aims to eradicate the scourge of addiction from the Union territory, officials said.

Chief of Staff (COS) White Knight Corps launched a three-month-long series of public outreach activities as part of anti-drug campaign at Nagrota, reaffirming the Army's commitment towards nation-building and societal resilience, a defence spokesman said.



The campaign commenced with a joint pledge ceremony followed by 'padyatra' by school children and National Cadet

Corps (NCC) cadets, symbolising a unified resolve to combat the menace of drug abuse. "The initiative | More on P6

'Digital arrest' is complete myth, says Crime Branch as AI-driven fraud rises in Kashmir

Rs 22 lakh recovered; victims of fraud up to Rs 50,000 may not need court orders, call 1930 immediately: CICE, Dy SP Ashiq Hussain Malik

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Apr 11: Amid a growing surge in cyber crime cases across Kashmir, the Cyber Crime Investigation Centre for Excellence (CICE), Crime Branch Srinagar, on Saturday said over 22 lakh Rs has been recovered in the last three months, even as officials underlined that lack of awareness continues to be the biggest factor behind people falling prey to online frauds.

Addressing a media workshop here to expand awareness

on cyber crime, Deputy Superintendent of Police (Dy SP) Ashiq Hussain Malik, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said cyber crime is increasing proportionately with technological advancement, making every individual with a phone or internet access vulnerable.

"Today, there is hardly any person, educated or uneducated, who does not have a phone. The moment a person has an internet-enabled device, he



becomes vulnerable to cyber fraud. Awareness is the only

way to prevent such crimes," he said.

Malik said the purpose of engaging media was to ensure that awareness messages reach the masses beyond limited institutional programmes. "Our awareness campaigns are often confined to offices or institutions. Through media, the same message can reach lakhs of people at once," he added.

He said children are increasingly targeted through social media platforms where their accounts are hacked, photographs misused or morphed using artificial intelligence and

later used for blackmail.

"These images are altered in such a way that they become highly objectionable, and children are threatened that they will be shared with family or friends," he said.

For youth, especially students and job seekers, the Dy SP said fraudsters exploit aspirations by offering fake scholarships, admissions in reputed institutions, or lucrative job opportunities in India and abroad. "They ask for money in the name of registration, air

tickets or processing. Once the payment is made, the link disappears," he said.

He added that in the business community, fraudsters pitch highly attractive investment opportunities. "If someone offers you a product worth Rs 1000 at Rs 200, it should immediately raise suspicion. Such offers must be verified thoroughly before any transaction," he said.

OTP, KYC and service-based frauds Malik said | More on P6

Div Com Kashmir chairs MDC meeting on traffic management

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 11: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Saturday chaired a meeting of the Multi-Disciplinary Committee (MDC) on Traffic Management to review ongoing initiatives and assess measures for streamlining traffic flow and reducing congestion across Srinagar.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, Chief Executive Officer, Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL), Vice Chairpersons of Srinagar Development Authority (SDA) and LCMA, Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic), and senior officers from the Education and Roads & Buildings (R&B) departments.

During the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner reviewed the status of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for the development of parking facilities, progress on key infrastructure projects,



and ongoing works at critical junctions including Natipora-Chanapora T-junction and the Shalteng-Parimpora Flyover.

He also assessed the progress of Smart City initiatives, including painting of bus

stops, marking of stop lines at major crossings, operational readiness of the Zoomar charging station, and development works at Batamalo and Hazratbal.

Emphasizing to ease congestion due to school buses, the

Divisional Commissioner directed the concerned officers to convene a meeting with stakeholders to explore regulation of school timings, subject to approval by the competent authority.

He further instructed the SSP Traffic to intensify enforcement against traffic violations and ensure effective issuance of challans to violators.

The meeting held detailed deliberations on measures to curb on-road parking and proposed the identification and declaration of no-parking zones in heavily congested areas.

It was also informed that all ITMS cameras are fully functional and actively supporting traffic monitoring and enforcement.

The Divisional Commissioner stressed the importance of coordinated and sustained efforts among all stakeholders to achieve effective traffic decongestion and improved mobility in the city.

Javid Dar reviews irrigation facilities in Rafiabad

KT NEWS DESK

BARAMULLA, APRIL 11: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar on Saturday chaired a comprehensive review meeting at Dak Bungalow, Rafiabad here to assess the status of irrigation facilities and ongoing developmental works in the area.

During the meeting, the Minister emphasized on the need for immediate repairing and de-silting of canals to ensure adequate irrigation facilities for farmers ahead of the forthcoming irrigation season.

He observed that efficient water management and timely maintenance of irrigation infrastructure are critical for enhancing agricultural productivity and safeguarding farmers' interests.

He further directed that all ongoing projects be executed strictly within stipulated timelines, with



focus on quality, durability and sustainability.

The Minister, as per an official statement, urged officers to maintain close inter-departmental coordination, adopt a result-oriented approach, and remain responsive to public needs so that developmental initiatives translate into tangible outcomes on the ground.

DLSA Budgam conducts workshop on social evils

KT NEWS DESK

BUDGAM, APRIL 11: A workshop on dowry and allied social evils was organized by the District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam in collaboration with Boys Higher Secondary School, Khan Sahib, under the aegis of the Legal Literacy Club (LLC).

The primary objective, as per an official statement, of the workshop was to create awareness among students regarding the social and legal consequences of the dowry system and to educate them about laws aimed at preventing such practices. It also encouraged youth to take a firm stand against social evils and to promote the values of equality, respect, and justice.

The workshop also included an important session on the rights, protection, welfare, and entitlements of senior citizens, emphasizing the need to ensure dignity, safety, and legal protection for the elderly.

Participants were sensitized to the challenges faced by senior citizens and informed about the legal safeguards available to them.

The workshop witnessed active participation from students and faculty members, who engaged in interactive discussions with the resource persons. The session provided a platform for meaningful exchange of ideas and enhanced understanding of issues related to dowry and the neglect of senior citizens.

Lateef Ahmad Khan, Chief Legal Aid Defense Counsel, and Nazir Ahmad Wagay, Deputy Legal Aid Defense Counsel, DLSA Budgam, served as the resource persons. They delivered insightful sessions highlighting the harmful impact of the dowry system on society.

The speakers elaborated on the provisions of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, emphasizing that the Act strictly prohibits the giving, taking, or demanding of dowry



and prescribes stringent penalties for violations. They noted that the practice of dowry has evolved into a coercive system, often resulting in harassment, domestic violence, and dowry-related deaths.

They also underscored the significance of the Supreme Court judgment in State of Uttar Pradesh vs. Ajmal Beg, which calls for strict enforcement of anti-dowry laws and promotion of legal awareness.

Furthermore, the resource persons discussed the legal rights of senior citizens and highlighted remedies available in cases of

neglect or abuse, stressing society's collective responsibility to safeguard their well-being.

The speakers also deliberated on issues of child marriage and gender-based discrimination, which adversely affect societal stability, public health, and equality, and are often linked to poverty, illiteracy, and substance abuse.

The Vice Principal, Ghulam Mohi-ud-Din Shah, appreciated the efforts of DLSA Budgam and all stakeholders in promoting legal awareness and social responsibility among the youth.

RMS 2026-27

Director Agriculture Jammu reviews preparedness for wheat procurement operations

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, APRIL 11: In view of the approaching harvesting season, Director Agriculture Production & Farmers Welfare, Jammu Anil Gupta Saturday chaired a meeting at Krishna Bhawan Talab Tillo to review and finalize arrangements for the procurement of wheat by FCI marking the Rabi Marketing Season (RMS) 2026-27.

The Director Agriculture, as per an official statement, emphasized the importance of streamlining procurement operations to ensure a smooth and timely process. He stressed the need for direct procurement from farmers by the Food Corporation of India (FCI) through the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) mechanism, ensuring transparency and timely payments. He highlighted that the establishment of adequate procurement centres is essential to prevent distress sale and to ensure that farmers receive the notified Minimum Support Price (MSP) of Rs 2,585 per quintal.

Detailed discussions were held on the strategic selection and finalization of procurement centre locations, keeping in view accessibility and convenience for farmers. Emphasis was laid on ensuring necessary infrastructure at procurement mandis, including space, availability of gunny bags, logistical arrangements and other essential facilities.

Key agenda points deliberated during the meeting included uploading of specifications, appointment of MLCs and DNOs, engagement of

Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs) in the procurement process, identification and readiness of procurement centres, assessment of current crop conditions and expected wheat arrivals and streamlining of payment systems along with arrangements for gunny bags.

Anil Gupta urged that cleaning charges be fixed by the Deputy Commissioners and also stressed the need for extensive awareness among farmers regarding the Minimum Support Price offered by FCI and the prescribed commodity specifications to ensure maximum participation in the procurement process.

It was informed that a total of 21 wheat procurement centres (mandis) will be established across Jammu Division, including 11 in Jammu district, 9 in Kathua and 1 in Samba. It was jointly discussed in the meeting that procurement operations may start in the last week of April and continue till May 31, 2026, with the provision for extension, if required.

The meeting was attended by Aman Jyoti Sharma Joint Director Agriculture (SLUB/Marketing); Manohar Lal Sharma Chief Agriculture Officer Jammu; Sanjay Kumar Badyal DAO (Ext.) Samba; Vinod Kumar Khajuria DAO (Ext.) Jammu; Raj Singh Sumbria DAO (Ext.) Kathua; Samrithi Kumar AGM (QC) FCI RO Jammu; Vikash Kumar Manager (Proc.) FCI RO Jammu; Mukesh Verma, Manager (Proc.), FCI DO Jammu and Sanjeev Khajuria, I/c Procurement Cell, DoAJ along with other officers from the Directorate

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR JAMMU AND KASHMIR SERVICES SELECTION BOARD Muthi, Akhnoor Road, Jammu/ZamZam Complex, Rambagh, Srinagar (www.jkssb.nic.in)

Subject: Final Selection List for the post of Junior Engineer (Civil) of Public Works (R&B) Department and Jal Shakti Department advertised vide Advertisement Notification No. 03 of 2025 dated 24.04.2025 under Item Nos. 06 and 07.

Notification No. 16- Selection of 2026
Dated: 10th of April, 2026

Whereas, the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board, vide Indent No. JSDNGJ02/2021/28166 dated 28.06.2024 followed by clarification dated: 22.08.2024, Indent No. JSD-NGK/25/2024-01-7407022 dated 07.01.2025 and Indent No. PWD-ADM/122/2021-05 (E86549) dated 08.08.2024 followed by clarification dated: 21-10-2024, received the requisition for making direct recruitment to the below-mentioned 508 posts of Junior Engineer (Civil) of Jal Shakti Department and Public Works (R&B) Department respectively as mentioned as per the following break up:-

S. No.	Advt No	Item No.	Name of the post	Cadre of the post	OM	ST -I	ST -II	S C	RBA	EWS	ALC/IB	OBC	Total posts
1.	03 of 2025	06	Junior Engineer (Civil)	UT Cadre	143	36	36	28	36	35	15	29	358
2.	03 of 2025	07	Junior Engineer (Civil)	UT Cadre	60	15	15	12	15	15	06	12	150

Whereas, as per the Indent, the qualification prescribed for the posts is as follows:-

S. No	Item No.	Department	Name of the post	Cadre of the post	Prescribed Qualification (As per Indent)
1.	06	Jal Shakti	Junior Engineer (Civil)	UT Cadre	03 years Diploma in Civil Engineering from Government recognized Institute/ Indian University Degree in Civil Engineering or AMIE section (A&B) India
2.	07	PW(R&B)	Junior Engineer (Civil)	UT Cadre	03 years Diploma in Civil Engineering from Government recognized Institute/ Indian University Degree in Civil Engineering or AMIE section (A&B) India

Whereas, the Jammu and Kashmir Services Selection Board (JKSSB) advertised the aforementioned 508 posts of Junior Engineer (Civil) of Public Works (R&B) Department and Jal Shakti Department vide Advertisement Notification No. 03 of 2025 dated 24.04.2025 under Item Nos. 06 and 07.

Whereas, as per the Notification, the selection to above posts was made on the basis of Written Examination only and, accordingly, the JKSSB conducted the OMR Test for the posts of Junior Engineer (Civil) of Public Works (R&B) Department and Jal Shakti Department on 02.11.2025, the result for which was notified vide notification No. JKSSBCOE0EXAM (UT)/29/2025-03 (7722899) dated 24.11.2025.

Whereas, on the basis of merit obtained by the candidates, the Document Verification for the posts of Junior Engineer (Civil) of Public Works (R&B) Department and Jal Shakti Department was conducted vide Notice No. JKSSB-COE0EXAM (UT)/29/2025-03 (7722899) dated 05.12.2025 both at Jammu and Srinagar by their respective DV Committees. Supplementary DV Committees for the left-out candidates was also conducted vide Notice No. JKSSB-COE0EXAM (UT)/29/2025-03 (7722899) dated 23.12.2025.

Whereas, the Selection Committee for preparing the selection to the aforementioned posts was constituted vide Order No. 413-SSB of 2025 dated 23.12.2025 followed by order No. 422-SSB of 2025 dated 26.12.2025.

Whereas, the provisional selection list for the aforementioned posts prepared as per the merit/eligibility of the candidates and having regard to the extant rules/regulations was placed before the Board in its 340th Meeting held on 21.02.2026, which, after deliberations and consideration of the matter, approved its notification which was subsequently notified vide No. JKSSB-Scry/3/2026-06 (E-7840629) Dated: 21-02-2026.

Whereas, objections (if any), were sought from the candidates through the email address selectionjkssb2026@outlook.com within fifteen (15) days from the date of this Notification.

Whereas, the proposal for notifying the Final Selection List for the aforesaid posts of Junior Engineer (Civil) of Public Works (R&B) Department and Jal Shakti Department advertised vide Advertisement Notification No. 03 of 2025 dated 24.04.2025 under Item Nos. 06 and 07, as prepared by the concerned Selection Committee, was placed in the Board in its 346th meeting held on 10.04.2026, which after due consideration and deliberation on various aspects attendant to the selection, approved its notification. Now, therefore, the Final Selection List for the above-mentioned posts of Junior Engineer (Civil) under Item Nos. 06 and 07 advertised vide Advertisement Notification No. 03 of 2025 dated 24.04.2025 of Public Works (R&B) Department and Jal Shakti Department is hereby notified as per Annexure-A to this Notification. It is further notified that:

- This Final Selection List shall be subject to outcome of the OAs/Writ Petition(s), if any, pending in any competent court of law.
- This shall also be subject to the outcome of any pending inquiry, if any, involving candidate(s), figuring in this Final Selection List.
- The formal recommendations to the concerned Indenting Department shall be forwarded separately.
- The candidates whose recommendations are kept withheld shall submit the requisite documents/certificates within a period of one month.
- The Selection of the candidates has been made on the basis of Self-declaration/Certificates submitted by them and if at any stage, it comes to the light that any candidate(s) has submitted false information or has secured selection on the basis of fake documents/certificates, the selection shall be liable to cancellation at any stage.
- This being a Combined Selection, the Waiting List shall be notified and forwarded on the request of the Indenting Department, against the non-joining candidates, if any.
- The selection and the candidature shall be strictly governed by the provisions of regulations 44, 45 & 46 of the J&K Services Selection Board (Business & Procedure) Regulations, 2022.

By Order.

DIPK-337/26 DATED: 11-04-2026

No. JKSSB-Scry/3/2026-06 (E-7840629) Dated: 10.04.2026

Sd/-
(Atul Kumar) JKAS
Secretary,
J&K Services Selection Board.

Govt directs SSSA rollout by May-2026



KNO

Srinagar, Apr 11: The government has directed the Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) to ensure implementation of State School Standards Authority (SSSA) by May 2026. Chief Secretary of Jammu and Kashmir in a review meeting was informed that the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 has introduced several benchmarks to ensure quality in education across India. One such key initiative is the establishment of the State School Standards

Authority (SSSA) as an independent body. The objective of the SSSA is to enable States and Union Territories to evaluate and ensure adherence to basic quality standards across all schools, irrespective of whether they are public or private. "Prior to NEP 2020, school recognition and regulation were often handled in an uneven manner, resulting in variations in compliance and quality. The Chair directed that the SSSA shall be implemented in letter and spirit by May 2026," reads the minutes of the meeting.

Furthermore, the CS was apprised of the status of implementation of the National Professional Standards for Teachers (NPST).

NPST is a public statement outlining what constitutes teaching quality and what is required to improve educational outcomes for students in India.

These standards comprise a set of guiding principles that define expectations regarding the role of a teacher at various stages of their career and levels of expertise.

They also outline effective teaching practices and the competencies required to function in 21st-century classrooms.

The CS directed that clear targets be fixed for the implementation of NPST and that the same be achieved within a time-bound framework—(KNO)

Labour Commissioner chairs 'Aarogya Abhiraksha Saptah' closing session

KT NEWS DESK

Pulwama, Apr 11: Labour Commissioner and Director Jammu & Kashmir Employees' State Insurance Society (JKESIS) S. Charandep Singh on Saturday chaired the concluding session of 'Aarogya Abhiraksha Saptah' at Lassipora here.

During the session, a comprehensive Insured Persons (IP) Awareness Camp was organised which witnessed participation of around 100 HR representatives, Insured Persons and members of Trade Unions. The camp focused on spreading awareness regarding ESI benefits, digital initiatives and service delivery mechanisms.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, the Labour Commissioner highlighted the importance of health security and social protection for workers under the ESI scheme.

As part of the 'Aarogya Abhiraksha Saptah' various activities and programmes were held for the benefit of workers as well as HR professionals.

On April 8, 2026, an interactive meet with HR representatives was organized at National Institute of Electronics & Information Technology,



Rangreth, which witnessed participation of around 100 HR professionals representing various establishments including Fil Industries Pvt. Ltd., Jamkash Vehicleads, Paras Hospital, Ujala Cygnus Hospital, Bombay Darbar, Iqra International School, Continental Heating, Alba Pow-ers, High Electronics, Assal Tax Consultancy, Kids Care International School, Mushtaq Trunk Factory, Khyber Cement, Holy Mission School, Comfort Polymers and SBC Brick Kiln. The meet served as an important platform for discussion on ESI

coverage, compliance and stakeholder engagement.

On April 9, 2026, a webinar was organised on the topic "Social Security and Health Care under ESI Scheme".

The webinar witnessed participation of around 180 HR representatives along with their teams, insured persons (IPs) and workers.

The webinar featured expert sessions by Vinay Singh from V.V. Giri National Labour Institute, who delivered valuable insights on labour welfare and social protection.

Dy. Director, ESIC, Chandra Bhanu Jha, elaborated on the ESI Scheme and its transformative role in providing social security and healthcare benefits to workers.

Dr. Deeba, Psychiatrist, spoke on workplace stress and its effective management, highlighting the importance of mental well-being.

The session was also addressed by Labour Commissioner and Director JKESIS, S. Charandep Singh.

The programme was followed by a medical camp, which was organized to provide health check-ups to approximately 200 insured persons, their dependants and workers. Specialists from

the Health Department, Kashmir also joined the team of JKESIS during the medical camp, further strengthening the outreach and healthcare services.

In addition, multiple awareness and outreach programmes were conducted by Insurance Medical Officers (IMOs) across various locations, focusing on educating insured persons and employers about benefits, healthcare services and recent reforms under the ESI Scheme, particularly in light of the New Labour Codes.

Participants across all events were sensitized about various initiatives, reforms and entitlements under the ESI framework. Interactive sessions were held to address queries and encourage greater enrolment under the scheme.

The successful conduct of the campaign was made possible through the joint efforts of the officers and officials of JKESIS and the Labour Department along with active involvement of Insurance Medical Officers and support from the Health Department.

The department reaffirms its commitment to continue such initiatives aimed at strengthening the social security framework and ensuring accessible healthcare for all beneficiaries.

Chandraker Bharti reviews UT-level pre-monsoon readiness

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 11: Principal Secretary, Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (DMRRR), Chandraker Bharti on Saturday chaired a UT-level review meeting regarding preparedness-cum-coordination for Pre-Monsoon preparedness here at Civil Secretariat here.

The meeting was attended by representatives of Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Deputy Commissioners (Chairpersons DDMAs)-All, besides officers from Jal Shakti Department, Public Works (R&B) Department, Housing & Urban Development Department, Health & Medical Education Department and Rural Development & Panchayati Raj Department.

Representatives from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, Shri Amarnath Ji Shrine Board, JMC, SMC NDRF, SDRF, Civil Defence, Army, Police, Central Armed Police Forces, Border Roads Organisation, NHAI and other stakeholder agencies also participated in the meeting.

During the meeting, it was informed that Jammu and Kashmir is highly vulnerable to a wide range of natural and human-induced disasters including floods, flash floods, landslides, earthquakes, forest fires, Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs), fire incidents



and other calamities, resulting in loss of precious human lives and damage to property and infrastructure.

Emphasising on the importance of disaster risk reduction, the Principal Secretary underscored the need for a proactive and comprehensive approach through sustained and coordinated efforts among Government agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations and the general public with active community participation.

He stressed upon adoption of proactive 'Zero Casualty Approach' during natural calamities and called for strengthening inter-departmental coordination, identification of structural and non-structural vulnerabilities and leveraging technology for robust early warning systems.

The Principal Secretary also directed all Emergency Support Functionaries, line departments, Divisional and District

Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs), State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Fire and Emergency Services and other concerned agencies to adopt a proactive approach towards preparedness, mitigation and prompt response to any disaster-related eventuality during the pre-monsoon period.

He directed all departments and DDMAs to regularly update details of human resources, machinery and equipment on the India Disaster Resource Network (IDRN) portal.

He also emphasised on conduct of regular mock drills, including night-time simulations, and called for making such drills mandatory to ensure better preparedness.

The DDMAs were directed to share Incident Response System (IRS) notifications and operational details with Army, Police, Central Armed Police Forces and SDRF for better coordination during emergencies.

The Principal Secretary

further stressed upon regular training of frontline workers across departments and active involvement of youth and Aapda Mitras in disaster preparedness initiatives at district and sub-district levels through capacity building programmes.

The Geological Survey of India (GSI), Central Water Commission (CWC), Defence Geoinformatics Research Establishment (DGRE) and National Remote Sensing Centre (NRSC) were directed to convene coordination meetings for effective data sharing and constitute a Steering Committee involving all stakeholders.

Regarding preparations for the forthcoming Machil Mata Yatra, the Principal Secretary asked the Divisional Commissioner Jammu to ensure all preparedness measures are put in place for smooth and successful conduct of the Yatra scheduled to commence from April 2026.

SKIMS Soura reports 1,222 vacant posts out of 2,262

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Apr 11: Jammu and Kashmir's premier tertiary care hospital, Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura, is grappling with an acute manpower crisis, with more than half of its sanctioned posts lying vacant, raising serious concerns over patient care and healthcare delivery in the Valley.

According to details, out of a total sanctioned strength of 2,262 posts at SKIMS Soura, only 1,040 employees are currently in position, while a staggering 1,222 posts remain vacant, reflecting a shortage exceeding 50 per cent.

A further breakdown of the figures reveals that out of 250 sanctioned faculty positions, only 152 are filled, leaving 98 posts vacant. Similarly, in the paramedical category, only 518 staff members are in position against 1,303 sanctioned posts, with 785 vacancies reported.

The nursing segment is also severely affected, with just 370 staff in place out of 709 sanctioned posts, leaving 339 posts unfilled.

The alarming shortage has sparked concern among the general public, who view SKIMS Soura as the Valley's most critical referral and tertiary care hospital.

"SKIMS is considered the last hope for patients after Allah. If such a vital institution is facing this level of staff shortage, one can only imagine the condition



of hospitals in peripheral areas," said several attendants and patients. They added that despite the severe manpower deficit, doctors and paramedical staff continue to work tirelessly to provide treatment.

However, they noted that with such a high vacancy rate, the burden on existing staff is immense, especially as the hospital caters to thousands of patients daily. "There is tremendous pressure on the available workforce. While they are doing their best, the shortage inevitably affects efficiency and patient care. The government must take immediate steps to fill these vacancies," they said.

Meanwhile, a similar situation persists at SKIMS Medical College Hospital, Bemina, where

a significant number of posts are also lying vacant.

Out of 1,167 sanctioned posts at SKIMS Bemina, only 774 are filled, while 393 posts remain vacant.

The vacant positions at SKIMS Bemina include 70 faculty posts, 12 registrars, 6 junior residents, 23 other gazetted posts, 76 paramedical posts, 67 additional paramedical staff positions, 53 nursing posts, and 86 Class-IV posts.

The persistent vacancies in both institutions have raised questions about healthcare management and staffing policies, with stakeholders urging authorities to address the issue on a priority basis to ensure better patient care across Jammu and Kashmir—(KNO)

Authorities roll out one way traffic system in Sopore

KNO

Sopore, Apr 11: Authorities in Sopore have rolled out a one-way traffic system in the town following rising congestion and public demand for smoother vehicular movement.

An order issued by the Additional District Magistrate Sopore states that the one way system has come into force with immediate effect within municipal limits. The move follows similar traffic regulation measures implemented earlier in Baramulla town. As per the order, traffic will move one way from Ghanta Ghar to Shah Dargah Crossing via Main Chowk. In the return direction, vehicles will ply from Degree College to Iqbal Market via Ghanta Ghar.

To ensure implementation, the Municipal Council Sopore has been directed to install barricades and signages at key junctions and deploy officials

on ground. Street vending has been restricted along the Ghanta Ghar to Shah Dargah stretch to prevent obstruction.

Police and civil administration have also been tasked with strict monitoring. The SDPO Sopore and DySP Traffic Baramulla will oversee deployment of traffic personnel, while magistrates will be stationed at major junctions to maintain law and order.

The order further bars entry of heavy vehicles into the town between 8 am and 7 pm. Buses operating towards Kupwara, Bandidora and Srinagar have been directed to use the bypass route. Authorities have also prohibited illegal Sumo stands on main roads.

Officials said the arrangement is being implemented on a trial basis from April 12 to April 15, after which a review will be conducted. Public feedback has been invited to improve the system—(KNO)

Floods long gone, hardship remains on Gundipora-Pahoo road

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Pulwama, Apr 11: Months after the devastating floods of September 2025, the vital Gundipora-Pahoo road in south Kashmir's Pulwama district continues to remain in a dilapidated condition, causing immense hardship to residents and commuters.

The road, which serves as a key link for several villages in the area, was severely damaged during the floods. Since then, no significant restoration work has been undertaken, leaving the stretch riddled with potholes, muddy patches, and broken surfaces.

Locals said the deteriorating condition of the



road has badly affected their daily lives, making commuting not only difficult but also risky, especially for school-going children, patients, and elderly people. "We have been suffering for months now. The road

is in a terrible shape and becomes almost impassable during the rains," Ghulam Mohammad, a resident of Gundipora said. "Patients and pregnant women face serious difficulties in reaching hospitals on time due to

the bad condition of this road."

Another local, Bashir Ahmad from Pahoo, said transport services have been hit badly, with many vehicles avoiding the route due to frequent breakdowns. "Drivers are

reluctant to ply on this road as it damages their vehicles. As a result, we are left with very limited transport options," he said. Shopkeepers in the area also complained of declining business, attributing it to reduced footfall and transport disruptions.

Students, too, are bearing the brunt, with many facing delays in reaching their schools and colleges. "We often reach late due to the poor road conditions. During rainy days, it becomes even worse," said another local. The residents have urged the authorities to take immediate steps to repair the road and ease their suffering.

"We request the administration and concerned departments to start the repair work without any further delay. We have waited long enough," said another local. Meanwhile, officials from the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) said that the road is on their priority list and assured that the work will commence soon.

"Due process is underway. The tendering process is being completed, and once it is finalised, the repair work will be started at the earliest," an official said, adding that efforts are being made to expedite the process—(KNO)

Womaniya: Building Inclusive Market Access For Women Entrepreneurs

Press Information Bureau

Introduction: Womaniya-Opening the Door for Every Woman

Public procurement constitutes a major organised market in India. With the expansion of digital procurement through the GeM, the system has become more transparent, standardised and accessible to a wider supplier base. In order to encourage the participation of women-led micro and small enterprises (MSEs) and Self-Help Groups (SHGs) the Government introduced the Womaniya Initiative on GeM in 2019. The initiative aims to strengthen the inclusion of women entrepreneurs in public procurement by providing a designated digital interface, simplifying access requirements and creating structured pathways for women-entrepreneurs and SHGs to connect with Government buyers.

What is GeM?
Government e Marketplace (GeM) is an online platform that facilitates end-to-end procurement of goods and services by various Central/State Ministries, departments, organizations, public sector undertakings, Panchayats and Cooperatives. GeM, launched in 2016 under the vision of "Minimum Government, Maximum Governance," is a paperless, cashless and contactless platform enabling Government buyers to directly procure goods and services from pan-India sellers online.

To know more visit: <https://gem.gov.in/>
Womaniya Initiative: A Dedicated Platform for Women Entrepreneur

Womaniya is an inclusion-focused initiative on the GeM that helps in addressing constraints that limited women's access to formal Government markets. Under the Ministry of Commerce & Industry, it provides a dedicated digital interface through which women MSEs and SHGs can register & list their products such as handloom, jute, coir and home décor items, etc. to be purchased directly by Central Ministries and PSUs anywhere in India.

Did you know?
SHGs are a grassroots informal organisations aiming at empowering rural women. SHGs normally include 10 to 20 members who pool their resources, work together to save money and provide a helping hand to one another and engage in income generating activities.

As of February 2026, 10.05 crore women have been mobilised into 90.09 lakh SHGs, expanding financial inclusion and collective economic action.

The initiative supports women entrepreneurs by improving market visibility, enabling transparent buyer-seller interaction and reducing dependence on intermediaries. It also aligns with the Government's broader inclusion priorities and supports national objectives of:

- Expanding supplier diversity,
- Strengthening women-led entrepreneurship and
- Integrating under-represented groups into organised procurement channels.

What is SWAYATT?
SWAYATT (Startups, Women & Youth Advantage Through e-Transactions) is an initiative of the Government e-Marketplace launched in February 2019 to promote inclusive participation in public procurement. The initiative focuses on enabling startups, women entrepreneurs, youth, Micro & Small Enterprises (MSEs), Self-Help Groups (SHGs), and



marginalized communities to access government markets. SWAYATT aims to remove entry barriers and enhance ease of doing business for these groups on the GeM platform.

Womaniya complements the broader inclusion agenda under the SWAYATT programme.

Product Categories Under Womaniya
Womaniya groups product-segments where women-led enterprises and SHGs already have strong production capacity. These categories are formally identified under the initiative and made searchable for Government buyers through curated storefronts on GeM. They include:

- Womaniya Handicrafts
- Womaniya Grocery and Pantry
- Womaniya Office Accessories
- Womaniya Handloom Textiles

Womaniya Personal Hygiene and Care
By listing these items within a unified category framework, GeM improves product discoverability and makes it easier for departments to source from women-led producers at scale.

Key Features of the Womaniya Initiative
The initiative harnesses specialised platform features on the GeM to open new pathways for women-led enterprises and SHGs, enabling them to access Government markets, showcase their products and steadily expand their businesses within a transparent and supportive digital ecosystem.

Digital Onboarding of Women Entrepreneurs and SHGs

Women led micro and small enterprises are onboarded through a digital process using Udyam verification and essential

documentation. Mobilisation and capacity building of women MSEs is further reinforced through immersive onboarding sessions conducted through offline and online training workshops by GeM.

Standardised Catalogue Listing
Products are listed using uniform catalogue templates with defined technical specifications and attributes, ensuring comparability across sellers and simplifying buyer evaluation.

Transparent and Fully Digital Procurement Processes

All procurement activities including bidding, order placement, acceptance, invoicing and payments etc., are executed digitally. This reduces intermediary dependence and enables direct engagement between women led enterprises and Government buyers.

Key Takeaways

- The Womaniya initiative enables women entrepreneurs and SHGs to sell directly to Government buyers through the GeM platform.
- It covers designated categories such as handicrafts, handloom, jute, coir, home décor and office furnishings for procurement.
- Over 2.1 lakh women MSEs are registered on GeM, securing 13.7 Lakh order volume in FY 2025-26.

Time Bound Acceptance and Payment Mechanisms

Digitised workflows help ensure timely payments, a critical support for micro and small suppliers operating with limited working capital.

Training, Outreach and Support Services
Under SWAYATT and Womaniya focused programmes, GeM conducts capacity building activities such as onboarding workshops, vernacular training and buyer seller meets across states.

From Participation to Prosperity: The Womaniya Impact

Implementation of "Womaniya on GeM" is a step towards a gender inclusive procurement portal.

Government buyers place orders and create demand for Womaniya-listed products and integrating women producers into procurement cycles.

At the grassroots level, district administrations, enterprise support centres, and training institutions conduct onboarding drives, training programmes, and product catalogue workshops to enhance seller readiness.

Notably, the Womaniya Initiative has expanded significantly since its launch. In FY 2025-26:

Over 2.1 lakh women MSEs registered on GeM, with total order volume of 13.7 Lakh. More than 28,000 crore contract value awarded to women MSEs with 27.60% growth over last year.

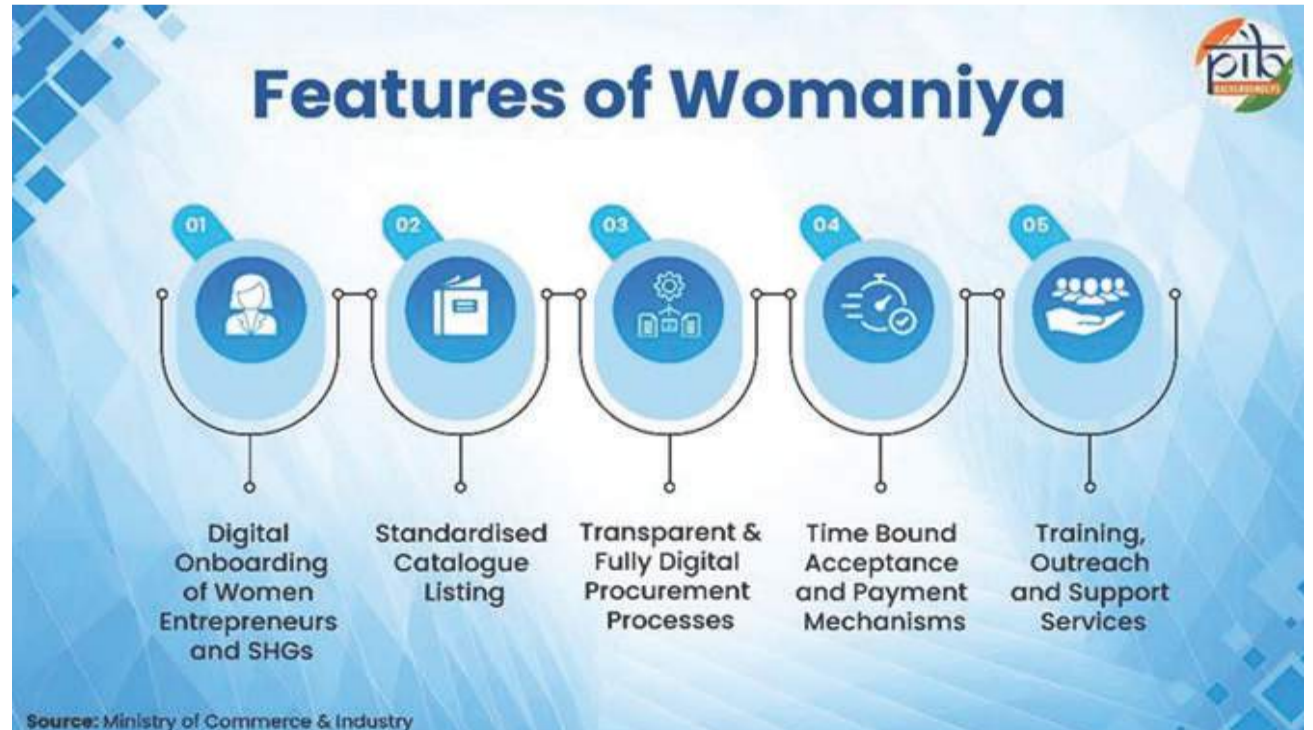
5.6% of GeM's total order awarded significantly surpassed the mandated 3% procurement target.

The initiative has evolved from a specialised inclusion effort into one of the largest organised public procurement channels for women-led enterprises in the country.

Together, the interconnected roles of digital infrastructure, field-level mobilisation, capacity building, and institutional demand create a synergistic enabling environment that supports women's economic participation at scale.

Conclusion: A Marketplace that Represents the Better Half of Society

By giving women-led enterprises and SHGs a direct path into one of India's largest public markets, Womaniya Initiative on GeM converts existing production strengths into formal, sustainable enterprise participation. As more women gain visibility, build capacity and connect with Government buyers, Womaniya becomes not just a procurement initiative but a pathway to greater economic independence and wider representation ensuring that public procurement reflects the capabilities and aspirations of the better half of society.



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100 DAY NASHA MUKT J&K ABHIYAN

DC calls for collective approach for effective implementation of campaign

KT News Desk

PULWAMA, APRIL 11: In alignment with the UT-wide launch of the 100-day intensive campaign under Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan, the District Administration Pulwama Saturday formally launched the campaign at Circuit House Pulwama.

The campaign aims to curb drug abuse through a comprehensive and sustained approach, with a strong focus on awareness generation, community participation, rehabilitation of affected individuals and strict enforcement measures.

On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom, as per an official statement, chaired a comprehensive review of all sectors to discuss and review the action plan for effective implementation of the campaign over the next 100 days.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC said that the 100-day campaign has been launched with the aim of eliminating drug abuse from society through coordinated efforts of all stakeholders. He stressed the need for a three-pronged strategy focusing on Information, Education and Communication (IEC), treatment and rehabilitation, and enforcement to achieve tangible results on the ground.

He further stated that the



thrust of this special campaign is on community-led initiatives and public participation. He called upon officers to ensure active involvement of youth, religious leaders, elected representatives, former PRI members, influential personalities, social activists, market associations, village communities, students and civil society organizations so that the message of the campaign reaches every nook and corner of the district.

He also directed the Assistant Commissioner Development Pulwama and Executive Officers of Municipalities to recreate and revitalize the youth clubs in all panchayats and wards so

that the training sessions are started immediately.

Highlighting the role of key departments, the DC stressed that the Health, Education and Social Welfare departments have a pivotal role in early identification, counselling and awareness. He directed for organizing sustained awareness programmes in educational institutions and strengthening counselling and de-addiction services, alongside promotion of helplines and community-based support mechanisms.

The DC further stressed on organizing parent-teacher meetings in educational institutions to sensitize parents about early

signs of drug abuse, adding that parents, especially mothers, play a crucial role in guiding and monitoring their children and can act as the first line of defence against substance abuse. He also emphasized the active participation of Self Help Group (SHG) women in awareness and counselling campaigns, noting their strong grassroots connect and ability to influence community behaviour.

Emphasizing enforcement, the DC called for joint enforcement drives against drug peddlers to ensure strict action against illegal networks. He also stressed the need for identifying and destroying illicit

crop cultivation, and directed that coordinated enforcement drives be carried out by multi-departmental teams comprising Revenue, Excise and Police departments.

Furthermore, the DC highlighted that inter-departmental coordination is crucial for effective implementation and called for a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach to ensure the success of the campaign.

Besides, as part of the launch event, DC flagged off an IEC van aimed at disseminating awareness messages across rural and urban areas of the district. Later, the Deputy Commissioner also inaugurated a cricket match at the Sports Stadium Pulwama as part of the campaign.

Addressing the gathering, he emphasized the importance of sports and constructive engagement of youth as a powerful means to channel their energy positively and keep them away from drug abuse, adding that sports activities will be promoted during the campaign.

The launch event was attended by SSP Pulwama, Tanushree; SSP Awantipora, Sajad Ahmad Shah; Commandant 182/183 Bn; Additional Deputy Commissioners of Pulwama, Tral and Awantipora; Chief Planning Officer Pulwama; General Manager DIC Pulwama; and other district and sectoral officers.

District-wide campaign begins from BHSS Shopian



KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, APRIL 11: 100 day Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Campaign was formally inaugurated in Shopian Saturday, marking a coordinated effort to promote a drug-free society.

The district wide campaign commenced from Government Boys Higher Secondary School Shopian in the presence of MLA Zainapora, Showkat Hussain Ganie, Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Shishir Gupta, Senior Superintendent of Police Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmad Choudhary, ADDC Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, ADC Shopian, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz and other officers.

The programme, as per an official statement, witnessed large participation from students, staff and the general public, reflecting a unified approach toward combating drug abuse.

The initiative is part of a broader UT wide campaign inaugurated by the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir.

MLA Zainapora, while addressing the gathering, emphasized the social responsibility of every citizen in eliminating drug abuse. He stressed that awareness at the grassroots level, especially among youth, is essential and called for collective vigilance by families, communities, and institutions, stating that drug addiction not only destroys individuals but weakens the social fabric of society.

The Deputy Commissioner, in his address, highlighted the administrative commitment toward making the district drug free. He emphasized coordination among departments, regular awareness drives, and strict monitoring mechanisms.

He also urged students and youth to act as ambassadors of change and actively participate in awareness activities.

Senior Superintendent of Police, Shopian, in his address focused on the enforcement aspect of the campaign. He underlined the strict action being taken against drug peddlers and reiterated the role of the police in dismantling drug networks.

He also highlighted the importance of community cooperation, urging citizens to socially boycott drug peddlers and report their activities and stated that public support is crucial in strengthening law enforcement efforts and ensuring long-term success.

On the occasion, various sports activities including volleyball, cricket, and tug of war were held reinforcing the campaign's focus on engaging youth in positive and healthy activities.

A painting competition, depicting the harmful effects of drug abuse was also organized, with enthusiastic participation from students of different schools.

As part of the district wide schedule, similar awareness and outreach programmes were conducted across multiple locations, including at Subdivision Zainapora, panchayat level initiatives and institutional activities, ensuring wider community engagement.

Students from various schools participated actively, contributing to the campaign's message of awareness and prevention.

The campaign places youth at the center, aiming to channel their energy toward constructive activities while sensitizing them about the dangers of drug abuse.

DC Budgam calls for intensified fight



KT News Desk

BUDGAM, APRIL 11: District Administration Budgam Saturday kickstarted the UT-wide 100 Days Intensive Nasha Mukht Abhiyan, with a strong resolve to eliminate drug abuse and promote a healthier, drug-free society.

In Budgam, the programme was formally inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, along with SSP Budgam Hariprasad KK, at the Drug De-Addiction Centre Budgam, in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare, District Information Centre Budgam, Health Department, and Police Department Budgam.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, highlighted the critical importance of a unified and sustained effort to tackle the growing drug menace. He stated that the campaign is not merely an awareness initiative but a comprehensive approach combining prevention, enforcement, treatment, and rehabilitation.

The DC emphasized that drug abuse poses a serious threat to the social fabric, particularly affecting the youth, and called upon all stakeholders including parents, teachers, civil society, and community leaders to actively participate in the Abhiyan.

He underscored the need for early intervention, continuous counselling, and community-based support systems to help affected individuals reintegrate into society.

Reiterating the administration's commitment, the DC said that this campaign spreads awareness, ensures strict enforcement, and provides treatment and rehabilitation.

The DC stressed that enforcement agencies have been directed to intensify efforts against drug trafficking networks, while healthcare institutions are being strengthened to provide accessible and effective de-addiction services.

He also appreciated the coordinated efforts of all

departments in ensuring the successful launch of this drive.

Following the inaugural session, the Deputy Commissioner inspected various sections of the Drug De-Addiction Centre Budgam, taking stock of the facilities, treatment mechanisms, and rehabilitation services being provided to the patients. He interacted with the staff and emphasized the need for compassionate care, professional counselling, and sustained follow-up for successful recovery outcomes.

On the occasion, the SSP also spoke about the various steps taken by Police administration Budgam to curb this menace and to bring the paddlers behind the bars.

Later, the DC, along with SSP Budgam, and other senior officers, led a plantation drive at Boys Higher Secondary School Budgam, symbolizing a commitment towards a healthier environment and a drug-free future.

Addressing students and participants, the DC spoke extensively about the dangers of drug abuse and urged the youth to stay away from harmful substances and act as ambassadors of change in society.

SSP Budgam, in his address, highlighted the crucial role of society in combating drug abuse. He emphasized the importance of community participation in identifying drug peddlers and supporting victims in their recovery journey. He reiterated that the police department is committed to strict action against those involved in drug trafficking and appealed to the public to cooperate in this mission.

The programme was attended by ADC Budgam, Joint Director Planning, CEO, CMO, District Information Officer, District Social Welfare Officer, ACD, BDO Budgam, and other senior officers of the district.

The launch of the 100-day intensive campaign marks a significant step towards a coordinated, mission-mode approach to eradicate drug abuse and ensure a safer, healthier future for the people of Budgam.

DC Anantnag urges collective action to eradicate drug menace

KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, APRIL 11: In sync with the UT-level launch of a 100-day mega campaign under the Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan commenced across Anantnag Saturday.

To mark the start of the intensive drive, a grand function was organized by the District Administration at the DC Office Complex. The program witnessed participation of Deputy Commissioner, Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat; SSP, Amod Ashok Nagpure; ADC, ACD, ACP, CPO, ASP, DSEO, DSWO and district sectoral and police officers along with officials, civil society members, and volunteers.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC, as per an official statement, termed the fight against drugs a "collective responsibility", noting while administration and law enforcement agencies are targeting the supply side, the role of parents, teachers, and civil society is essential to eliminate the menace from society. He stressed there is high need of creating mass sensitisation among the youth and vulnerable population to reduce the demand appreciably. He further called for active participation of common citizens and other stakeholders through "Jan Bhagidari," in



scheduled activities at panchayats, villages, and educational institutions.

Cautioning about the devastating effects of addiction on young lives and families, the DC pledged tough action against drug peddlers and suppliers by invoking stringent clauses of the NDPS Act. However, he advocated for a compassionate, non-stigmatized approach towards victims, emphasizing the need for proper identification at the village level to ensure they receive treatment and rehabilitation at District Drug De-addiction Centres (DDAC) and Addiction Treatment Facilities (ATF), while maintaining strict privacy and secrecy.

Advising participants to make sincere efforts in the fight against drugs, Dr. Bilal expressed hope that the coherent and concerted approach will lead to a drug free district, UT and country at large. He further called upon

the Masjid Imams to reserve a specific portion of their Friday Sermons sensitising masses on fight against drugs by invoking the moral and theological scriptures.

The SSP also addressed the gathering, urging participants to make coordinated efforts and become active stakeholders in the campaign to achieve the goal of a drug-free district, UT and country.

Earlier, the DC administered pledge to the participants reaffirming their commitment towards a drug free society and nation. Notably, similar ceremonies were held across all sub-divisions, tehsils, blocks, ULBs, schools, colleges and educational institutions of the district.

The 100-day initiative aims to strengthen the fight at the grassroots level through a dedicated and planned calendar wherein specific activities have been assigned to various line departments across the district.

Pad Yatra, plantation drive, pledge ceremony, blood donation camp in Kulgam

KT News Desk

KULGAM, APRIL 11: The 100-day intensive campaign under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan was Saturday launched in Kulgam with a series of awareness activities aimed at combating drug abuse and promoting a healthy, drug-free society.

The campaign was kick-started by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, along with Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Kulgam, Anayat Ali Choudhary.

On the occasion, a plantation drive, as per an official statement, was organised and a pledge-taking ceremony was held wherein participants pledged to stay away from drugs and work collectively towards building a drug-free society.

A Pad Yatra, which started from Mini-Secretariat to DPL Kulgam, was also organised. A blood donation camp was



also organised as part of the programme at DPL Kulgam.

An awareness session was also held at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat.

While addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner emphasised the need for coordinated efforts from all stakeholders, including government

departments, educational institutions, community leaders and youth, to effectively tackle the issue of drug abuse. He urged people, particularly the youth, to actively participate in the campaign and contribute towards building a drug-free society.

He added that youth have

a vital role to play in the campaign and encouraged them to take advantage of various government employment and livelihood schemes aimed at generating opportunities for young people.

He further said that strong willpower and community support are essential in overcoming substance abuse and added that strict action will be taken against drug suppliers as per law.

The SSP also addressed the gathering and said that substance abuse is a serious issue affecting society. He stated that the 100-day campaign aims to strengthen awareness and enforcement efforts to curb the menace. He stressed that community participation is crucial in dismantling the drug network and urged people to come forward with information about drug peddlers. He assured that strict action will be taken against those involved

in drug trafficking while emphasising the need to support victims through rehabilitation.

Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Altaf Ahmad Khan while speaking on the occasion, called upon people to "say no to drugs and yes to life." He said that substance abuse has emerged as a serious challenge in society and stressed the need to channelise the energy of youth in positive directions.

Ex-DDC Chairperson, Mohd Afzal also spoke on the occasion and highlighted the importance of collective efforts in eliminating drug abuse from society.

During the programme, youth who shared innovative ideas to tackle drug abuse under an Ideathon were awarded for their suggestions.

The event witnessed participation from officers of various departments, police officials, students and members of civil society.

Bharat cannot become USD 10 trillion economy by capital or policy alone: CJI Surya Kant

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 11: Calling for an overhaul of legal architecture to meet the demands of an evolving economy, Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Saturday said that the country's transformation into a USD 10 trillion economy cannot be achieved through capital or policy alone and that the quality of the legal system would be a crucial factor.

The CJI underscored the need for predictability, specialisation, and a culture of good faith in commercial law to help the country achieve this goal, as it will require capital that involves commitments that unfold over time and for which investor confidence is a must.

He asserted that mechanisms like mediation would do more for India's economic competitiveness than many reforms that attract greater attention. The CJI also stressed on the use of technology and adapting legal education to respond to the needs of the changing economy.

Speaking at the 'Rule of Law Convention 2026' on the theme 'Legal Reform Roadmap to a USD 10 Trillion Bharat', organised by the Bar Association of India, the CJI said the topic was not merely an aspiration for the country but a serious consideration and dealt with not a "marginal" query but one of the most important questions.

"I am confident that we will surely rise to the occasion. A USD 10 trillion mark will not be built

by capital or policy alone. It will be built in no small part by the quality of the legal system that upholds the rule of law and the promises on which all of that depends.

"Our country never lacked the legal talent to build that system. And what this convention affirms is that it does not lack the will as well," said CJI Surya Kant.

He said the generation that shapes India's commercial jurisprudence for a USD10 trillion economy will be remembered the same way as the generation that shaped its constitutional jurisprudence.

He said that to reach the mark, the country needed to attract capital of a very different kind.

"This is capital that is patient, long-term and dependent on institutional reliability; whether it is a pension fund investment in infrastructure, a technology company transferring proprietary know-how, or a global manufacturer establishing an integrated supply chain, these are not short-term bets, they are commitments that unfold over time," the CJI said.

He said that investors, before committing, needed to know whether the legal system governing that investment would remain honest, consistent and predictable over the years of their commitment.

"At its core, the question is one of trust; it is not merely about enforcement at the stage of breach of a contract, but about the continued integrity of obligations for performance. Such confidence

among the investors enables commerce and commercial relationships to create the value they are intended to generate," the CJI said.

Underlining the changing nature of commercial disputes over the last two decades, he said, from being relatively straightforward, centred on non-payments, breach of supply agreements and clear questions of liability, they have now emerged from relationships of far greater complexity and duration.

"And the reason for this shift is not merely procedural. It is fundamentally economic in origin. As commerce grows in scale and ambition, it moves away from isolated transactions toward continuing relationships," the CJI said.

He said that the present commercial laws had served the country reasonably well, but the legitimacy of law was in its ability to remain responsive to the society it served.

"There is no need to discard the existing one. It is to enable the existing framework to grow so that it protects not just the moment of agreement, but the full life of the relationship. Our courts have already paved the way in their approach to public contracts and legitimate expectations."

"They have demonstrated that the law can look beyond breach and remedy and ask what fairness demands across the life of a relationship. That instinct is already present in our public law. It is now time to carry it into the commercial spheres as well," CJI Surya Kant said.

Regarding the question of a

legal ecosystem that helped to create the kind of investor confidence in sync with long-horizon commerce, he said there were three imperatives: predictability, where similar situations, despite changes in governments or events, were governed with similar principles and the development of an ethos of dispute prevention through fostering a culture of good faith in contract performance.

"Mechanisms like mediation can deliver on their full promise if we foster this culture (of dispute prevention) and guard it jealously. So litigation becomes the last resort rather than the first response. That shift alone would do more for India's economic competitiveness than many reforms that attract greater attention," the CJI said.

The third imperative, according to CJI Surya Kant, was specialisation. "The nature of commercial disputes today has outgrown the scope of the generalist framework within which much of our legal training has been traditionally oriented. Disputes involving infrastructure, finance or digital systems increasingly demand sector-specific expertise; the profession must invest in that depth and legal education must respond accordingly and produce graduates suitable to the economy they are going to serve."

"In fact, there is a lot of requirement for our judges also to require a periodic orientation. And for that, I will sincerely make some efforts where some domain experts can have an informal

interaction with judges to understand the different nuances of the economic system, so that they have a fair idea beyond the law books," the CJI said.

He also highlighted the importance of treating technology as part of the legal system.

"I believe technology must be treated as part of the legal systems, as part of its core infrastructure, not as an optional upgrade. Digital case management, AI-assisted research tools and electronic postings directly affect the speed, accessibility and cost of justice," the CJI said, adding,

"But of course, human judgment must remain at its core. The objective is to remove every avoidable obstacle between a legitimate claim and its fair resolution."

CJI Surya Kant also emphasised the role of the bar in realising the goal, saying the commercial jurisprudence, over the years, had seen a sustained engagement between the bar and the bench and its next phase would require the same quality of effort, collaboration and commitment between both sides.

"It depends equally on whether the bar chooses to see itself as a worthy stakeholder in India's economic future, or a mere service provider."

"That shift cannot be mandated by legislation or a court order. It must come as a matter of professional commitment," he said, adding that the generation that shapes India's commercial jurisprudence for the economic goal will be remembered the same way as the generation that shaped its constitutional jurisprudence.

Pope Leo urges end to 'madness of war' as US, Iran start talks

Vatican City, Apr 11: Pope Leo on Saturday urged world leaders to end what he called the "madness of war," in an impassioned appeal as senior US and Iranian officials met in Pakistan to discuss ending the six-week conflict.

At a special prayer vigil in St. Peter's Basilica, the first US pope decried the use of religious language to justify war and said a "delusion of omnipotence that surrounds us ... is becoming increasingly unpredictable."

Making a direct appeal to world leaders, he said: "Stop! It is time for peace! Sit at the table of dialogue and mediation, not at the table where rearmament is planned."

Leo, who is known for choosing his words carefully, has emerged as an outspoken critic of the Iran war.

On Saturday, he used forceful language to denounce conflict, citing letters from children in war zones he said described "horror and inhumanity."

The pope also referenced the Church's opposition to the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, citing an appeal by the late Pope John Paul II made four days before the start of that conflict.

"Enough of the idolatry of self and money!" Leo said. "Enough of the display of power! Enough of war!"



The pope, who on March 30 said US rejects the prayers of leaders who start wars and have "hands full of blood," denounced again on Saturday the use of Christian language to justify war.

"The balance within the human family has been severely destabilized," said Leo. "Even the holy Name of God, the God of life, is being dragged into discourses of death."

The pope's earlier comments were interpreted by conservative Catholic commentators as aimed at US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, who has invoked Christian language to justify the joint US-Israeli strikes on Iran that initiated the war.

Saturday's special prayer service was announced by Leo last Sunday, in the pope's Easter message.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

'Our neighbour' funding

revoke passports, driving licenses, Aadhaar numbers, and arms licenses of smugglers involved in drug trafficking. If they are absconding, a Look Out Circular will be issued immediately. Additionally, their movable and immovable properties will be attached under the NDPS Act, bank accounts frozen, and financial investigation will be launched.

LG Sinha said that top drug peddlers will be publicly identified at police station level to ensure accountability and deterrence.

FIGHT AGAINST DRUG ABUSE IS A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

The Lieutenant Governor said the fight against drug abuse is a collective responsibility. "The menace has spread to every village, every district and every section of society."

Directing enforcement agencies to follow the principle: "Do not harass the innocent, but do not let the guilty escape," LG Sinha said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that a decisive battle has been launched for a "Drug-Free Jammu Kashmir."

The Lieutenant Governor after flagging of the padyatra joined the public representatives, senior officials and thousands of citizens in the walkathon from MA Stadium Jammu to Parade Ground, marking the beginning of 100-days intensive campaign under Nasha Mukti Jammu Kashmir Abhiyaan.

He said, "We have given voice to a resolve that will reach every village, town, city, home, and heartbeat in Union Territory, fulfilling the pledge of a drug-free region."

"Next three months are pivotal, with campaign advancing in six clear phases- Awareness intensive drives, youth focused events, community engagement, strict enforcement, rehabilitation and evaluation. We will move forward with the whole of government approach to rid J&K of drug menace," the Lieutenant Governor said.

ADMIN WON'T ALLOW ANY YOUTH, FAMILY, OR DREAM FALL INTO DARK ABYSS OF ADDICTION

The Lieutenant Governor said, "We pledge resolutely that the administration will not let any youth, family, or dream fall into the dark abyss of addiction. I firmly believe that drug addiction statistics show mere percentages and case files but behind each lies a vivid story, a family's struggle and agony."

Drug-free J&K campaign demands not just sympathy but collective action because it is not an individual plight but a collective crisis, not one family's tragedy but a challenge to us all. Together, with unwavering resolve, we will fight and defeat the scourge of drug abuse," the Lieutenant Governor said.

DRUG ABUSE IS AMONG J&K'S GRAVEST CHALLENGES

The Lieutenant Governor said that drug abuse is among J&K's gravest challenges and we stand firm in our commitment to confront drug abuse and emerge victorious.

"Bound by shared purpose, we will rise against drug abuse and claim the victory that awaits us. The three-month long people's movement across J&K will make every person grasp the issue, turning information into responsibility through public participation," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor vowed decisive and uncompromising action against drug smugglers to free the J&K UT from the grip of the drug menace.

He said, "On 2nd April, we had notified the Jammu and Kashmir Substance Use Disorder Treatment, Counselling and Rehabilitation Centres Rules, 2026, ensuring every center is genuine, dedicated to patients affected by addiction, equipped with all required human

resources, and under continuous monitoring. Action will be taken against centers operating without support staff or in violation of the rules."

The Lieutenant Governor directed the senior officers for swift action on complaints and strengthening of grassroots intelligence with the help of panchayats, mohalla committees, chowkidars, lambardars and ward surveillance committees to identify and punish every culprit.

"Our strength in Drug-Free J&K Campaign lies in collective action. When departments unite with shared purpose, we prevail."

WE HAVE MOVED BEYOND PLANNING TO DECISIVE ACTION FOR DRUG-FREE J&K

Since early 2021 we have moved beyond planning to decisive action for Drug-Free J&K. We are successfully implementing initiatives that have reached previously untouched communities, engaged youth in schools, and expanded rehabilitation services. No individual faces this battle alone; the administration stands firmly committed," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor called upon youth, social workers, community leaders, teachers, women and athletes to participate in large numbers since they are the face, force and future of this campaign.

"The next three months will sow seeds of lasting change. Let anti-drug sports tournaments brim with fervor, debates steel youth resolve, quizzes embed awareness. Map drug-affected areas accurately; unity marches, Padyatra inspire neighborhoods; marathons from panchayats to cities declare that J&K will never bow to drugs," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that from village chaupals to district headquarters, every event must pulse with mass movement spirit, followed by reviews because feedback will be our compass to refine, strategize and act stronger.

"April 11 is not a ceremonial start but the first step of a transformative march. Let us build a movement so broad, so resolute, and so deeply people-driven that it lays the foundation of a drug-free J&K," he further said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor administered the "Anti-Drug Pledge" to the citizens and unveiled the official campaign mascot. Awareness Video, singing and cultural performances by renowned artists echoed the message of a drug-free Jammu Kashmir.

The Padyatra was warmly received by business organizations, civil society members, and various stakeholders along the route. (KNO)

J&K Govt revamps

tax slabs. Biris have been included in the 9% category, while pan masala, unmanufactured tobacco, cigarettes, and similar items have been moved to the 20% tax bracket, reinforcing the government's focus on boosting revenue from sin goods.

The government has also introduced special procedures for rectification of GST orders, particularly in cases involving wrongful availment of input tax credit (ITC). Taxpayers earlier denied ITC under Section 16(4), but now eligible under amended provisions, can apply for rectification within six months, with authorities directed to dispose of such applications within three months.

In another relief measure, timelines have been set for the waiver of interest and penalties under Section 128A. Registered taxpayers can clear dues by specified dates, such as March 31, 2025, to avail waivers, while extended timelines apply in cases involving appellate orders.

The government has further notified special

categories of taxable supplies, bringing online money gaming, online gaming (other than money gaming), and actionable claims in casinos under the GST ambit.

On the compliance front, new provisions aim to speed up GST registration. A system-driven process will now allow registration within three working days based on data analysis and risk parameters. Additionally, small taxpayers with a monthly liability below 2.5 lakh can opt for simplified registration, subject to Aadhaar authentication.

The amendments also clarify refund restrictions and appellate procedures. Notably, no refund will be granted for taxes already paid for periods before the enforcement of amended provisions under Section 128A, even if disputes cover multiple periods.

In addition, a notification operationalises provisions of the J&K GST (Second Amendment) Act, 2025, retrospectively enforcing several sections from October 1, 2025.

Further, changes to Schedule IV define "specified actionable claims," explicitly covering betting, gambling, casinos, horse racing, lottery, and online gaming, bringing J&K's GST framework in line with central provisions. (KNO)

Breakthrough reflects

noted that the development holds immense potential for enhancing livelihoods, particularly in mountainous and rural regions where Morel mushrooms are both an economic asset and an integral part of traditional heritage.

He emphasized that the university's efforts are poised to open new avenues for sustainable cultivation, value addition, and increased income generation.

The Chief Minister also placed on record his special appreciation for the dedicated efforts of the scientists involved in the research.

Conveying his best wishes, the Chief Minister expressed hope that the entire SKUAST-K fraternity, including its scientists and researchers, will continue to excel in future endeavours and contribute meaningfully to agricultural innovation and rural prosperity.

Local body polls

the ruling party and the opposition that DDCs encroach upon the mandate of MLAs. It is considered better to revert to indirect elections for the third tier," sources disclosed.

A senior government official pointed out that the cabinet is yet to take a final call on the report submitted by a panel headed by former High Court Judge Justice Janak Raj Kotwal, which determined reservation for Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in Panchayats and Urban Local Bodies.

"The cabinet has to decide whether to adopt or reject the report," he said.

The revision of Panchayat electoral rolls is currently underway in Jammu & Kashmir and is scheduled to be completed by May 15, 2026, with the publication of the final rolls.

The electoral rolls for urban local bodies in J&K will only be available after Special Intensive Revision (SIR) exercise is carried out in the Union Territory. The State Election Commission has no updated electoral rolls for urban local bodies of J&K because the last revision was conducted by the Election Commission of India in 2024. (KNO)

Viral video pushes

cross a flowing stream daily due to the absence of a bridge, posing serious risks to their safety.

Considering the gravity of the issue, authorities decided on the spot to start academic activities for Classes 9th and 10th at a newly constructed double-storey school building in

the upper belt, which had remained non-functional for years.

Officials said three subject-specific teachers have been deployed at the new facility to ensure uninterrupted education, thereby eliminating the need for students to cross the stream.

With the arrangement now in place, students are now attending classes safely and academic activities have resumed smoothly, they said.

Chief Education Officer Kulgam, Abdul Gani Bhat, told KNO that the issue has been resolved and necessary arrangements have been made at both locations.

"The building, constructed at a cost of Rs 95 lakh for High School Nandimarg, had remained non-functional for a long time. Due to space constraints in the existing school and the risk involved in crossing the stream, we have now made the new building functional for Classes 9th and 10th. Students of these classes will continue to attend classes at both locations as per the arrangement," he said. (KNO)

Army's White Knight

is being conducted in close synergy with civil administration, police authorities, medical agencies, educational institutions and community leaders, ensuring a whole-of-society approach," the spokesman said.

Over the next 14 weeks, the campaign will focus on intensive awareness drives across schools and colleges, community engagement through influencers and religious leaders, and targeted outreach programmes aimed at sensitising youth and families, he said, adding that lectures, interactive sessions and testimonial engagements will form the core of awareness efforts, supported by digital amplification and grassroots participation.

The spokesman said the initiative will also facilitate early identification, counselling support and linkage with rehabilitation mechanisms, while promoting positive behavioural change through community participation and youth engagement activities.

This concerted effort reflects the enduring commitment of the Army to partner with state agencies and civil society in addressing social challenges, strengthening public trust and guiding the youth towards a constructive and drug-free future, the official added.

'Digital arrest' is complete

many scams revolve around OTP sharing, fake KYC verification, and impersonation calls from banks or service providers. He further cited instances where fraudsters exploit situations like shortages of essential commodities, offering quick delivery in exchange for OTPs or personal details.

"In earlier times, valuables were kept in safes. Today, everything from banking to identity and money is inside your phone. Sharing credentials means handing over your entire security," he said.

"Digital arrest" scam a complete myth

Highlighting a major emerging trend, the Dy SP said fraudsters are using the concept of "digital arrest" to intimidate victims, particularly elderly individuals. "There is no such legal term as digital arrest. No one can be arrested digitally. Fraudsters use fear tactics, often targeting elderly people living alone, threatening them with links to serious crimes to extort money," he said.

The officer said that elderly persons are more vulnerable as they tend to panic under pressure, unlike younger individuals who may question such threats.

AI and impersonation risks rising
Malik warned that the rise of artificial intelligence has made cyber fraud more

sophisticated, including voice cloning and identity impersonation. "In today's AI era, a fraudster can clone someone's voice or identity and call their relatives for money. The safest way is to always verify by calling back the concerned person," he said.

He also cited cases of WhatsApp hacking, where fraudsters send urgent financial requests from compromised accounts. "Even if a message comes from a known contact, verify before sending money," he advised.

Figures, recovery and funds on hold
Sharing enforcement data, the police officer said more than Rs 22 lakh has been recovered in the past three months, while a significant amount remains on hold and is in the process of being returned to victims. "There is still a large amount that has been lost, and efforts are being made to recover it," he said.

He also elaborated on new measures introduced by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C), stating that victims of fraud up to Rs 50,000 may not need to approach courts for recovery. "If the cyber police station is satisfied that the claim is genuine, it can recommend that the bank release the amount directly," he said.

However, Malik pointed out practical challenges in implementation. As per the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), the victim must approach their bank branch and file a grievance, after which the bank manager seeks a report from the concerned cyber police station.

"Many bank managers are still not fully aware of this process, causing delays. Some may hesitate to take responsibility and refuse release, but there are higher grievance levels where victims can escalate," he said.

He also referred to earlier difficulties where victims were required to obtain court orders, often spending more on legal fees than the amount defrauded.

Immediate response crucial: 1930 helpline
The Dy SP stressed that immediate reporting is critical in financial fraud cases. "Call 1930 without delay. The transaction can be frozen instantly, but it does not take even a minute," he said.

He described the helpline, along with the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (cyber-crime.gov.in), as "lifelines" for victims, adding that the helpline operates 24x7 despite occasional congestion.

Online gaming, fake ads and regulation gaps
On online gaming frauds, Malik said several platforms involving monetary transactions have been banned, with hundreds of websites blocked, though fraudsters continue to evolve.

He also raised concerns over unregulated online advertisements on social media, which mislead users. "Action can be taken if such content is reported, but authorities depend on public complaints as there is no automatic detection mechanism," he said.

The officer cautioned against posting or commenting on individuals, such as doctors, without consent on social media, warning that such actions may violate legal provisions.

In addition to cyber crime, he highlighted rising drug addiction in Jammu and Kashmir, calling it a more serious societal threat. He said teenagers and young individuals are particularly vulnerable and urged parents to remain vigilant.

Malik described the media as a crucial partner in combating cyber crime. "Through media, awareness can reach lakhs of people instantly. If awareness spreads, fraud will reduce," he said.

He urged citizens to remain cautious, verify all digital interactions, avoid sharing sensitive information and report any suspicious activity promptly to prevent losses. (KNO)

Modi attacks TMC over 'syndicate raj', vows stern action on crimes against women in Bengal

PTI

Kushmandi (WB), Apr 11: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday launched a blistering attack on the TMC, accusing it of turning West Bengal into a state run by "syndicates", while promising action on atrocities against women if the BJP comes to power.

Addressing a rally at Kushmandi in Bangladesh-bordering Dakshin Dinajpur district, Modi said the TMC had "handed over even the game of football to its syndicates", referring to the fiasco during Argentine football legend Lionel Messi's visit to Kolkata last December.

"The entire world watched those shameful pictures. TMC has handed over football, too, to its syndicate," he said.

Alleging that the state had become synonymous with lawlessness, he said, "In West Bengal, the syndicate is the government and the government is the syndicate."

Referring to the rape and murder of a doctor at the RG Kar Medical College and Hospital in 2024, Modi said the people of the state, cutting across football club loyalties, had united in protest, as he sought to invoke Bengali pride.

"Mohun Bagan and East Bengal fight on the field. But after the RG Kar incident, both stood shoulder to shoulder on the streets. In the same way, West Bengal must unite to teach the TMC government a lesson," he said.

The PM also mocked the TMC's attempts to expand beyond West Bengal, claiming that it failed because it lacks ideology and principles.

"Nobody votes for the TMC in Assam, Tripura or Goa because it has no principles. TMC has ventured



into other states, but could not do anything there. It cannot win elections outside Bengal because it has neither the intent nor the policy," he claimed. Modi claimed that the TMC had "mastered the art of goondaism and corruption" and "done a PhD in it".

Targeting the state's ruling party over crimes against women, he promised that a BJP government in the state would reopen old cases.

"We will reopen the files of every atrocity committed against women under the TMC rule. We will reopen the files of every rape case and ensure accountability in each. This is Modi's guarantee," he said. The prime minister said the 2026 assembly polls would be a contest between "TMC's fear and BJP's trust". "This battle is to defeat fear and take West Bengal forward with trust. TMC's shop of loot and lies is about to be shut down. Fear will exit West Bengal, making way for trust," he said. Modi also attacked the TMC over what he described as an "insult" to

President Droupadi Murmu during her recent visit to the state.

"By insulting the honourable president, the TMC insulted women, tribals and the people of the country," he alleged. Modi repeatedly accused the TMC of being "anti-tribal" and contrasted it with what he called the BJP's track record.

"The Rajbanshi and Santhal communities have played a major role in India's development. We are proud of their contribution. Our effort is that tribal society should develop rapidly," he said in a district that has a significant tribal population.

Claiming that tribal areas earlier affected by Maoist violence had witnessed a transformation under the BJP-led government at the Centre, he said, "Our government has nearly freed tribal communities from the menace of Maoism."

He pointed out that the BJP has appointed tribal chief ministers in various states and also as the president, stating that this reflected the party's commitment to the community.

"But TMC insults the Santhal community. TMC never wanted tribal development," he alleged.

The PM also reiterated that refugees belonging to the Matua and Namasudra communities would be granted citizenship under the CAA.

"Those who have suffered for decades and taken refuge here will get justice. The Matua and Namasudra communities will get citizenship under the CAA," he said.

Urging voters to compare the tenure of different parties in the state, Modi said, "You gave the Left 35 years. You gave the TMC 15 years. Give Modi five years."

"Wherever there is a double-engine government, there is development," he claimed.

Interaction between Modi, Rahul draws attention at event for Mahatma Phule



PTI

New Delhi, Apr 11: A brief conversation initiated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi drew attention during a commemorative event for renowned social reformer Jyotirao Phule at the Parliament House complex here on Saturday.

The interaction stood out as the two leaders are rarely seen speaking to each other beyond exchanging pleasantries at such public events.

When the prime minister arrived to pay floral tributes at the statue of Phule on the occasion of his birth anniversary, several dignitaries, including Gandhi, the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha, were standing in a row. After greeting everyone with folded

hands, Modi stopped near Gandhi and started talking to him.

Though it was not immediately known what they spoke about during their minute-long exchange, Gandhi was seen replying and nodding to Modi on a few occasions.

Gandhi was flanked by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Union ministers J P Nadda, Virendra Kumar and Arjun Ram Meghwal, outgoing Deputy Chairman of Rajya Sabha and newly nominated Rajya Sabha MP Harivansh, among others.

The brief conversation also drew speculation on social media.

After paying tributes, Modi wrote on 'X': Paid homage to Mahatma Phule in the Parliament complex. My ideals continue to give

strength and hope to countless people".

Prime Minister Modi described Phule as a visionary social reformer who dedicated his life to the ideals of equality, justice and education.

"He was also a pioneer in championing the rights of women and the marginalised. Through his efforts, education became a powerful instrument of empowerment," Modi said in another post.

The prime minister said this year marks the start of Phule's 200th birth anniversary celebrations.

"May his thoughts continue to guide everyone in the pursuit of societal progress," he said.

In a post, Gandhi said: "On the birth anniversary of the great social reformer Mahatma Jyotiba Phule ji, I offer my humble homage to him".

"He dedicated his entire life to protecting the rights and entitlements of the marginalised. His struggle against discrimination and inequality showed the nation the path to equality and justice."

"His ideals and thoughts will forever continue to inspire us to move forward towards social justice,"

More agri reforms needed; shortage of funds won't come in way for dev: Rajnath



PTI

Raisen, Apr 11: Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday called for more reforms in the agriculture sector, saying it is the backbone of the Indian economy, and that the shortage of funds would not come in the way of doing more for the farming community and rural India.

Addressing the three-day Unnat Krishi Mela here, Singh said the Narendra Modi government has launched several schemes - PM-Kisan, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Soil Health Card and an online network of wholesale mandis - to boost farmers' income and farm productivity.

"These efforts have transformed the lives of farmers. But I believe the change is not enough. There is a need to do even more for the agriculture sector and our villages," he said, adding, "We will

not be worried about funds. The shortage of funds will not be an obstacle. I want to assure you this."

Reflecting on his political journey, Singh said the farmer in him had never left despite holding several ministerial portfolios. "In my political life, I have been Agriculture Minister in the past. Wherever I have gone, the kisan in me has been alive," he said.

"Usually, people see a defence minister as responsible for soldiers and the country's security, not agriculture. Our responsibility is to ensure the country's security, but the kisan in me has not gone away," he added. Underlining his concern for farmers, Singh said the defence ministry had begun procuring organic fresh vegetables and fruits directly from farmers for cantonment areas.

"Vegetables, fruits and other produce were earlier being brought from far away, losing

freshness in transit. Now we are buying organic produce from farmers," he said, noting the move would fetch farmers better prices while also benefiting soldiers.

The defence ministry, he said, is also promoting millets - shree anna such as jowar and ragi, along with organic produce, through its Canteen Stores Department.

Singh said the government is acting on the 'Jai Jawan Jai Kisan' slogan by promoting millet in the armed forces to strengthen farmers economically.

"Flours made from jowar, bajra and ragi have been introduced in the armed forces. By our efforts, we are again acting upon the slogan 'Jai Jawan-Jai Kisan'," said Singh, who was Union minister for agriculture in 2003-2004 in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government.

These initiatives, he said, have helped raise farmers' income and given a fillip to organic farming.

Calling on the youth to engage with agriculture, Singh said the sector deserved the same importance as any other. "There is huge potential in agriculture. If youth engage in it, farmers' income and the farm economy can grow. Our government is always ready to support," he said.

Farming can be made smart through drones, sensors and mobile technology, Singh said, while asserting that the government remains committed to providing all possible support so that farming becomes a matter of pride and farmers live with dignity and honour.

India-flagged LPG tanker Jag Vikram crosses Strait of Hormuz after US-Iran ceasefire

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 11: An India-flagged liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) tanker, Jag Vikram, has crossed the Strait of Hormuz, marking the first such transit by an Indian vessel since a temporary two-week ceasefire between the United States and Iran was announced, according to ship-tracking data.

The tanker moved through the strategic waterway between Friday night and Saturday morning and was located in the Gulf of Oman, east of the Strait on Saturday afternoon, proceeding eastwards.

Jag Vikram is the ninth Indian vessel to exit the Persian Gulf since early March, while about 15 India-flagged ships remain in the region, awaiting passage.

Owned by Mumbai-based Great Eastern Shipping Company, Jag Vikram is a mid-sized gas carrier with a deadweight capacity of over 26,000 tonnes.

Trade sources estimate it could be carrying around 20,000 tonnes of LPG.

At least 28 India-flagged vessels were in the Strait of Hormuz region when the West Asia conflict erupted, including 24 on the western side and four on the eastern side of the waterway.

Prior to Jag Vikram's transit, eight vessels from the western side and two from the eastern side had managed to sail to safety. Several foreign-flagged ships carrying India-bound cargo also remain stranded in the Persian Gulf.

According to MarineTraffic data, hundreds of vessels remain in the region, including 426 tankers, 34 LPG carriers and 19 LNG vessels, many of which had been effectively stranded amid the disruption.

India, the world's third-largest

energy consumer and fourth-largest gas user, imports about 88 per cent of its crude oil, around half of its natural gas needs and nearly 60 per cent of its liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) requirement, underscoring its dependence on overseas supplies.

More than half of crude imports, about 40 per cent of gas and up to 85-90 per cent of LPG shipments come from Gulf countries and pass through the Strait of Hormuz, a key global energy corridor that was shut during the West Asia conflict.

The United States and Iran, earlier this week, agreed to a conditional two-week ceasefire that includes reopening the Strait



for shipping.

India curtailed LPG supplies to commercial users such as hotels and restaurants after disruptions to Gulf energy flows, before restoring about 70 per cent of pre-crisis volumes as alternative supplies were secured.

Natural gas supplies were initially cut to industries, including fertiliser plants, to prioritise CNG for transport and piped cooking gas for households. Supplies to fertiliser units have since been partially restored, with operating urea plants receiving about 80 per cent of recent average consumption, while overall allocation to the sector has been raised to around 95 per cent this week.

Govt hikes windfall tax on diesel to Rs 55.5/litre, ATF to Rs 42/litre

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 11: The government on Saturday hiked export duty, or windfall tax, on diesel to Rs 55.5 per litre and on aviation fuel ATF to Rs 42 a litre.

The duty hikes would be applicable with immediate effect, the finance ministry said in a notification.

The government had, on March 26, imposed an export duty of Rs 21.50 a litre on diesel, and Rs 29.5 per litre on Aviation Turbine Fuel (ATF). The duties were levied to increase domestic availability of the fuel amid the war in West Asia.

They were also aimed at not allowing exporters to take undue advantage due to price differences, as globally crude oil prices had risen since the beginning of the war.

On February 28, the United States and Israel launched military strikes against Iran, triggering sweeping retaliation from Tehran.

Bihar bans private practice by govt doctors

PTI

Patna, Apr 11: The Bihar government on Saturday announced a complete ban on private practice by doctors employed in government hospitals.

According to a notification issued by the state Health Department, the decision was taken under the state's flagship programme 'Saat Nischay-3' (seven resolves) for the 2025-30 period.

"Under the resolution 'accessible health, secure life', the state has decided to prohibit private practice by government doctors," the notification said.

Key points of draft Delhi Electric Vehicle Policy 2026-2030

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 11: Following are the key points of the draft Delhi Electric Vehicle Policy 2026-2030:

- 100 per cent road tax plus registration fee exemption for electric vehicles till 2030 less than Rs 30 lakh ex-show-room cost
- Electric cars less than Rs 30 lakh will get full exemption till 31 March 2030
- Strong hybrids to get 50 per cent exemption in fees and taxes
- Only electric three-wheelers to be

- registered from 1 January 2027
- Only electric two-wheelers from 1 April 2028
- No new petrol/diesel vehicles in delivery fleets - All new government vehicles to be electric
- 30 per cent schools buses to be electric by 2030
- All new government buses to be electric
- Delhi Transco Limited to lead expansion of public charging and battery swapping stations
- Single-window clearance system for faster setup HIG



US has not agreed to unfreeze Iranian assets: White House official

REUTERS

Dubai, Apr 11: A US official on Saturday denied reports that Washington has agreed to unfreeze Iranian assets.

Reuters reported earlier in the day that the US had agreed to release Iranian frozen assets held in Qatar and other foreign banks, citing a senior Iranian source.

A senior Iranian source said on Saturday the US had agreed to release Iranian frozen assets held in Qatar and other foreign banks, welcoming the move as a sign of "seriousness" in reaching a deal with Washington in talks in Islamabad.

The source, who declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the matter, told Reuters that unfreezing the assets was "directly linked to ensuring safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz," which is expected to be a key issue in the talks.

The senior source did not give a value for the assets that Washington had agreed to unfreeze. A second Iranian source said the United States



had agreed to release \$6 billion of frozen Iranian funds held by Qatar.

There was no immediate statement from the United States about any unfreezing of assets. Qatar's Foreign Ministry did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Funds originally frozen eight years

ago. The \$6 billion, originally frozen in 2018, had been due for release in 2023 as part of a US-Iranian prisoner swap but the funds were again frozen by the administration of President Joe Biden following the Oct. 7, 2023 attacks on Israel by Iran's ally, the Palestinian militant group Hamas.

US officials said at the time that Iran would not be able to access the money for the foreseeable future, stressing that Washington retained the right to completely freeze the account.

The funds stem from Iranian oil sales to South Korea and had been blocked in South Korean banks after President Donald Trump reimposed sanctions on Iran in 2018 — during his first term in the White House — and scrapped a deal between world powers and Tehran over its nuclear program.

Under the September 2023 US-Iran prisoner swap mediated by Doha, the money was transferred to Qatari bank accounts. The prisoner swap involved the release of five US citizens detained in Iran in exchange for the funds' release and the release of five Iranians held in the United States. US officials said at that time that the money was restricted to humanitarian use only, to be disbursed to approved vendors for food, medicine, medical equipment and agricultural goods shipped into Iran under US Treasury oversight.

South Korea president clashes with Israel on rights, disinfo claims

AFP

Seoul, Apr 11: South Korean President Lee Jae Myung on Saturday accused Israel of failing to "reflect" on allegations of rights abuses by its forces, after Israel decried him for amplifying social media "disinformation."

The Seoul leader irked Israel's foreign ministry this week with his comments on a social media video with a caption purporting it showed Israeli soldiers torturing and pushing a "Palestinian kid" off a roof.

"I need to look into whether this is true, and if so, what measures have been taken," Lee said Friday on X.

AFP was not able to immediately identify provenance of the video, which has been widely shared on social media.

However, it appeared to show the different angle of an incident captured by AFP TV in the West Bank two years ago, when reporters saw an Israeli soldier use his foot to push the body of an apparently dead adult man off a roof.

In 2024 the White House called the footage "deeply disturbing" and said it had demanded an explanation from Israel amid its intensifying raids on the West Bank, which it has occupied since 1967.

Israel's foreign ministry said in a statement on Saturday the incident was already "investigated and addressed."

"President Lee Jae Myung, for

some strange reason, chose to dig up a story from 2024 and to cite a fake account that falsely presented it as a current event," said a ministry social media statement.

"This account is notorious for spreading anti-Israeli disinformation and falsehoods about Israel," it added.

South Korea's foreign ministry attempted to defuse the escalating social media confrontation.

In a statement it said Lee's post — which drew parallels between alleged Israeli abuses and historical atrocities against Jews and Koreans — was a call to "universal human rights rather than an opinion on any specific issue."

But on Saturday Lee issued another pointed social media missive, commenting on a news article detailing Israel's backlash against his remarks.

"It's disappointing that you don't even once reflect on the criticisms from people around the world who are suffering and struggling due to relentless anti-human rights and anti-international law actions," he said. "When I am in pain, others feel that pain just as deeply."

South Korea, an ally of Israel's biggest international backer the United States, has generally maintained a balanced stance on strife in the Middle East, without backing any one side in the conflict.

Trump says US forces are 'clearing' Strait of Hormuz

REUTERS

Washington, Apr 11: US President Donald Trump on Saturday posted on social media that the United States military has started to clear the Strait of Hormuz, and that all of Iran's minelaying ships have been sunk.

"We're now starting the process of clearing out the Strait of Hormuz," Trump wrote in a social media post, adding that "all 28" of Iran's "mine dropper boats are also lying at the bottom



of the sea." Trump has repeatedly said that American forces have destroyed Iran's navy and air force

while crippling its ballistic missile and nuclear programs. But fear of Iranian attacks on

shipping over the past several weeks has effectively closed the Strait of Hormuz, a critical conduit for global oil supplies. Throttling the strait has disrupted global energy markets.

US gasoline prices have spiked even though most of the oil that flows through the waterway does not go to the United States.

Representatives from the US and Iran began talks hosted by Pakistan in Islamabad on Saturday amid a fragile ceasefire in the conflict.

It will take lot of effort to envision that: Shreyas on maiden IPL title for PBKS



PTI

Mullanpur, Apr 11: Coming off a heart-breaking loss in last year's final, Punjab Kings look hungry for their first IPL title this season, though captain Shreyas Iyer acknowledged that "it will take a lot of effort to envision that".

Shreyas led from the front with an unbeaten 69 off 33 balls to guide PBKS to a six-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Saturday, making small work of a 220-run target after openers Priyansh Arya and Prabhsimran Singh set it up with a rollicking stand of 99.

"They're delivering on the field. I keep reiterating every now and then, you have to be in the present. Ricky (Ponting) also takes a lot of importance in this aspect. Even last year, we came so close to winning the trophy. This year, we want to lift it. It will take a lot of effort to envision that," Shreyas said at the presentation ceremony.

Player of the Match Shreyas lauded the effort of his openers who laid a strong foundation with their explosive batting in the powerplay. "Firstly, we've got a phenomenal start. When you're chasing 220, you need that start. Pleasing to the eye, proper cricketing shots. Steadied the rhythm at the start. Not easy, but maintaining that momentum - I needed to give myself time. Once I gauged the pace of the pitch..."

Having opted to field after winning the toss, PBKS bowlers were taken to the cleaners by Abhishek Sharma and Travis Head, with the duo adding 120 runs in just 8.1 overs.

However, Shashank Singh brought them back into the contest by removing both Head and Abhishek in the same over.

Asked what was the thinking after SRH's start, Shreyas said, "All of us came together, and Shashank approached me, give me an over. Ricky came and asked me, what's your thought? I said I'll go with Shashank - I need someone to take the pace off.

Sports Minister Mandaviya plans nationwide campaign to build momentum for 2030 CWG

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 11: Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya says plans are afoot to launch a nationwide campaign featuring iconic athletes and youth leaders to build momentum for the 2030 Commonwealth Games in Ahmedabad.

The minister met a Commonwealth Sport delegation headed by its President Donald Rukare here on Friday and time-lines to ensure "efficient delivery" of the mega-event and legacy planning dominated the discussions.

Mandaviya said India is embarking



on a country-wide campaign in schools, colleges and Universities to create awareness among students on the importance of India hosting the centenary edition of the Games.

"As a country we are preparing to host the best CWG in 2030 with more sporting disciplines, world class infrastructure and a talent pool that has support through multiple government schemes," he said in a statement issued on Saturday.

"Parallely, we want to inculcate the pride of hosting the centenary edition among young Indians. This nationwide campaign of building a sporting culture among youngsters will act as a catalyst to attract more youth towards sports and build a bench strength that will support our 2036 Olympic dreams," he added.

RKFC look to break winless run against Gokulam Kerala



KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, Apr 11: Real Kashmir Football Club (RKFC) will look to turn their fortunes around when they face Gokulam Kerala FC in an Indian Football League (IFL) clash on Sunday (April 12) at TRC Ground, Srinagar.

The match is scheduled to kick off at 4 pm and will be live on several channels.

Owned by Arshad Shawl, RKFC have had a challenging season so far in the IFL, formerly known as the I-League. Despite consistent performances, the team has struggled to convert dominance into victories, especially in their recent home fixtures.

Head coach Ishfaq Ahmad, however, remains optimistic ahead of the crucial encounter.

Speaking at a pre-match press conference, he said

the team has shown significant improvement over the last few matches.

"The team has improved a lot, but results have not been in our favour. We dominated our last three home games but could not secure wins. We will approach this match with the same positive mindset and aim for a favourable result," he said. Ishfaq also acknowledged the strength of the opposition, noting their experience and new signings. "We have faced them in previous seasons. They have a good coach and have brought in new foreign players, so we expect a tough contest," he added. RKFC player Huzaifa echoed similar sentiments, saying the team has been playing good football and is hopeful of delivering a strong performance. He also urged fans to turn up in large numbers to support the home side.

VAAZHA-II-BIOPIC OF BILLION BROS (U/A)
MALAYALAM WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
11:00 AM

PROJECT HAIL MARY (U/A)
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
03:25 PM

DACOIT (U/A)
HINDI - 06:35 PM

DHURANDHAR THE REVENGE (A)
HINDI - 11:00 AM, 12:20 PM, 04:45 PM
HINDI ATMOS - 02:15 PM, 06:40 PM

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