



Nasha Mukt Jammu Kashmir Abhiyaan

LG Sinha sets 30-day deadline to dismantle drug networks across J&K

Directs police to prepare 'top drug peddlers' lists Leads Padyatra, vows no perpetrator will escape justice

KNO Desk

Jammu, Apr 13: Directing police officials to prepare 'top drug peddlers' lists at all Police Stations, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday set a 30-day deadline to take decisive action to dismantle drug networks across Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing a massive public rally at Sports Stadium Kathua, where he launched a people's movement against narcotics under the Drug Free Jammu Kashmir campaign, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) asked the police officials to prepare 'top drug peddlers' lists at all Police Stations and take decisive action to dismantle drug networks within 30 days. "Adopt a focused and time-bound approach for complete



elimination of drug syndicate," LG Sinha told the police officials.

The Lieutenant Governor led a Padyatra from the Sports Stadium to Government Degree College, Kathua, joined by

thousands of citizens, public representatives, senior officials, civil society members, social activists, NGOs, women, students and various stakeholders, all united under a shared resolve to make Jammu Kashmir

Nasha Mukt. WARNS DRUG SYNDICATES OF IMPENDING CRACKDOWN

Warning drug syndicates of an impending crackdown, the Lieutenant Governor stated that a groundbreaking Standard Operating Procedure, recently notified, will ruthlessly crush smugglers by revoking their passports, driving licenses, Aadhaar cards, and arms licenses.

"Under the NDPS Act, we will confiscate all movable and immovable assets, freeze bank accounts, and launch exhaustive financial probes. I want to assure the people of Jammu Kashmir that no perpetrator will escape justice," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He called upon women's self-help groups to form a Women Vigilance Squad for monitoring the drug | More on P6

Modi-led govt hit Pak 'where it hurt most': Amit Shah

Says Manmohan Singh-led dispensation treated terrorists with 'biryani'

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 13: Blaming erstwhile Manmohan Singh led regime backed by Mamata Banerjee's party for failing to act firmly against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said that the dispensation led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi responded decisively by launching "Operation Sindoore" after the Pahalgalam terror attack and hit Pakistan "where it hurt the most."

Speaking at a rally in Paschim Bardhaman, HM Shah, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Previous governments showed leniency in dealing with Pakistan-sponsored terrorism. The Manmohan



Singh government, supported by Mamata Banerjee's party, never took firm action against Pakistan-sponsored terrorism and instead treated them with biryani."

Pertinently, on April 22, 2025, terrorists killed 26 tourists in Pahalgalam and "Operation Sindoore" was carried out to avenge it. A targeted tri-service Indian military strike carried out on May 6-7, 2025, destroyed nine

terrorist camps deep inside Pakistan and PoJK.

Officials described the "Operation Sindoore" as a calibrated, non-escalatory operation focused on dismantling terrorist infrastructure and signalling a shift in India's counter-terrorism approach. The attack on terrorist camps led to skirmishes between the two countries that continued for four days. Hostilities | More on P6

LG greets people on Ambedkar Jayanti

KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 13: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday greeted the people on the eve of the birth anniversary of the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

In his message, the Lieutenant Governor said, "On the occasion of the birth anniversary of Dr. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar, I extend my greetings and best wishes to all. Babasaheb stands as a transformative architect of India's social and national ethos. A tireless advocate for the oppressed, he devoted his life to eradicate social and economic inequities. His enduring vision continues to illuminate paths of hope and inspiration. On this day, let us pledge unwavering commitment to his principles and build a united, just, and compassionate society rooted in mutual trust and brotherhood."

GOC 16 Corps reviews preparedness along LoC



KNO Desk

Jammu, Apr 13: General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Army's White Knight Corps Lieutenant General Prasanna Kishore Mishra along with GOC of Cross Swords Division on Monday visited the Akhnoor sector of the Line of Control to review operational preparedness.

Nagrotta-based White Knight Corps, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), wrote on X: "GOC White Knight

Corps, along with GOC Crossed Swords Division, visited the general area of Akhnoor to review the operational preparedness and prevailing security grid. The visit focused on the assessment of counter-infiltration measures, the integration of new-generation equipment, and overall operational synergy."

"The GOC commended the formation for induction and integration of niche technologies and exhorted all ranks to sustain a robust, agile and responsive | More on P6

J&K Govt committed to harnessing hydroelectric potential: CM Omar

Discusses power reforms Parl Committee on Energy

KT News Desk

Gulmarg, Apr 13: A study group of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Energy on Monday met Chief Minister Omar Abdullah during its visit to the region, and apprised him of the objectives of their visit and deliberated on key issues pertaining to the power sector.

The Chief Minister underscored the government's commitment to strengthening energy infrastructure, enhancing power reliability, and expediting reforms to effectively meet the growing demand across Jammu & Kashmir.

The members highlighted key issues related to energy infrastructure, renewable energy potential, and the need for strengthening power supply systems in the region.



CM Abdullah welcomed the Committee members and appreciated their keen interest in assessing the energy scenario of Jammu and Kashmir. He emphasized the importance of sustained investments in the power sector to meet the

growing demand and to ensure reliable and affordable electricity for all sections of society.

The Chief Minister also underscored the government's focus on harnessing Jammu and Kashmir's vast hydroelectric potential | More on P6

LG, CM extend Baisakhi greetings

Srinagar, Apr 13: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday extended warm greetings to the people on the joyous occasion of Baisakhi, highlighting the festival's cultural and spiritual significance.

In his message, the Lieutenant Governor said, "On the joyous occasion of Baisakhi, I convey my heartiest greetings and best wishes to all. This harvest festival stands as a solemn reminder of the extraordinary contributions of our farmers whose labor, sacrifice, and dedication sustain the very foundation of our nation. Baisakhi also marks the historic foundation of the Khalsa Panth by the tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who empowered the people and the community. As we celebrate Baisakhi, let us reaffirm our commitment to the teachings of righteously, unity, | More on P6

Weather to remain dry till April 15: MeT

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 13: Weather across Jammu and Kashmir will remain generally dry from April 13 to 15, with no significant activity expected across most places, Meteorological Department said on Monday.

A MeT official while talking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "On April 16, the weather will remain generally dry, with a brief spell of light rain or thundershowers likely at a few places towards evening or night. From April 17 to 18,

generally cloudy conditions will prevail, with light rain or thundershowers expected at many places. Gusty winds with speeds of 40-50 kmph and hailstorm activity are also likely at a few locations during this period."

He said, "From April 19 to 23, the weather will turn generally dry again across the Union Territory."

Meanwhile, temperatures are expected to rise by 2-4 degrees Celsius at many places till April 16. Farmers are advised to continue all agricultural operations | More on P6

Bijbehara siblings drown in Jhelum River

'One brother was set to marry next month'

Umair Gull Ganie

Anantnag, Apr 13: Two siblings drowned after slipping into the Jhelum River in South Kashmir's Anantnag District on Monday.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the duo drowned after accidentally falling into the river while washing livestock in the Padshahibagh village of Bijbehara town this afternoon. "One of the brothers slipped, and in a bid to save him, the

other also slipped into the river," the official added.

Rescue teams, including Anantnag Police and SDRF, rushed to the spot and launched an operation soon after the incident was reported. However, both could not be saved.

The bodies were later retrieved by locals and rescue teams.

The deceased were identified as Majid Bashir and Shahid Bashir, both sons of Bashir Ahmed Malik and residents of | More on P6

Nasha Mukt Abhiyaan

Dir Info felicitates winners of poster making, slogan writing competition

KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 13: Director Information, Shreya Singhal today felicitated the winners of the 'Talent Vista-Poster Making and Slogan Writing Competition on Nasha Mukt Abhiyaan' at Media Complex here.

Speaking on the occasion, the Director Information congratulated the winners and applauded all participants for their exceptional creativity and commitment towards the social cause. She emphasized that



such awareness campaigns play a crucial role in sensitizing society, especially the younger

generation, about the harmful effects of drug addiction and the need for | More on P6

Unemployment, academic pressure, financial instability driving stress surge in Kashmir: Experts

'Seeking help not sign of weakness but step toward recovery'

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Apr 13: Stress, once considered a temporary emotional response, is increasingly emerging as a silent public health concern in Kashmir, with doctors warning that a growing number of people, especially youth, are grappling with its long-term consequences.

Medical experts say that stress, triggered by social, economic, and psychological pressures, is no longer limited



to specific groups but is affecting people across all age brackets.

"Stress is essentially the body's natural response to pressure or perceived threats,

but when it becomes chronic, it can severely impact both mental and physical health," Dr Murtaza Khan, a physician, told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

He explained that while short-term stress can sometimes enhance performance, prolonged exposure leads to serious complications. "We are witnessing a surge in patients complaining of headaches, hypertension, sleep disturbances, and fatigue, all of which are

directly or indirectly linked to unmanaged stress," he added.

Doctors attribute the rise in stress levels to a combination of factors, including unemployment, academic pressure, financial instability, and social challenges.

Dr Javid Ahmad Reshie, speaking to KNO, said that modern lifestyle patterns and excessive screen time are also contributing significantly.

"People today are constantly exposed to information overload, | More on P6

Hajj flights from Sgr to begin April 18; 4,704 pilgrims to depart

'Each pilgrim to get SIM-enabled smartwatch for tracking, coordination'

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 13: Hajj flights from Srinagar are scheduled to commence from April 18 and continue till May 20, with a total of 4,704 pilgrims from Jammu and Kashmir set to undertake the pilgrimage this year.

Executive Officer of the Hajj Committee, Dr Shujat Ahmed, informed the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO)

that 3,990 pilgrims will depart via Srinagar embarkation, including 323 from Ladakh, while 1,000 pilgrims will travel through Delhi and 50 through Mumbai.

He said the flights will operate for around 10-15 days from Srinagar, with schedules subject to adjustments due to operational requirements.

Ahmed said new guidelines issued by Saudi authorities include stricter health screening, under which pilgrims with serious conditions such as renal failure, those on dialysis, or with cardiac | More on P6

IIT Jammu proposes AI reforms, Sakeena Itoo calls for roadmap in J&K



KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, APRIL 13: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, Monday chaired a high-level meeting to review the proposed Artificial Intelligence (AI) initiatives presented by IIT Jammu aimed at bringing transformational reforms in the School Education and Health sectors across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Commissioner Secretary, Health and Medical Education, M. Raju; CEO, State Health Agency, Anant Dwivedi; Directors of School Education Jammu/Kashmir and other senior officers of the Health and School Education departments, either in person or through video conferencing. Speaking during the meeting, the Minister emphasized on developing a structured, age-appropriate AI curriculum spanning primary, middle and higher secondary levels, covering AI fundamentals, responsible use of generative AI, prompt engineering and computational thinking. She called upon the representatives

of IIT Jammu to conduct in-depth deliberations with School Education department and take all aspects into consideration from the grassroots level before finalizing these initiatives.

The Minister stressed on the need to prepare students for future technological advancements and asked both Directors to explore introduction of Artificial Intelligence literacy in Government schools through a structured and age-appropriate curriculum.

She also called for studying the existing platforms like Smart Classrooms and Atal Tinkering Labs of the School Education department and their integration with these proposed initiatives.

The Minister highlighted that promoting experiential learning and fostering innovation among students is the need of hour adding that such initiatives would empower young learners to develop technology-driven solutions for local challenges and help in building a future-ready workforce across Jammu and Kashmir.

Highlighting the importance of inclusivity in education, Sakeena

Itoo directed that AI education content should be made accessible in regional languages to ensure equitable learning opportunities for students across all districts, particularly in remote and underserved areas.

While reviewing the proposed initiatives for Health sector, the Minister underscored the importance of adopting modern technologies to build a transparent, efficient and accountable healthcare system in Jammu and Kashmir. She directed the Health department to examine the proposed AI-based interventions for strengthening healthcare governance and enhancing service delivery. The Minister laid particular emphasis on leveraging Artificial Intelligence for fraud detection in AB-PMJAY/SEHAT schemes, stating that robust monitoring mechanisms must be established to ensure public funds are utilized transparently and reach genuine beneficiaries without misuse. Further, the Minister directed for exploring the possibilities of introducing AI-based optimization of hospital operations including bed management, workforce planning, ambulance

deployment and infrastructure utilisation to improve patient care and administrative efficiency across healthcare institutions.

She directed the concerned departments to work in close coordination with IIT Jammu for developing a comprehensive roadmap and implementation strategy aligned with Government priorities for phased execution of the proposed initiatives.

Reaffirming Government's commitment towards modernization and innovation-led governance, the Minister stated that adoption of Artificial Intelligence in education and healthcare would serve as a transformative step towards building a technologically empowered and citizen-centric administration in Jammu and Kashmir.

During the meeting, the team of IIT Jammu presented detailed proposals for integration of AI-driven interventions in government schools and healthcare governance in collaboration with its Institute Incubation & Innovation Council (I3C) and implementation partner Innenu Labs Limited.

Advisor Wani visits bereaved Kupwara family

Assures help for repatriation of mortal remains from Saudi Arabia

KT NEWS DESK

KUPWARA, APRIL 13: On the directions of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani Monday visited the residence of Bilal Manzoor, a resident of Sogam in Lolab, who recently passed away after a brief illness while working in Saudi Arabia.



Advisor Wani, as per an official statement, met the bereaved family at their home in

Lolab and conveyed the heartfelt condolences of the Chief Minister. He expressed deep sympathy with the family and stood in solidarity with them during this difficult time.

Spending time with the family, the Advisor offered words of comfort and support. He also assured them that the government would extend all necessary assistance to facilitate the early repatriation of the mortal remains of their son from Saudi Arabia.

Comm State Taxes chairs review meeting of Kashmir division



KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 13: Commissioner State Taxes Department, P.K. Bhat Monday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the performance and progress of the department in the Kashmir Division. The meeting was attended by Additional Commissioners State Taxes (Adm. & Enf.) Kashmir, Parveez Ahmad Raina and State Taxes Officers of all Circles of Kashmir Division.

The meeting, as per an official statement,

focused on key agenda items, including year-on-year revenue realisation, action taken on reports generated by GST Analytics & Fraud Detection (BISAG), growth in cash and IGST settlements, progress in Audit cases initiated under Section 65 of the JK GST/CGST Act for FY 2022-23, efforts to curb the menace of fake Input Tax Credit (ITC), payments released by Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs) and resultant tax paid by taxpayers, scrutiny of returns under Section 61 of the Act, enforcement activities and their outcomes, as well as utilisation of various analytical reports and their results.

The Commissioner deliberated on the impact of rate rationalisation on the Automobile, Cement, and Insurance sectors. The tax rate was revised from 28% to 18% for Automobiles and Cement, and to zero percent for Insurance. While the rationalisation is likely to affect revenue growth during FY 2025-26, it is expected to have a positive impact on revenue collection in the current financial year.

The rationalisation exercise reflects the government's broader objective of making essential and mass-market goods and services more affordable while simplifying the tax regime and promoting sectors such as affordable housing, mobility, and financial protection.

The Commissioner also acknowledged that compared to payments of Rs 9007 crore released against various works contractors, payments of Rs 8994 have been released during FY 2025-26. He also emphasized that registrations granted under Rule 14A need to be scrutinised properly and on regular basis to check any misuse and passing on of fake ITC.

Javid Dar greets people on Baisakhi, Khalsa Panth Foundation Day, Ambedkar Jayanti



Paying rich tributes to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Minister remarked that his pioneering role in framing the Constitution of India continues to inspire the generations. He lauded his relentless efforts towards promoting social justice, equality and education, describing him as a guiding force for building an inclusive and progressive society.

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 13: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Javid Ahmad Dar on Monday extended warm greetings to the people on the auspicious occasions of Baisakhi, Foundation Day of Khalsa Panth and birth anniversary of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar being observed on April 14.

In his message, the Minister, as per an official statement, highlighted that these occasions symbolize unity, cultural heritage and social justice. He said that Baisakhi marks the solar New Year and the harvest season, reflecting joy, prosperity and gratitude towards the hard-working farmers who form the backbone of nation's economy. Javid Dar emphasized the historic significance of

the Foundation Day of Khalsa Panth, saying that it represents courage, sacrifice and commitment to righteousness. He extended his best wishes to the Sikh community and prayed for peace, harmony and prosperity for all.

Paying rich tributes to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Minister remarked that his pioneering role in framing the Constitution of India continues to inspire the generations. He lauded his relentless efforts towards promoting social justice, equality and education, describing him as a guiding force for building an inclusive and progressive society.

The Minister expressed hope that these significant occasions will further strengthen the bond of unity and inspire the people to work collectively for the welfare and development of society.

Nasha Mukht J&K Campaign Pledge ceremony observed at Mini Secretariat Shopian

KT NEWS DESK

SHOPIAN, APRIL 13: Second day of the ongoing Nasha Mukht J&K Campaign in District Shopian was observed with a pledge ceremony held at the Mini Secretariat Shopian and awareness events across the district.

Employees of the Mini Secretariat participated in the pledge ceremony at Shopian, collectively affirming their resolve to work towards a drug free society and to actively support awareness efforts under the campaign.

The event, as per an official statement, was attended by the Additional District Development Commissioner Shopian, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, Additional Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Dr Zakir Hussain Faaz, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Shopian, Shakoor Ahmad Dar, along with other district officers and officials.

While addressing the gathering, the ADDC underscored the importance of individual responsibility in eliminating drug abuse. He stated that the fight against drugs must begin at the personal level, urging employees to lead by example through conscious choices and responsible behaviour.

He further highlighted that consistent individual efforts can collectively bring meaningful change in society.

Employees were also seen holding placards depicting various anti-drug slogans, reinforcing the message of awareness and prevention.

On the occasion, official from the District Social Welfare Office highlighted the ill effects of drug abuse and emphasized the need for awareness, early intervention, and community participation to curb the menace.

Meanwhile, as per the campaign schedule, similar pledge ceremonies and awareness events were also conducted in schools across the district, accompanied by special morning assemblies where students and staff took a collective oath to stay away from drugs and promote a healthy lifestyle.

COURT OF AUTHORIZED OFFICER, AWANTIPORA FOREST DIVISION, AWANTIPORA OFFICE ORDER

Whereas a Tata Mobile vehicle bearing Registration No. JK03B-6326 loaded with illicit forest produce, namely Kail Round timber 10 logs measuring 49 Cfts, was seized on 05/08/2023 at Doman Narastan Tral, Pulwama.

Whereas confiscation proceedings under Section 52 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 have been initiated before the undersigned, being the Authorized Officer, Forest Division Awantipora.

Now, therefore, in order to ensure compliance with the principles of natural justice and the provisions of Section 52(4) of the Indian Forest Act, 1927, it is hereby ordered that a Public Notice regarding confiscation proceedings shall be published as substituted service in a leading daily newspaper having wide circulation in the area The said notice shall call upon the driver, the registered owner, or any other person having any claim, right, title, or interest in the seized vehicle or forest produce to appear before the Authorized Officer, Forest Division Avwantipora, within a period of fifteen days, failing which the confiscation proceedings shall be decided ex-parte in accordance with law.

Accordingly, the Range Officer concerned is hereby directed to take immediate steps for publication of the said notice through the proper channel and to place the newspaper cutting/proof of publication on record for further proceedings.

No: DFo-Awtp/2026-27/Confs/41

Dated: 10/04/2026

Authorized Officer
Divisional Forest Officer Forest Division Awantipora

COURT OF AUTHORIZED OFFICER, AWANTIPORA FOREST DIVISION, AWANTIPORA OFFICE ORDER

Whereas n'rata Mobile vehicle bearing Registration No. JK03A-7490 loaded with illicit forest produce, namely Deodar Round timber 07 logs measuring 30 Cfts, was seized on 29/05/2022 at Dazi Mudoora Tral, Pulwama, and an FIR No. 80/2022 dated 29/05/2022 stands registered at Police Station Tral.

Whereas confiscation proceedings under Section 52 of the Indian Forest Act, 1927 have been initiated before the undersigned, being the Authorized Officer, Forest Division Awantipora.

Now, therefore, in order to ensure compliance with the principles of natural justice and the provisions of Section 52(4) of the Indian Forest Act, 1927, it is hereby ordered that a Public Notice regarding confiscation proceedings shall be published as substituted service in a leading daily newspaper having wide circulation in the area The said notice shall call upon the driver, the registered owner, or any other person having any claim, right, title, or interest in the seized vehicle or forest produce to appear before the Authorized Officer, Forest:Division Awantipora, within a period of fifteen days, failing which the confiscation proceedings shall be decided ex-parte in accordance with law.

Accordingly, the Range Officer concerned is hereby directed to take immediate steps for publication of the said notice through the proper channel and to place the newspaper cutting/proof of publication on record for further proceedings.

No: DFo-Awtp/2026-27/Confs/42

Dated: 10/04/2026

DIPK-357/26

Dated: 13-04-2026

Authorized Officer/
Divisional Forest Officer Forest Division Awantipora

CM Omar pays tributes to Dr B. R. Ambedkar



KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, Apr 13: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today paid rich tributes to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on his birth anniversary, describing him as a visionary leader, social reformer, and the principal architect of the Indian Constitution.

In his message, the Chief Minister said that Dr. Ambedkar's lifelong struggle for social justice, equality and the upliftment of marginalized sections continues to inspire generations. He highlighted Dr. Ambedkar's invaluable contribution in laying the foundation of

a democratic and inclusive India based on the principles of liberty, equality and fraternity.

The Chief Minister called upon the people, especially the youth, to draw inspiration from Dr. Ambedkar's ideals and work towards building a just and equitable society. Reaffirming the government's commitment to inclusive development, the Chief Minister said that the true tribute to Dr. Ambedkar lies in upholding his vision of social justice and ensuring equal opportunities for all.

Zoji-La tunnel one of PM Modi's dream projects: LG Saxena

RAJA SYED RATHER

Kargil, Apr 13: Lieutenant Governor, Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena on Monday visited the Eastern Portal of Zoji-La Tunnel to inspect the ongoing construction work during his visit to Drass. He reviewed progress on one of the most significant infrastructure projects aimed at ensuring all-weather connectivity to Ladakh.

During the inspection, LG Saxena was given a detailed presentation on the project. He was informed that the tunnel, being executed by Megha Engineering & Infrastructure Ltd at a sanctioned cost of Rs 6,808.69 crore, is expected to be completed by February 2028. The breakthrough of the tunnel is anticipated by mid-2026.

The project incorporates modern engineering features, including lay-bys at intervals of every 750 metres and three ventilation shafts to ensure operational efficiency and safety.

The Lieutenant Governor was also briefed on the use of the New Austrian Tunneling Method (NATM) from both the western



and eastern portals for excavation. However, officials highlighted that poor rock quality in certain stretches has posed challenges, impacting the pace of progress.

Expressing satisfaction over the progress achieved so far, the LG directed the concerned officials to further expedite the work to ensure the timely completion and early operationalisation of the tunnel, which will be crucial for ensuring year-round connectivity to Ladakh. He called for maintaining the highest

safety standards during construction and in the final structure, keeping in view the safety and security of commuters.

Describing the Zoji-La Tunnel as one of the dream projects of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, LG Ladakh commended the dedication and resilience of the workforce engaged in the project, acknowledging their efforts in challenging terrain and harsh weather conditions.

"Upon completion, the tunnel will not only ensure seamless connectivity between Ladakh and the rest

of the country but will also significantly boost tourism in the region," he said.

Highlighting its strategic importance, he said the project would contribute to enhanced economic growth and socio-cultural integration between the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

"The completion of the Zoji-La Tunnel would mark a transformative milestone for the region, opening new avenues for development and positioning Ladakh as a major destination for tourism," the LG said—(KNO)

Legislators, delegations call on Rana



KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 13: CC, here at Civil Secretariat, to apprise him of a wide range of public and sector-specific issues.

Among those who met the Minister were legislators R. S. Pathania and Khurshid Ahmed. A delegation of Water Testing Laboratory employees, representatives of the JJM Contractors Association and other individuals raised their issues.

During the interactions, the visiting legislators and delegations highlighted a range of pressing concerns, particularly those related to drinking water supply schemes, forest management issues and other matters of public importance affecting

local communities. The delegation of Water Testing Laboratory employees drew the Minister's attention to their demand for enhancement of honorarium.

Meanwhile, representatives of the JJM Contractors Association raised the issue of delays in the release of payments for works executed under various water supply projects.

The Minister gave a patient hearing to all the delegations and individuals, acknowledging the significance of the issues raised.

He assured them that their genuine concerns would be addressed on priority and issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned authorities for their prompt and time-bound resolution.

SSCL CEO holds transport route realignment meet

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, Apr 13: In a major initiative to decongest key traffic corridors and enhance urban mobility, Faz Lul Haseeb, Chief Executive Officer, Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL), chaired a meeting with representatives of transport operators and the Private Operators Association to deliberate on the realignment and optimization of transport routes across Srinagar.

The meeting was attended by Ajaz Ahmad, Senior Superintendent of Police, Traffic City Srinagar, along with senior officers of Srinagar Smart City Limited.

The deliberations focused on rationalizing existing routes to reduce congestion along major arteries and ensure smoother vehicular movement across the city.

Comprehensive discussions were held on restructuring transport routes, improving operational efficiency, and enhancing commuter convenience through better coordination between public and private transport stakeholders. The need for data-driven planning and synchronized implementation was



also emphasized.

The CEO underscored the importance of a collaborative approach, stating that effective coordination between government agencies and transport operators is essential for achieving a streamlined, efficient, and commuter-friendly urban transport system. He reiterated that the proposed measures are aligned with the broader vision

of sustainable and smart urban mobility for Srinagar.

The meeting concluded with a reaffirmation that the route realignment and optimization exercise is being carried out under the supervision of a multidisciplinary committee on traffic, aimed at ensuring effective implementation and long-term traffic decongestion in the city.

Zero-tolerance approach to dismantle drug ecosystem within 100 days: SSP Srinagar

KNO

Srinagar, Apr 13: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar, Dr Sandeep Chakravarthy on Monday said that a strict zero-tolerance approach against drugs will dismantle the narcotics ecosystem in the district within the next 100 days.

Speaking at a function held at Amar Singh College here, the SSP said the initiative is part of a focused 100-day action programme under the 'Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan', which he described as a "national mission" rather than a routine campaign.

He said the programme, envisioned by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, aims to eliminate the drug menace through a well-coordinated strategy involving police, civil departments and the community at large.

"J&K Police have full clarity and a firm resolve. This is not just an awareness drive but a strategic action plan. In the next three months, visible results will be on the ground," Dr Chakravarthy said.

Highlighting ongoing efforts, he said Srinagar Police have already intensified operations against drug peddlers and users, adding that sustained enforcement and preventive measures will continue during the campaign period.

The SSP stressed that tackling substance abuse requires collective responsibility, calling upon parents, students and educational institutions to actively participate. "This is not just a policing issue but a societal challenge. We



must fight it together," he said.

He appealed to the youth to join the anti-drug movement and urged citizens to share information about drug-related activities without fear. "We assure complete protection of informants. Their identity will remain confidential," he added.

Dr Chakravarthy further said the mission is to make Srinagar a drug-free district and contribute towards a drug-free Jammu and Kashmir and the nation.

Meanwhile, the SSP reviewed preparedness for the upcoming Amarnath Yatra, assuring that all necessary arrangements are being put in place to ensure a peaceful and secure pilgrimage—(KNO)

Mahajan reviews measures for strengthening road safety

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 13: Transport Commissioner J&K, Vishesh Mahajan on Monday chaired a meeting to review and strengthen the functioning of the Transport Department across the Union Territory.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on intensifying enforcement drives; curbing traffic violations and improving public service delivery. Emphasis was laid on ensuring strict adherence to traffic rules and enhancing accountability within the system.

Transport Commissioner directed the concerned officers to launch a strong enforcement drive against traffic offenders. He stressed that strict action must be taken against those violating rules including suspension of Driving Licences and Registration Certificates (RCs); as per the provisions of law.

The Commissioner also emphasized effective implementation of PM RAAHAT scheme and timely disbursement of relief under road safety victim fund.

He further underscored the need to strengthen public service delivery mechanisms to ensure efficient; transparent and citizen-friendly services across all transport offices. During the meeting all RTOs/ARTOs were present in the meeting.

Army ready to tackle any threat: GOC Mukherjee

SAJID RAINA

Rajouri, Apr 13: Asserting that Army is on high alert, General Officer Commanding (GOC) of Ace of Spades Division, Major General Kaushik Mukherji on Monday said that the soldiers are fully prepared to respond to any threat from across the border.

Addressing a 'Rajouri Day' event, GOC Mukherjee said, "The Army is ready to give a strong response to any hostile action and is closely monitoring the security situation in the region."

He said the Army, civil administration and local residents in Rajouri and Poonch districts are working in coordination to maintain peace and stability in the border areas. "Given the prevailing situation, we remain vigilant and fully prepared to deal with any



eventuality," he said.

GOC Mukherjee paid tribute to soldiers who laid down their lives during the 1947-48 operations to liberate Rajouri from enemy forces, saying their sacrifice continues to inspire the armed forces. He also remembered officers and personnel

who laid down their lives during 'Operation Sindoor,' acknowledging their contribution to national security.

Highlighting the role of civilians, the GOC said that cooperation from local residents is a major strength for the Army in countering threats. He noted that

people in the region stand shoulder to shoulder with security forces, helping in maintaining vigilance and thwarting any attempts to disturb peace.

"Apart from security measures, the Army is also focusing on community outreach and development initiatives in the region," he said, adding, "A project to manufacture interlocking tiles from plastic waste is being launched in Rajouri and Poonch, which will contribute to environmental protection while also creating livelihood opportunities for local residents."

He said that under the Digital Bharat Darshan programme, students from government schools are being virtually connected to major cities across the country on a monthly basis to broaden their exposure and awareness—(KNO)

Driving test fully digitised: ARTO Srinagar

Says applicants get confirmation SMSs, digital licences within 48 hours

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Apr 13: The driving test system at Bemina trial ground in Srinagar has been fully digitised with online slot booking, SMS-based updates and time-bound issuance of digital driving licences, Assistant Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) Srinagar headquarters, Anis Ahmad, said on Monday.

Anis said driving skill tests are conducted three days a week, on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, under a structured slot-based system to ensure regulated operations.

He said the centre handles an average of 130 to 140 candidates daily, with applicants required to book their slots online or through authorised centres and appear strictly on their assigned dates.

"The entire system is slot-based. Candidates are required to come only on their allotted date, which helps maintain discipline and avoids overcrowding," he said.

Providing operational data, the ARTO said around 70-80 four-wheelers are tested daily, while the remaining candidates appear for two-wheeler tests depending on category-wise bookings.

"The process is fully transparent, with each driving test videographed and strict identity verification conducted at entry points to eliminate impersonation," he said.

On system flexibility, Anis said the department uses an online rescheduling mechanism in case of adverse weather or unavoidable circumstances, with applicants receiving SMS alerts linked to their registered mobile numbers. "Candidates can also check updated schedules through the online portal," he said.

He added that successful applicants are issued confirmation messages and receive digital driving licences within 48 hours of clearing the test.

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Boy, girl found dead in abandoned house

UMAISAR GULL GANIE

Anantnag, Apr 13: Police on Monday recovered bodies of a boy and a girl from an abandoned house in South Kashmir's Anantnag district.

An official said that two decomposed bodies were spotted by locals inside the house in Kamad village this morning.

He said locals informed the police after noticing the bodies, following which a team reached the spot. "The FSL team collected samples for investigation from the location. It appears to be a case of suicide," the official added.

He said that both the deceased—a 25-year-old boy and a 17-year-old girl (names withheld)—were residents of a nearby village and had gone missing on March 18 this year.

After conducting the post-mortem, bodies were handed over to the families for the last rites. Police have started an investigation—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

LG's Iron Fist Against Drug Menace

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's announcement of a comprehensive, no-holds-barred crackdown on drug smuggling networks marks a watershed moment in Jammu and Kashmir's battle against a scourge that has stolen countless young lives and shattered innumerable families. A new Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) has been put in place that goes far beyond routine enforcement. The era of leniency is over. This is a declaration of war against

the menace. The measures announced are both sweeping and surgical. The revocation of passports, driving licenses, Aadhaar numbers, and arms licenses of drug smugglers attacks the smugglers' mobility, identity, and legitimacy. The attachment of movable and immovable property under the NDPS Act strikes at the very profit motive that drives the trade. Freezing bank accounts and launching financial investigations dismantles the economic infrastructure

of narcotics networks. The immediate issuance of Look Out Circulars for absconding criminals ensures that flight is not an escape. This is a coordinated, whole-of-government assault on every pillar of the drug ecosystem. The LG's framing of cross-border smuggling as a deliberate strategy by hostile neighbours to "poison our communities and undermine our nation's future" correctly identifies the national security dimension of the drug crisis. This is narco-terrorism. And

it requires a response that matches the gravity of the threat. The 100-day intensive campaign transforms this effort from a government directive into a people's movement. The six-phase approach—awareness, youth-focused events, community engagement, enforcement, rehabilitation, and evaluation—provides a structured, measurable framework. Involving panchayats, mohalla committees, chowkidars, lambardars, and ward surveillance committees ensures that

vigilance reaches the grassroots. The administration has drawn the line. The smuggler now knows that the full force of the law awaits. The youth now know that the government stands with them. The families shattered by addiction now have reason to hope. This is how you fight a war. This is how you save a generation. The LG has sounded the charge. Now the entire machinery of the state must march in lockstep behind him.

Sagarmala: Transforming India's Maritime Landscape

Press Information Bureau

India's maritime sector plays a central role in shaping its trade and economic activity. The country has a coastline of about 11,099 kilometres, along with nearly 14,500 kilometres of potentially navigable waterways. Coastal regions are home to major ports that connect India with global shipping routes and facilitate the movement of goods and passengers. Around 95% of the country's trade by volume and about 70% by value is handled through maritime routes.

India has 12 major ports and over 200 non-major ports. While the major ports are under the administrative control of the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways, the non-major ports are under the jurisdiction of the respective State Maritime Boards/State Government. These ports handle a wide range of cargo, including crude oil, coal, containers, fertilizers, and agricultural commodities, making ports and shipping central to the country's trade logistics.

Building on this, the Sagarmala Programme was launched in March, 2015 to promote port-led development. It aims to improve logistics efficiency, reduce transportation costs, and support trade by increasing the use of coastal shipping and inland waterways alongside existing road and rail networks. It focuses on modernizing and building ports, improving port connectivity while encouraging investment from both the public and private sectors.

Components of the Sagarmala Programme

The Sagarmala programme consists of several key components aimed at transforming India's maritime sector. The overall set of projects under the Sagarmala Programme are divided into 5 pillars and 24 categories as given below.

Port Modernization and New Port Development

This pillar focuses on upgrading existing ports and developing new ones to expand capacity and improve operational efficiency. It includes addressing infrastructure gaps and introducing modernization, mechanization, and digital systems in port operations.

Port Connectivity Enhancement

This component aims to strengthen connectivity between ports and the hinterland to facilitate faster and more cost-efficient cargo movement. It includes the development of multimodal transport networks, integrating road, rail, coastal shipping and inland waterways for seamless logistics.

Port-Led Industrialization

The programme promotes the development of industrial clusters in port-proximate areas to support manufacturing and economic activity. Proximity to ports helps reduce logistics costs and improves access to domestic and international markets.

Coastal Community Development

This pillar focuses on improving livelihoods and promoting sustainable development in coastal regions. It includes skill development programs, support for fisheries and coastal tourism, and initiatives aimed at enhancing economic opportunities for coastal communities.

Coastal Shipping and Inland Waterways Transport

This component encourages greater use of coastal shipping and inland waterways for cargo movement. These modes offer cost-effective and environmentally sustainable alternatives to road and rail transport while helping reduce congestion on existing transport networks.

Navigating Success: Achievements and Milestones

Over the past eleven years, the Sagarmala Programme has delivered measurable outcomes. The cumulative progress highlights its scale and long-term impact on maritime infrastructure development. Around 845 projects, estimated at 6.06 lakh crore, have been taken up under the programme. As of 24th March 2026, 315 projects worth 1.57 lakh crore have been completed, while 210 projects are currently under implementation,



Source- Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

and 320 projects are in the planning stage.

The following initiatives reflect sustained progress in strengthening port infrastructure, improving connectivity, and supporting economic activity across coastal regions.

Infrastructure and Capacity Creation

Significant progress has been achieved in strengthening coastal infrastructure and expanding cargo-handling capacity through targeted investments.

Fishing Harbour Development: A total of 11 fishing harbour projects, costing 1,057 crore, have been completed, directly benefiting more than 30,000 fishermen. In Karnataka, the third-stage expansion and modernization of the fishing harbour at Malpe have been completed, with the development of the fishing harbour at Kulai under implementation.

Coastal Berth Development: 7 coastal berth projects, valued at 494 crore, have been completed, adding 9.84 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) of cargo-handling capacity.

The renovation of the historic Bascule Bridge at Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata, is being undertaken to preserve the port's heritage while upgrading critical infrastructure. Once completed, the modernized bridge is expected to enable safer, faster, and more efficient movement of cargo and vehicles within the port premises, thereby enhancing logistics efficiency at one of India's oldest and busiest ports.

Operational Efficiency: Average vessel turnaround time declined significantly from 96 hours in 2014 to 49.5 hours in 2025, indicating improved port efficiency and faster cargo handling.

Global Recognition: Indian ports have strengthened their global presence, with 9 ports ranking among the world's top 100, including Visakhapatnam Port, which ranks among the top 20 ports for container traffic.

Growth in Inland Waterways: Cargo movement through inland waterways increased from 18.10 MTPA in FY 2013-14 to 145.50 MTPA in FY 2024-25, representing a growth of about 700%, contributing to a more



Source: Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways

efficient and diversified logistics system.

Passenger Connectivity and Urban Waterway Transport

The programme has also supported the expansion of passenger and vehicle movement through coastal and inland waterways, improving connectivity and reducing travel time.

Ro-Pax and Ferry Services: A total of 29 Ro-Pax (a ship that carries both vehicles and passengers) and passenger ferry projects, with an investment of 1,233 crore, have been taken up to strengthen urban waterway transport systems. Out of these, 17 projects worth 706 crore have been completed, benefiting more than 35 lakh passengers by providing faster and more efficient transport options.

Improved Travel Efficiency: The Ghoghahazira Ro-Pax service reduced travel time from nearly 10 hours by road to about 4 hours by sea, enabling the movement of over 36,000 trucks, 61,000 cars, and nearly 4 lakh passengers. The Mumbai-Mandwa ferry service has eased road congestion by replacing a 109-kilometre road journey with an 18.5-kilometre sea route, substantially reducing travel time.

Coastal Livelihoods and Skill Development

Beyond infrastructure, the programme has contributed to improving livelihoods in coastal communities through targeted skill development initiatives.

Under the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Grameen Kaushalya Yojana (DDU-GKY) convergence initiative, more than 7,600 candidates have received skill training, with over 3,100 indi-



viduals successfully placed in maritime and allied sectors.

The Sagarmala Programme has estimated a cumulative employment potential of around 1 crore jobs, including 40 lakh direct and 60 lakh indirect employment opportunities, driven by port-led industrialization and the expansion of maritime and related infrastructure.

The Institutional Backbone of Sagarmala

The Sagarmala Programme is supported by a multi-tier framework designed to enable coordinated planning, efficient implementation, and continuous monitoring across the Centre and States. The key components of this framework are as follows:

National Sagarmala Apex Committee (NSAC):

Constituted in May 2015, NSAC is the apex body providing overall policy guidance and oversight for the programme. It reviews key aspects of planning and implementation and ensures alignment of projects with the broader objectives.

Maritime States Development Council (MSDC):

The MSDC is convened periodically to facilitate centre-state coordination. It brings together central ministries, state governments, and maritime stakeholders to review progress, address inter-ministerial issues, and promote coordinated development of ports and related infrastructure.

State Sagarmala Committees (SSCs): Constituted in coastal states and union

Key Takeaways

- Sagarmala is implementing 845 projects worth ₹6.06 lakh crore, with 315 projects worth ₹1.57 lakh crore completed.
- The completion of 7 coastal berth projects has added 9.84 million tonnes per annum of cargo handling capacity.
- India's major ports handled a record 915 million tonnes of cargo in FY 2025-26.
- Sagarmala 2.0, supported with ₹85,482 crore, aims to catalyze ₹3.6 lakh crore in investment.

territories (UTs), SSCs are responsible for identifying projects, coordinating implementation, and monitoring progress at the state level. They play a key role in aligning state-level priorities with the overall objectives of the programme.

Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL):

Sagarmala Development Company Limited (SDCL), established in August 2016, has played an important role in advancing India's maritime infrastructure. In June 2025, SDCL underwent a significant transformation and was restructured as the Sagarmala Finance Corporation Limited (SMFCL). This transition reflects an expanded mandate, with SMFCL positioned as India's first Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) focused on the maritime sector. SMFCL aims to provide financial solutions tailored to the needs of the maritime sector, addressing critical financing gaps and supporting the development of ports, shipping infrastructure and related industries. The company approved loan sanctions of about 4,300 crore in December 2025, formally entering the maritime lending space, reinforcing its ambition to emerge as a dedicated and credible financier for the maritime sector.

The Next Wave of Innovation

Sagarmala 2.0

Sagarmala 2.0 is proposed as the next phase of the Sagarmala Programme launched in March 2015, building upon its achievements while adopting a broader and more integrated national vision for the maritime sector outlined in MIV (Maritime India Vision) 2030 and MAKV (Maritime Amrit Kaal Vision) 2047. The scheme aims to position India as a global maritime hub through comprehensive modernization of ports, promotion of port-led industrialization, improvement in coastal and hinterland connectivity to ports, enhancement of inland waterways & coastal shipping services, development of island and coastal communities, and fostering innovation aligned with sustainable development objectives. Sagarmala 2.0 is also envisioned as a key enabler of inclusive economic growth, employment generation, and logistics cost reduction, in alignment with the national vision of Viksit Bharat 2047. The proposed scheme envisages total budgetary support of ₹85,482 crore with total investment of ₹3.6 lakh crore, to be utilized for identified interventions across ports, inland waterways & coastal infrastructure, maritime services, coastal development, research & development and institutional strengthening during the scheme period.

Conclusion

India's maritime sector has seen significant expansion in capacity, connectivity, and operational efficiency over the past decade. The Sagarmala Programme has contributed to the modernization of ports, the development of coastal and inland waterway infrastructure, and the enhancement of cargo handling capabilities. Completed projects have added measurable capacity, reduced vessel turnaround times, and supported port-led industrial and coastal community development. Collectively, the initiatives provide a structured approach to sustaining growth and strengthening India's maritime infrastructure for trade and industrial activities.

The views expressed by contributors on this page are their own and do not necessarily reflect the policies or positions of the newspaper

Deputy CM stresses quality, timely completion of projects in Jammu

Inspects work on Bridge Project at Meeran Sahib

KT News Desk

JAMMU, APRIL 13: The Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary Monday inspected the ongoing construction work on Rs. 7.42 crore bridge project being executed on the Satwari-R S Pura road at Meeran Sahib, Jammu.

During the inspection, the Deputy Chief Minister, as per an official statement, reviewed the pace and quality of work being executed on the vital infrastructure project. He emphasised the importance of timely completion of the vital project while strictly adhering to the set quality parameters.

Highlighting the significance of the bridge, the Deputy Chief Minister said that the project holds historical importance and will play a crucial role in ensuring seamless connectivity and improved accessibility for the people of the area.



Interacting with the engineers and officials, he sought detailed information regarding

the construction methods, quality of materials being used and overall progress achieved,

so far. "We will closely monitor the project and conduct periodic

inspections to ensure that the work is carried out as per the prescribed standards," asserted the Deputy CM.

The Deputy Chief Minister also reviewed the safety features of the bridge, including provision of a footpath for the pedestrians aimed at preventing accidents and enhancing public convenience.

Chief Engineer R&B, Rajesh Kumar Agastam, SE and Executive Engineers and other senior officers accompanied the Deputy Chief Minister during the inspection.

Earlier, the Deputy Chief Minister visited Sukh Sagar Bhawan Ashram at village Sikandarpur, Bisnah in Jammu and paid obeisance at the temple.

He also interacted with the caretakers and reviewed the ongoing works, emphasising their timely completion and quality execution.

Deputy CM extends Baisakhi, Ambedkar Jayanti greetings

KT News Desk

JAMMU, APRIL 13: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, Monday extended warm greetings to the people on the auspicious occasions of Baisakhi and Ambedkar Jayanti.

The Deputy Chief Minister, as per an official statement, said that both the occasions hold immense significance for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who celebrate these festivals with great fervour and enthusiasm. He highlighted that Baisakhi marks the harvest season and symbolizes prosperity, joy and gratitude among the farming communities across the region.

He said that April 14 marks the birth

anniversary of B. R. Ambedkar, the principal architect of the Indian Constitution, whose life and ideals continue to inspire the generations towards equality, justice and social empowerment.

The Deputy Chief Minister emphasized that the celebrations of both Baisakhi and Ambedkar Jayanti reflect the rich cultural diversity and inclusive spirit of Jammu and Kashmir. He added that the region has always been a shining example of brotherhood, harmony and peaceful coexistence.

He expressed hope that these occasions would further strengthen the bonds of unity and inspire the people to work collectively for progress and prosperity of J&K.

Commissioner Secretary reviews progress on Nasha Mukht campaign in Ramban



KT News Desk

RAMBAN, APRIL 13: Commissioner Secretary, Science and Technology, Babila Rakwal, who is also the Mentor Secretary for implementation of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan in Jammu and Kashmir for Poonch, Monday visited the district to review progress on the ongoing 100 day intensive campaign against drug abuse.

During the visit, the Commissioner Secretary chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess implementation of the district action plan formulated by the District Administration under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Alyas Khan.

The meeting, as per an official statement, focused on evaluating the coordinated efforts of various stakeholder departments in achieving the objective of a drug-free society. Additional Deputy Commissioner, Varunjeet Singh Charak, delivered a detailed PowerPoint Presentation highlighting the initiatives undertaken, awareness activities conducted and the roadmap prepared by different

departments for effective implementation of the campaign. He also informed about inter-departmental coordination and grassroots-level outreach programmes being carried out across the district.

The Commissioner Secretary emphasized the need for a multi-pronged and sustained approach to curb the drug abuse and called for intensified awareness campaigns, targeting the youth and vulnerable sections. She suggested strengthening the community participation, involving educational institutions, civil society and religious leaders to ensure widespread public engagement.

Stressing the importance of collective responsibility, the Commissioner Secretary asked the officers to ensure active involvement of people from all walks of life in the campaign, making it a mass movement. She also underscored the need for regular monitoring, impactful IEC activities and measurable outcomes.

The Commissioner Secretary further reviewed preparedness for the Mega Padyatra scheduled to be led by the Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, on April 15 in Ramban.

Satish Sharma unveils General Zorawar Singh's bust

Pays tributes on legend's birth anniversary

KT News Desk

REASI, APRIL 13: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, and Transport, Satish Sharma, Monday unveiled a commemorative bust of the legendary military commander General Zorawar Singh in Reasi, marking his birth anniversary with great reverence and patriotic fervor.

The function was organized by the General Zorawar Singh Memorial Educational and Charitable Trust, drawing participation from senior officials of the district administration and the locals.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister, as per an official statement, paid glowing tributes to General Zorawar Singh, popularly known as the "Napoleon of the East," and hailed his extraordinary military acumen, courage and unmatched contribution to the nation. He emphasized that the life and legacy of such iconic figures serve as a guiding light for the future generations.

"General Zorawar Singh's valour, strategic brilliance and indomitable spirit remain a source of inspiration for all. It is our collective responsibility to preserve and promote the legacy of such heroes so that the



youth remain connected to their glorious past," the Minister said.

Highlighting the role of educational and cultural institutions, Satish Sharma appreciated the efforts of the Trust in commemorating the General's contributions and fostering awareness among the younger generation about the region's rich history and heritage.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from the students and staff of various schools, who paid floral tributes and showcased deep respect for the historic icon.

Chairman of the Trust, Devinder Singh Kaluria, along with Avtar Singh Jamwal and other members, reiterated their commitment towards promoting the values of courage, patriotism and sacrifice through

continued educational and social initiatives.

Later, the Minister visited the Sports Stadium in Reasi, where he interacted with the young football players and encouraged them to pursue sports with dedication and discipline. He reiterated the government's commitment to strengthen the sports infrastructure and provide greater opportunities for the youth to excel at national and international level.

The Minister also inspected the Mother & Child Hospital in Reasi, where he reviewed the healthcare facilities and functioning of the institution. He interacted with the doctors, staff and the patients, emphasizing the need for efficient service delivery and improved patient care.

Hajj-2026

DC Srinagar visits Hajj House Bemina, inspects arrangements for pilgrims

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, APRIL 13: Ahead of the commencement of Hajj-26, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Saturday visited Hajj House Bemina to conduct an on the site inspection of preparations and arrangements for seamless departure of Hajj-2026 pilgrims.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz, Joint Commissioner SMC, Nuzhat Khurshid, Additional CEO SCCL, Suhail ul Islam, SP West, Imtiaz Ahmad, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, SDM West, Irfan Bahadur, LDM(Banks), Nilofer Jan, Tehsildar Shalteng, Rayees Ahmad and other Officers from Health, PHE, KPDCI, Hajj Committee and SMC.

During the visit, the DC, as per an official statement, carried out a comprehensive review of facilities and basic amenities available at the Hajj House, including accommodation, sanitation, medical facilities, parking space and transportation arrangements. He also inspected the cleanliness of lodging rooms and reviewed the availability of essential



services such as water supply and uninterrupted electricity.

Emphasizing coordinated efforts, the DC directed all concerned departments to ensure the best possible arrangements focusing on their comfort, safety and convenience throughout the journey. He stressed upon maintaining proper hygiene, ensuring the availability of essential services and providing all necessary assistance so that pilgrims do not face any inconvenience.

The DC further instructed departments to work in close coordination and ensure all arrangements are finalized well in advance. He highlighted the importance of delivering efficient and meticulous services to pilgrims during their stay at the Hajj House and at the time of departure.

Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal visits Bandipora, reviews judicial infrastructure

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, APRIL 13: Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal, Judge, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Administrative Judge for District Bandipora, Monday visited the newly constructed Court Complex at Bandipora.

On his arrival at the Court Complex, he, as per an official statement, was received by Jeema Bashir, Principal District and Sessions Judge, Bandipora; Indu Kanwal Chib, Deputy Commissioner, Bandipora; Mir Wajahat, Additional District and Sessions Judge, Bandipora; Ajaz Ahmad Zargar, Senior Superintendent of Police, Bandipora; Iqbal Akhoun, Chief Judicial Magistrate, Bandipora; Amandeep Singh, Munsiff, Bandipora; Sofi Feroz, President, Bar Association Bandipora; besides other judicial officers, members of the Bar, and officers of the civil and police administration.

The Principal District and Sessions Judge, expressed gratitude to the Administrative Judge and acknowledged the presence and cooperation of all dignitaries, including officers of the civil and police administration, members of the Bar, judicial officers, media personnel, and all participants who contributed to the successful conduct of the programme.

The Deputy Commissioner,



appreciated the development of judicial infrastructure in the district and assured continued cooperation of the administration in facilitating the functioning of the courts. She also emphasized the importance of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan and sought the cooperation of the Bar and judiciary in making the campaign successful.

Addressing the gathering, Justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal emphasized the foundational role of the District Judiciary in the justice delivery system and observed that the effectiveness of the judiciary is measured by the quality and accessibility of justice at the grassroots level.

While appreciating the establishment of the new Court Complex, he observed that the facility has not yet been fully operationalized and directed that the process of shifting be completed within one week. He further emphasized that all pending requirements be addressed on priority through coordinated efforts of all stakeholders.

He also stressed the importance of strengthening judicial infrastructure, adopting technology for efficient functioning, ensuring timely disposal of cases, and maintaining fairness, sensitivity, and efficiency in the administration of justice. He also highlighted the vital role of the Bar in assisting the courts and emphasized the need for professional responsibility and cooperation.

On the occasion, justice Wasim Sadiq Nargal also interacted with judicial officers, members of the Bar, and officers of the civil and police administration and took stock of issues relating to infrastructure and functioning of courts in the district.

Sofi Feroz, President, Bar Association Bandipora, expressed gratitude to the Administrative Judge for his visit and highlighted various infrastructural requirements at the Court Complex, including availability of basic amenities, provision of facilities for litigants and lawyers, and the need for full-time functioning of courts.

Nasha Mukht Abhiyan

SSP, ADC review preparations for 100-Day anti-drug campaign in Ganderbal

KT News Desk

GANDERBAL, APRIL 13: In a significant step towards building a drug-free society, the District Administration Ganderbal Monday launched a comprehensive 100-day action plan under the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan, aiming to intensify efforts against substance abuse through coordinated and grassroots-level interventions.

The campaign, as per an official statement, was launched during a high-level meeting co-chaired by the Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Ganderbal, Sudhanshu Dhama, and Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Ganderbal, Syed Faheem Bihagi at the Mini-Secretariat Complex, aimed to intensify the fight against substance abuse through a multi-departmental and grassroots approach.

The ADC informed the meeting that the intensive campaign is scheduled to run for 100 days, effective from Monday until June 30. A program has been devised through extensive collaborative exercise between the District Administration and the Police stressing grassroots outreach covering every educational institution, Panchayat, and Urban Local Body (ULB)



within the district to ensure maximum outreach and community participation.

The heads of departments, institutions, and blocks were on the occasion directed to personally monitor and ensure the religious implementation of assigned activities. He urged officers to ensure full participation and proactive involvement in the campaign to achieve meaningful results. It was noted that while the district has conducted several awareness programmes in the past, the focused 100-day drive is expected to bring more impactful outcomes.

Addressing the meeting, the SSP said that under the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan, we have launched a three-month intensive charter for a Drugs Free Jammu and Kashmir that demands tangible, measurable outcomes rather than symbolic

efforts. This mission requires every department head to take personal responsibility for creating confidence-building measures and awareness, ensuring families feel supported in seeking help for substance abuse, he remarked.

He said, while the police will aggressively target peddlers, the collective focus must remain on the sustained rehabilitation and reintegration of victims to prevent relapse. "We must act with urgency and creativity to ensure that, after 90 days, we can demonstrate a substantial and sustainable impact on the lives of those in our district."

The District Administration reaffirmed its commitment to making Ganderbal a model district under the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan through sustained efforts, community engagement, and strict monitoring of implementation.

District Informatics Officer, National Informatics Centre; Additional Superintendent of Police Ganderbal, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Education Officer, Divisional Forest Officer and other officers and officials attended the meeting.

Meanwhile, the launch was marked by a series of events Monday, including press briefing by the Senior Superintendent of Police Ganderbal and Additional Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal. During the press conference, the SSP and ADC outlined the roadmap and daily schedule of activities planned during the three-month long campaign period and sought the Media's cooperation in amplifying the message and mobilizing community support.

This was followed by a pledge ceremony, wherein the ADC administered the Nasha Mukht Pledge to the participants

Later, a joint Nasha Mukht rally led by SSP Ganderbal and ADC Ganderbal featuring district administration officers and officials and police staff was flagged-off from the DC Office towards the Clock Tower to sensitize the public about the harmful effects of substance abuse.

You can become a lawyer: Justice Sharma tells Arvind Kejriwal

PTI
New Delhi, Apr 13: As former chief minister Arvind Kejriwal pleaded his case before Delhi High Court's Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma on Monday for her refusal from hearing the liquor policy matter, the judge told the AAP leader that he had "argued well" and he can become a lawyer.

Kejriwal, however, responded that he was happy with his present calling.

"You argued well. Aap vakeel ban sakte hai," Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma told the AAP chief after he concluded his hour-long submissions on his application seeking recusal of the judge from hearing the CBI's petition against the trial court order discharging him and other accused in the liquor policy case.

Even as the former IRS officer responded that he was happy with his present calling, senior lawyer Sanjay Hegde, who was appearing for AAP leader Manish Sisodia, requested him "not to add to the competition".

The hearing on Monday started at 2.30 PM and lasted till around 7 PM. The court reserved its verdict on the issue of recusal after hearing all parties.

Kejriwal raised several objections against the judge hearing the CBI plea, including that she had earlier denied him relief on his petition challenging his arrest, refused to grant relief on bail pleas of other accused, including Manish Sisodia and K Kavitha, and also made "strong and conclusive" findings.

"I was almost declared guilty. I was almost declared corrupt. Kewal saza sunani baaki reh gayi thi (Only the sentence was left to be pronounced)," he said.

This is not the first instance of the AAP leader himself making submissions in a court proceeding.

On March 28, 2024, when the trial court extended his custody with the Enforcement Directorate in the related case, Kejriwal directly addressed the trial judge, questioning whether there was enough material to arrest a sitting chief minister. He was permitted by the trial judge to make verbal submissions despite being represented by a senior counsel.

The trial court, on February 27, discharged Kejriwal, Sisodia and 21 others and pulled up the CBI, saying its case was wholly unable to survive judicial scrutiny and stood discredited in its entirety.

On March 9, Justice Sharma issued notices to all 23 accused on the CBI's plea against their discharge, saying certain observations and findings of the trial court at the stage of framing of charges prima facie appeared erroneous and needed consideration.

She also stayed the trial court's recommendation on the initiation of departmental action against the CBI's investigating officer in the liquor policy case.

Justice Oswal calls for strengthening judicial infra for efficient justice delivery

Inaugurates newly developed facilities at District Court Complex Kathua

KT News Desk

Kathua, Apr 13: Justice of the High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Administrative Judge for Kathua district Justice Rajnish Oswal on Monday visited the District Court Complex Kathua and dedicated newly constructed facilities including 36 Lawyer chambers, a hall and a canteen to the legal fraternity.

In his inaugural address, Justice Rajnish Oswal congratulated all stakeholders and observed that the newly created advocate chambers would go a long way in facilitating the legal fraternity and enhancing access to justice for the common man. He lauded the efforts of Principal District & Sessions Judge Jatinder Singh Jamwal and appreciated the Bar for the smooth and hassle-free distribution of chambers.

Responding to the issues projected by the Bar Association, Justice Oswal assured that the demand for lift facilities would be examined. He informed that fire audit processes for court complexes have already been initiated. Regarding mobile connectivity issues arising due to security restrictions near the District Jail, he assured that the matter would be looked into without compromising



security considerations and suggested exploring local Wi-Fi systems as a possible solution.

He further informed that the court complex at Basohli is nearing completion and will be dedicated shortly.

Earlier, Principal District & Sessions Judge Jatinder Singh Jamwal, in his welcome address, termed the present period as a "golden phase" for the judiciary in Kathua, highlighting significant infrastructural reforms.

He informed that new court complex buildings have been established at Kathua and Hiranagar, while similar infrastructure is in the pipeline for Basohli and Billawar in the coming times.

President, District Bar Association Advocate Y.C. Katoch appreciated the sustained efforts of Justice Rajnish Oswal, the present Administrative Judge for Kathua and Justice Sanjeev Kumar, former Administrative Judge

for Kathua, for prioritizing infrastructural augmentation and strengthening of the judicial delivery system. He reiterated the Bar Association's continued support for such welfare measures. He also projected demands including installation of lift facilities, strengthening of fire-fighting systems and addressing mobile connectivity issues in the court complex owing to restrictions near the District Jail.

Advocate Nidhi Suman also expressed gratitude to the higher judiciary, particularly the Administrative Judge and the District & Sessions Judge, for the initiatives that have provided much-needed relief to the advocates, who had been facing difficulties in the absence of adequate chamber facilities.

Chief Judicial Magistrate Kathua, Ajay Kumar presented the vote of thanks.

Among others present were Additional District & Sessions Judge Kathua, Parveen Pandoh; Deputy Commissioner Kathua Rajesh Sharma, SSP Kathua Mohita Sharma, Sub Judge/Secretary DLSA Kathua, Urvashi Raina Bhargav; Judicial Magistrate Ist Class, Viren Magotra; District Mobile Magistrate Kathua, Poonam Gupta, besides a large number of members of the Bar.

Sopore: Girl student alleges harassment, police book senior lecturer

Accused suspended, DSEK orders probe, seeks report within 15 days

Waris Fayaz

Sopore, Apr 13: Police on Monday registered a case against a senior lecturer posted in North Kashmir's Sopore town after a girl student accused him of harassment, triggering protests in the area.

Senior Superintendent of Police Sopore, Iftkhar Talib, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said the accused teacher stands booked and investigation is underway.

Meanwhile, Directorate of School Education Kashmir suspended the lecturer with immediate effect. An inquiry was ordered into his conduct.

Officials said Joint Director North was appointed as inquiry officer with a direction that he would submit a report within 15 days.

Soon after the allegations surfaced, students staged protests in Sopore, demanding strict action against the lecturer. (KNO)

She is gone, the music lives on: Sorrow and song as Asha Bhosle cremated with state honours

PTI

Mumbai, Apr 13: "Abhi Na Jaao Chhodkar..." The strains of that wistful song played in the background at the Shivaji Park crematorium on Monday as hundreds of people gathered inside -- and outside -- to bid music legend Asha Bhosle a final sayonara.

A gun salute rang out as the last rites of Bhosle, perhaps the last of the singing greats who ruled the soundwaves for decades and still do, were held in accordance with Hindu rituals and with full state honours. Her son Anand performed the rituals.

Bhosle, one half of the legendary Mangeshkar sisters, passed away on Sunday due to multi-organ failure. She was 92 as was her Lata didi when she died in February 2022.

Priests recited mantras around the funeral pyre, decorated with vibrant yellow and orange marigolds.

Granddaughter Zanai was inconsolable. Sister Usha Mangeshkar, also a singer, and brother Hridaynath Mangeshkar, a music composer, were there too.

Among those gathered



to pay their last respects to India's singer nonpareil were Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, Deputy Chief Ministers Eknath Shinde and Sunetra Pawar, director Ramesh Sippy and actors Aamir Khan and Vicky Kaushal.

It was a moment of sorrow and song too.

Before the pyre was lit, singers Shaan, Sudesh Bhosle and Anup Jalota paid a musical tribute to the enduring legend who sang some 12,000 songs in an incredible eight-decade career that started when she was just 10.

While Sudesh Bhosle crooned "Zindagi Ek Safar Hai Suhana", Shaan sang "Pyaar Ke Mod Pe".

And they were not the only ones.

Many fans, their hands folded in prayer, were heard singing the many numbers that made Bhosle the star that she was for music lovers of all ages and through many generations.

Snatches of "Aaiye Meherbaan", the languid song of love filmed on Madhubala, and "Chura Liya Hai Tumhe Jo Dil Pe", romance of another hue pictured on Zeenat Aman many decades later, and many others, could be heard. Some softly crooned, others louder.

"I've been a huge fan of Asha Tai. She has had songs for every mood and occasion. Our Tai, and her songs, will live forever in our hearts," said one ardent fan.

The irrepressible, exuberance of the versatile Bhosle,

who was compelling whether she was singing classical or cabaret, was inspirational, said another.

"Not just her songs, but her being so energetic at this age inspired me. It's all because of her that I'm quite active even now," added another who came with her daughter.

The fanspeak melded with the instrumental versions of many of Bhosle's songs, right from "Inhi Logon Ne" to "In Aankhon Ki Masti" that played out.

It was a day to remember for Mumbai.

People lined the streets, gathered on rooftops and windows, and hundreds walked along the cortege as it made its slow way from Bhosle's home Lower Parel to Shivaji Park to accompany the city's very own Asha Tai on her last journey.

Chants of "Asha Tai amar rahe" went up in the crowds gathered for a last glimpse of the singing star who ruled playlists -- and hearts -- for eight decades.

A giant photograph of Bhosle, radiant in a red sari with her trademark bindi and an ornate nose ring, was placed on the flower-decked bier as the procession made its

way through the streets.

Earlier in the day, Bhosle's body, in a glass casket and draped in the tricolour, was kept at her home for mourners to pay their last respects.

Her songs across the decades -- "Aao Huzoor Tumko", "Aaiye Meherban", "Jhumka Gira Re", "Dil Cheez Kya Hai", "O Saathi Re" and "Yai Re Yai Re" -- played softly in the background.

A reminder as it were that the singer may be gone but her songs will live on forever.

Veteran actors Asha Parekh and Helen, Ranveer Singh, Tabu, composer AR Rahman, cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar and political leaders Uddhav Thackeray, Praful Patel and Supriya Sule were among those who gathered at her residence.

"Asha ji will always be with us. Her voice, her words, her thoughts towards life will always inspire us and there was no one like her, nor will there ever be. She was the one unique, strong-willed person who lived her life on her own terms.

"And whatever tragedies happened with her, there's no one like her who faced them with a smile, always maintaining a positive mindset, and did

her work with full professionalism," Shaan told PTI.

Bhosle, who is survived by her son Anand, lost two of her children. Daughter Varsha died in 2012 and son Hemant just three years later in 2015.

Lalit Pandit, who along with his brother Jatin composed the music for Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol's 1995 film "Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge", which featured Bhosle's popular songs "Zara Sa Jhoom Loon Main" and "Ajnabi Mujhko Itna Bata", described the star as the last of her kind.

"She has left behind so much work in her legacy that generations can learn from it. It is true that she was the last legend and is no longer with us but she will always remain in our hearts," he added.

Sudesh Bhosale recalled his childhood memories.

"She would take me to her shows and more than a singer, she loved me like her child... And despite so many personal sorrows, she always remained positive and never gave up in life. I feel that her songs will keep inspiring the upcoming artists for thousands of years to come. May her soul rest in peace."

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

LG Sinha sets 30-day

abuse cases and informing senior officials about the activities in their areas.

LG Sinha said, "People say, this isn't my problem. This mindset must go. We must remember that true prosperity stems not just from wealth, but vigilant and collective resolve."

He said, "The Government and society must unite for surveillance, rally anti-drug support, and cultivate drug-free villages and towns. We have empowered our police and agencies with full authority to dismantle drug syndicates."

The Lieutenant Governor said, "A youth who grasps life's purpose becomes our strongest weapon against drugs."

He entrusted upon the NGOs and activists to drive grassroots efforts and feedback.

DRUG-FREE JAMMU KASHMIR WILL EMERGE FROM COLLECTIVE ACTION

He said, "A drug-free Jammu Kashmir will emerge not from one person, but from collective action. Society must realize that drugs don't just kill individuals—they erode entire villages, wards and cities' honor and destiny."

"Let's build a J&K where our youth's energy illuminates the world, not destroys itself. Let us confront this challenge with unyielding resolve," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor called upon every citizen, every Kathua family, to rise and unite against drug abuse. "I ignite a people's revolution to eradicate drugs from every panchayat, every alley, every family in Kathua district. This is no dream, it's my unbreakable pledge," he said.

WE HAVE CRAFTED WELL-PLANNED 100-DAY ROADMAP

The Lieutenant Governor said that our future won't be scripted in documents but forged through decisions of this people's movement in the next three months.

"We have crafted a well-planned 100-day roadmap- six phased steps fueling systematic resolve. Month one ignites awareness and mobilization; month two deepens community/family penetration; month three cements sustainability," he said, adding, "Next three months won't just run a campaign but they will

sow seeds for lasting change in J&K. The campaign's cornerstone is compassionate rehabilitation. We must shift our mindset: addicts are patients and they need our help and support."

The Lieutenant Governor stressed the need for a more effective, accessible, humane rehabilitation centers where lives are reclaimed. "We will crack down hard on traffickers and criminals, but those trapped need empathy and mercy. If a youth strays, we help him recover," he said.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor administered an 'Anti-Drug Pledge' and launched the Nasha Mukta Jammu Kashmir Anthem. The event also featured powerful awareness video by DIPR and programs, where renowned artists and students used Nukkad Natak, cultural performances, songs, and poetry to mobilize the public against the menace of narcotics. (KNO)

Modi-led govt

ended after Pakistan Director General of Military Operations (DGMO) approached his Indian counterpart and requested for a ceasefire.

HM Shah also accused the Trinamool Congress of sheltering illegal infiltrators, saying they had been protected for long and that the BJP, after coming to power, would identify and deport them, adding that freeing the country of illegal infiltrators is the party's mission. (KNO)

J&K Govt committed

and promoting clean and renewable energy initiatives.

The Committee and the Chief Minister also discussed various challenges faced by the sector. The Chief Minister assured full cooperation and support from the Jammu and Kashmir Government in facilitating the Committee's work and implementing recommendations that would contribute to strengthening the energy sector.

It is pertinent to mention that the study group is part of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Energy, tasked with examining subjects related to the Ministry of Power and

allied sectors. MLA Gulmarg Pirzada Farooq Ahmed Shah was also present on the occasion.

LG, CM extend

devotion and selfless service to humanity. May this festival bring prosperity and joy to all in the year ahead."

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, in his message, said that Baisakhi marks the harvest season and symbolizes prosperity, hope and new beginnings. He noted that the festival reflects the rich cultural diversity and communal harmony of Jammu and Kashmir, where people of different faiths celebrate each other's traditions with mutual respect and enthusiasm.

Omar said such occasions strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and reinforce the values of unity and inclusiveness in society. He expressed hope that the festival would bring peace, happiness and prosperity to every household and prayed for the well-being of the farming community, whose hard work sustains the region's economy.

GOC 16 Corps

counter-infiltration posture. The Knight Stands Vigilant... We Serve, We Protect!" the post read.

Pertinently, the Army guards the 740-km-long Line of Control in Jammu, Poonch, and Rajouri districts in Jammu division, and Baramulla, Kupwara, and Bandipora districts in Kashmir division.

The Army is deployed to prevent infiltration, exfiltration, smuggling and drone activities initiated from across the LoC by terror outfits with the assistance of Pakistan.

An official said, "These drones are used to drop payloads of arms, ammunition, cash and drugs on the Indian side. Overground workers of terrorist groups pick up these payloads and pass them on to the terrorists to sustain terrorism in J&K."

"The duties of preventing infiltration, exfiltration, smuggling, and drone activities are carried out by the Border Security Force along the 240-km-long international border in J&K," he added.

The international border is situated in Samba and Kathua districts, and partly in the Jammu district. (KNO)

Weather to remain

till April 16 in view of the dry conditions. (KNO)

Bijbehara siblings

Jablipora Bijbehara.

Locals said that one of the brothers, Majid, was scheduled to get married in May. The area is in deep mourning, and both were laid to rest in a local graveyard. (KNO)

Dir Info felicitates

collective efforts to eradicate this menace. The Director further reiterated the Administration's commitment to strengthening public outreach initiatives under the Nasha Mukta Abhiyaan. She encouraged the participants and young minds to continue participating in awareness-driven activities that contribute positively to society.

The Director presented certificates and mementos to the winners for their creative efforts and meaningful contributions towards spreading awareness against drug abuse.

Pertinently, the competition witnessed more than 3600 entries across Jammu and Kashmir. Sneha Devi from Dewan Devi Public School won in Slogan Writing while as Priya Rathore from Udhampur achieved first rank in poster making competition.

Information Officers Maheer Thakur and Alka Mishra were also present during the felicitation ceremony.

Unemployment, academic

social comparison, and uncertainty about the future. These factors collectively create a state of persistent anxiety," he said. "In Kashmir, additional socio-political stressors further aggravate the situation."

Health experts warn that if left unaddressed, stress can evolve into severe health conditions. "Chronic stress weakens the immune system and increases the risk of heart disease, diabetes, and mental health disorders such as anxiety

and depression," Dr Reshie said. "We are also seeing behavioural changes like irritability, social withdrawal, and substance misuse."

Doctors said that stress not only affects individuals but also disrupts family life, work productivity, and overall societal well-being.

Experts said that while stress cannot be completely eliminated, it can be effectively managed through simple lifestyle changes.

"Regular physical activity, balanced diet, and adequate sleep are the first steps toward stress management," Dr Khan said. "Practices like meditation, deep breathing, and mindfulness can significantly reduce stress levels."

Dr Reshie stressed the importance of social support and open communication. "People should not hesitate to talk about their problems. Seeking help is not a sign of weakness but a step toward recovery," he said.

Doctors have called for greater awareness around mental health, urging institutions and communities to promote stress management programs.

"There is still stigma associated with mental health issues. Early intervention and counselling can prevent stress from turning into serious disorders," Dr Reshie added. (KNO)

Hajj flights from

issues have been screened out.

"Self-cooking facilities have been discontinued this year, and pilgrims will instead be provided food arrangements," he said, adding that each pilgrim will be issued a smartwatch with a SIM-enabled tracking system for monitoring and coordination purposes.

Due to ongoing repair work at Srinagar airport, flights will operate with reduced passenger capacity, leading to refuelling halts in Delhi before proceeding to Madinah, the officer said.

He said the luggage allowance has also been reduced from 40 kg to 25 kg.

Ahmed said accommodation facilities have been arranged at the Hajj House for pilgrims arriving from distant areas, including Jammu and Ladakh, allowing them to stay ahead of their scheduled departures. (KNO)

Women's Reservation Act will realise visions of past, fulfil resolutions of future: PM Modi

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 13: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said Parliament is close to creating "new history" when the Women's Reservation Act will be amended this week for its implementation in 2029.

The enactment of the law will realise the visions of the past and fulfil the resolutions of the future, he said at the 'Nari Shakti Vandan Sammelan' here ahead of a three-day sitting of Parliament, where the amendments to the women's quota law are expected to be brought for consideration and passage. "Our country's Parliament is close to creating a new history. A new history that will realise the visions of the past; that will fulfil the resolutions of the future. A resolve for an India that is egalitarian, where social justice is not merely a slogan, but a natural part of our work culture, our decision-making process," he said at the conference.

He also said that when the law was introduced in 2023, it was



passed unanimously by all parties and there was a collective demand, particularly from the opposition, for its implementation by 2029.

The Prime Minister said from the state assemblies to the country's Parliament, the time to end decades of waiting is April 16, 17 and 18 — when the extended Budget session has been scheduled for the consideration and passage of the amendments.

"In 2023, in the new Parliament, we took the first step in the form

of the Nari Shakti Vandan Act... Amidst these crucial milestones in our nation's development journey, India stands on the brink of making one of the most significant decisions of the 21st century.

"I say with great responsibility that this decision will be among the most important of our time. It is a decision dedicated to the empowerment of women, a true tribute to the strength and reverence of womanhood," he said.

In September 2023, Parliament passed the 'Nari Shakti Vandan

Adhiniyam', commonly known as the Women's Reservation Act, marking a significant step towards enhancing women's representation in legislative bodies.

The Act provided for the reservation of one-third of seats for women in the Lok Sabha and state legislative Assemblies.

The amendments to the Women's Reservation Act, when passed, will ensure an increase in the number of Lok Sabha seats to 816, of which 273 will be reserved for women. The provision to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies was brought by amending the Constitution in 2023.

Under the current law, the reservation for women would not have become enforceable before 2034, as it was tied to the completion of the delimitation exercise post 2027 Census.

To implement it from the 2029 Lok Sabha elections, changes were needed in the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam; hence, the government is holding special sitting to pass the amendments to the law.

Bengal will reply to bombs with votes, form double-engine govt: Shah

PTI

Birbhum/Raniganj, Apr 13: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said the people of West Bengal will reply to bombs and bullets with votes, and pledged the BJP would "hang the syndicate and cut money promoters upside down to make them straight" once the voters "bid adieu to the TMC government".

Addressing poll rallies in Mayureshwar and Khayrasole areas of Birbhum district and in Paschim Bardhaman's Raniganj, he said the writing on the wall is that the BJP will form a government in Bengal as the people of the state have decided to bid "Ta Ta Bye Bye" to TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee.

"Let the people bid adieu to the Mamata government. The BJP will then take up the task of hanging the syndicate and cut-money promoters upside down to make them straight," Shah said.

Alleging that TMC-sheltered criminals have tortured BJP workers in Bengal for a long time, the home minister said that after May 5, a day after counting of votes, saffron party workers will drag their torturers out of the netherworld and bring them to justice.

"I advise TMC goons to stay in their homes on April 23 (the first phase of polling), else we will pick them up one by one on May 4 and throw them in jail." Birbhum will go to the polls in the first phase on April 23. The second phase of polling is on April 29, and the counting of votes will be held on May 4.

Referring to his party's poll manifesto, Shah said, "Once in power, the BJP will build five industrial estates in Bengal to facilitate investment flow into the state."

Accusing Banerjee of trying to "terrorise" the state's majority community, Shah said this assembly election is to drive out infiltrators from Bengal and also from the rest of the country. "Didi, we have been living here for centuries. Who are you to intimidate us?" Shah asked, alleging that riots



took place in Murshidabad, attacks were perpetrated on Ram Navami processions, and Saraswati Puja was not allowed at some places under Mamata Banerjee's rule.

Alleging that the Congress and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee supported keeping Ram Lalla inside a tent for 550 years, the former BJP chief pointed out that "PM Modi built Ram temple in Ayodhya".

"Humayun Kabir is Mamata Banerjee's stooge. He wants to build Babri Masjid in Bengal, but the BJP will never allow it," Shah said.

The Union home minister targeted the Mamata Banerjee government over the issue of illegal immigration, asking, "Can the chief minister or her nephew (Abhishek Banerjee) throw infiltrators out? They do not even allot land for border fencing."

"Mamata Banerjee is not giving land for border fencing, but blaming the BSF for infiltration in Bengal," Shah told a rally in Paschim Bardhaman's Raniganj.

The BJP will finish the task of land allotment for fencing India's borders with Bangladesh within 45 days of assuming power in West Bengal, Shah said. "And not just from Bengal, we will pick infiltrators one by one from the whole country and throw them out."

"The Manmohan Singh government, supported by Mamata Banerjee's TMC, never took firm action against Pakistani terrorism. Instead, they treated the terrorists with briyani," he said.

On the other hand, Prime Minister Narendra Modi directed the conduct of Operation Sindoor after the Pahalgam attack and hit Pakistan where it hurt them the most, the Union home minister said.

"The Modi government

crushed Naxalism in the country, and now it is time for infiltrators to be thrown out."

Shah reiterated his party's resolve to implement a Uniform Civil Code in the state. "Once enforced, the UCC will put an end to the practice of certain members getting married four times," the home minister said.

He lashed out at the TMC for allegedly indulging in scams and claimed the party embezzled money to the tune of Rs 5,000 crore.

"They were responsible for the cash-for-query scam in Parliament, for taking away the jobs of 26,000 school teachers, for SSC and civic body recruitment irregularities, cattle smuggling, ration distribution scam, as well as stealing MNREGA and PM Awas money. We will make the scammers return every penny to the people after we come to power," the former BJP chief said.

Shah took on the chief minister for her alleged comments on women in public spaces post-sundown. "Shame on Mamata Banerjee for saying that women should stay at home after 7 pm. We will ensure an environment where young girls can ride their scooters at 1 am," Shah said.

He promised that there would be no repeat of Sandeshkhali, R G Kar, South Calcutta Law College and Durgapur Law College-like incidents under BJP rule in the state.

Referring to the BJP's poll manifesto, the home minister pledged the enforcement of the 7th pay commission recommendations for government employees within 45 days, Rs 3,000 per month to women and unemployed youth, Rs 21,000 to pregnant women, and Rs 2,000 to specially-abled people.

Stock markets plunge nearly 1 pc as US-Iran talks collapse, fuelling West Asia conflict fears



PTI

Mumbai, Apr 13: Benchmark stock indices Sensex and Nifty closed nearly 1 per cent lower on Monday as the failure of US-Iran negotiations heightened concerns of a prolonged conflict driving crude oil prices sharply higher.

The 30-share BSE Sensex tumbled 702.68 points or 0.91 per cent to settle at 76,847.57. During the day, it dived 1,681.93 points or 2.16 per cent to 75,868.32.

The 50-share NSE Nifty plunged 207.95 points or 0.86 per cent to end at 23,842.65.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Maruti, InterGlobe Aviation, Bajaj Finance, Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services and HDFC Bank were the biggest laggards.

ICICI Bank, NTPC and Axis Bank were the winners.

The US and Iran failed to reach a peace deal at their historic 21-hour talks in Pakistan, leaving the fate of a tenuous two-week ceasefire in doubt, with both sides attempting to hold each other responsible for the collapse of the negotiations.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, jumped 7.73 per cent to USD 102.6 per barrel.

In Asian markets, South Korea's benchmark Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index ended lower, while Shanghai's SSE Composite index settled marginally higher.

European markets were trading lower.

"Markets continue to derive limited support from last week's ceasefire framework, which remains intact for now and is encouraging selective buying interest along with a buy-on-dips approach. This comes despite an initial negative reaction to the breakdown of US-Iran peace talks and the announcement of a US naval blockade in the Strait of Hormuz, which pushed crude prices above USD 100/bbl," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Investments Limited, said.

Elevated oil prices are raising concerns around inflation, currency stability, and broader macro balances, thereby weighing on overall sentiment, Nair added.

US markets ended on a mixed note on Friday.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) turned buyers on Friday as they bought stocks worth Rs 672.09 crore, according to exchange data. On Friday, the Sensex jumped 918.60 points or 1.20 per cent to settle at 77,550.25. The Nifty climbed 275.50 points or 1.16 per cent to end at 24,050.60.

SC notice to Centre, EC on plea to implement finger, iris biometric system at polling stations

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 13: The Supreme Court on Monday sought responses from the Centre, Election Commission and others on a plea seeking to implement finger and iris biometric identification system at polling stations to prevent duplicate voting.

While agreeing to hear the plea, a bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi made clear that the prayer sought in the petition can't be considered for the current state Assembly elections in some states.

"However, whether such a recourse deserves to be followed before the next parliamentary election and/or state assembly elections needs to be examined. Issue notice," the bench said.

The top court issued notice to the Centre, the poll panel and several other states seeking their responses on the plea filed by advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay.

Upadhyay, who appeared in person, told the bench that the prayer sought in the plea would prevent bribery and proxy voting.



The bench observed that it would require major changes in the rules and would incur huge financial burden. The plea said the poll panel, by using its plenary power under Article 324, may implement finger and iris based biometric authentication to strengthen voter identification and eliminate bribery, undue influence, personation, duplicate and ghost voting.

During the hearing, Upadhyay said he was not on the ongoing state Assembly in five states.

The plea said that adoption of finger and iris biometric verification

at the polling booths in elections would ensure that only genuine and duly registered electors are permitted to cast their votes.

"The injury to citizens is extremely large as bribery, undue influence, personation, duplicate voting and ghost voting still affects the purity and integrity of the electoral process," it submitted.

"Therefore, to uphold the constitutional mandate of free and fair elections, the Election Commission of India may consider implementing finger and iris biometric authentication at polling booths in impending assembly elections," the plea said.

It claimed that at present, voter identification is based on voter ID cards and manual verification, which are susceptible to misuse due to outdated photographs, clerical errors, and a lack of real-time validation. "This creates scope for impersonation and multiple voting by the same individual or by unauthorised persons. Finger and iris biometric authentication, being unique to each individual, would eliminate duplication/ghost voting and ensure strict compliance of 'One Citizen, One Vote'," it said.

Maha Governor, senior leaders pay tribute to Asha Bhosle



PTI

Mumbai, Apr 13: Maharashtra Governor Jishnu Dev Varma and former chief ministers Sushilkumar Shinde and Uddhav Thackeray paid tribute to the mortal remains of singing legend Asha Bhosle at her residence here on Monday.

The 92-year-old singer, who mesmerised generations with her unforgettable melodies across seven decades, passed away on Sunday due to multi-organ failure at Breach Candy Hospital in Mumbai.

Governor Varma laid a wreath at Bhosle's mortal remains, which were draped in the national flag and placed in the lobby of her Casa Grand residence in Lower Parel.

Her timeless songs played softly in the background, adding to the solemn atmosphere as he conveyed condolences to

the grieving family. Former CMs Shinde and Thackeray were seen consoling Bhosle's family members, including her son Anand and granddaughter Zana.

Thackeray's wife Rashmi, her eyes moist with sorrow, extended her condolences to Bhosle's family members.

Maharashtra ministers Ashish Shelar and Mangal Prabhat Lodha, NCP (SP) MP Supriya Sule and NCP leader Praful Patel also paid respects to the late singer. Affectionately known as Ashatai, the legendary singer was a recipient of the Padma Vibhushan and Maharashtra Bhushan awards.

Renowned for her versatility, she gifted the world countless classics, including "Abhi Na Jao Chhod Kar," "In Ankhon Ki Masti," "Dil Cheez Kya Hai," "Piya Tu Ab to Aaja," "Duniya Mein Logon Ko," and "Zaara Se Jhoom Loon Main."

SC seeks responses from Centre, others on plea concerning MSP

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 13: The Supreme Court on Monday sought responses from the Centre and others on a plea to accord weightage to states' proposal on the exact cost of cultivation while fixing minimum support price (MSP).

A bench of Chief Justice Surya Kant and Justice Joymalya Bagchi agreed to hear the plea and issued notices to the Centre, Directorate General of Foreign Trade and the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices, seeking their response on the plea.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the petitioners, said the plea raises a very important issue related to the farmers in the country.

"Indian farmers are facing a terrible financial crisis because of being unable to sell their produce even at their actual cost of production. This has led to large scale suicides of farmers with over seventeen thousand farmers having committed suicide in Maharashtra alone in the last 5 years," the plea said.

During the arguments, Bhushan said the MSP was often fixed below the actual cost of cultivation.

The bench observed that a lot of mathematical formulas



were being cited in the petition and difficulty may arise in case of cost of land and capital which may vary from state to state.

Bhushan said the calculations were made by the government itself.

"You are asking us to re-write the economic policy," the bench observed. It said probably, there can't be a uniform policy for all as there are farmers with big chunk of land also.

The bench, however, agreed to hear the plea and issued notice on it.

It said the government and its institutions calculate the cost of production of different agricultural products state by state.

"The MS Swaminathan Commission Report in 2006 had

recommended that the farmers should be paid their cost + 50 percent profit to make farming viable in the country," the plea said, adding that this recommendation has never been questioned by the government.

It said the MSP being fixed by the government year by year and crop by crop was considerably less than the weighted average cost of production.

"For some crops, especially wheat and rice, the government is virtually the monopoly purchaser since it is distributing these agricultural produce under the Food Security Act at highly subsidised prices, virtually free of cost, to the people," it said.

It also said the provision of free wheat and rice under the

Food Security Act to roughly two-third of the population has also resulted in artificially depressing the demand for other competing food crops, particularly millets, which are not being purchased by people because of the availability of virtually free rations of wheat and rice.

"Adding to this already acute distress is the newly concluded trade deal between India and the US by which most agricultural products are allowed to be imported into India from the US virtually free of any import duty," the plea said.

It has sought direction to the authorities to ensure complete procurement of notified crops under the MSP calculated on the basis of the exact cost of cultivation.

The plea has also requested for direction to establish effective, accessible and functional procurement centres at every tehsil, block, village, and district across the country, and to put in place a transparent and uniform procurement mechanism ensuring assured procurement of all crops notified under the MSP regime, without confining effective procurement only to select crops or regions.

Trump says he doesn't care if Iran returns to negotiations

REUTERS/AFP

Washington, Apr 13: US President Donald Trump said he does not care if Iran comes back to negotiations with the United States after weekend talks in Pakistan failed to produce a deal.

"I don't care if they come back or not. If they don't come back, I'm fine," Trump told reporters at Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, upon his return from Florida.

Oil tankers are steering clear of the Strait of Hormuz ahead of a US blockade later on Monday following failed peace talks between the US and Iran over the weekend, shipping data showed.

President Donald Trump said on Sunday the US Navy would start blockading the Strait of Hormuz, raising the stakes after marathon talks with Iran failed to reach a deal to end the war, jeopardizing a fragile two-week ceasefire.

US Central Command said US forces would begin implementing the blockade of all maritime traffic entering and exiting Iranian ports at 10 a.m. ET (1400 GMT) on Monday.

It would be "enforced impartially against vessels of all nations entering or departing Iranian ports and coastal areas, including all Iranian ports on the Arabian Gulf and Gulf of Oman," it said in a statement on X.

US forces would not



impede freedom of navigation for vessels transiting the Strait of Hormuz to and from non-Iranian ports, and additional information would be provided to commercial mariners through a formal notice prior to the start of the blockade, it said.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards said on Sunday that any military vessels attempting to approach the Strait of Hormuz would be considered a violation of the ceasefire and be dealt with harshly and decisively.

Pakistan-flagged tankers Shalamar and Khairpur entered the Gulf on Sunday, data from LSEG and Kpler showed. The Aframax tanker Shalamar is heading to the United Arab Emirates on Monday to load Das crude while the Panamax-sized Khairpur is heading to Kuwait to load refined products, the data showed.

Pakistan National Shipping, which manages Shalamar, did not immediately respond to a request for comment outside

of office hours.

Liberia-flagged very large crude carrier (VLCC) Mombasa B, which also transited the strait earlier on Sunday, is ballasting in the Gulf, the data showed.

Malta-flagged VLCC Agios Fanourios I, which tried to pass through the strait on Sunday to enter the Gulf to load Iraqi Basra crude for Vietnam, has since turned back and is now anchored near the Gulf of Oman, the data showed. The tanker plans to head to Iraq.

Eastern Mediterranean Maritime, which manages the Agios Fanourios I, and CMB, TECH NV, the manager for the Mombasa B, did not respond to requests for comment outside office hours.

Despite the stalemate, three supertankers fully laden with oil passed through the Strait of Hormuz on Saturday, shipping data showed. They appeared to be the first vessels to exit the Gulf since the ceasefire deal was struck last week.

Russian FM to visit China for talks on Iran-US conflict, Hormuz



During Lavrov's visit, the foreign ministers of the two countries will exchange views and coordinate positions on the development of bilateral relations, cooperation in various fields, as well as international and regional issues of common concern, Guo said.

PTI

Beijing, Apr 13: Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov will arrive in Beijing on Tuesday for talks with the Chinese leadership on the escalation of the West Asia conflict and the American blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, amid a deepening global energy crisis.

Lavrov will visit Beijing at the invitation of Foreign Minister Wang Yi, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Guo Jiakun said at a media briefing here.

His two-day visit comes in the immediate backdrop of US President Donald Trump's announcement of the blockade of the Strait of Hormuz in a bid to cripple Iran's oil supplies to China and other countries.

China and Russia have a "no limits partnership" as described by their leaders - Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin - and have maintained strong political alignment on global and regional issues.

They have also maintained strategic and military ties with Iran.

China has been importing substantial amounts of Iranian oil over the years,

disregarding US sanctions, and Trump's move to impose a blockade of the Strait of Hormuz is expected to impact Beijing in the long run.

China is also a major importer of Russian oil and gas.

During Lavrov's visit, the foreign ministers of the two countries will exchange views and coordinate positions on the development of bilateral relations, cooperation in various fields, as well as international and regional issues of common concern, Guo said.

On China-Russia ties, Guo said in recent years, both countries have continuously deepened their good-neighbourliness and friendship, expanded comprehensive strategic coordination, and pursued mutually beneficial cooperation and win-win results. The two countries have maintained close communication and coordination on international and regional affairs, making important contributions to advancing equitable and orderly world multi-polarity, reforming and improving global governance, and safeguarding international fairness and justice.

World Bank chief sounds alarm about looming jobs crisis even after war ends



REUTERS

Washington, Apr 13: The Middle East war will dominate global finance officials' talks this week in Washington, but World Bank President Ajay Banga is sounding the alarm about a bigger, looming crisis: a huge gap in jobs for the 1.2 billion people who will reach working age in developing countries in the next 10 to 15 years.

At current trajectories, those economies will generate only about 400 million jobs, leaving a deficit of 800 million jobs, Banga told Reuters.

The former Mastercard CEO admits that focusing people on the long-term is daunting, given a series of short-term shocks that have buffeted the global economy since the COVID-19 pandemic, the most recent being the war in the Middle East.

He says he's determined to ensure that finance officials stay focused on those longer-term challenges like creating jobs, connecting people to the electricity grid and ensuring access to clean water. "We have to walk and chew gum at the same time. Short-velocity cycle is what we're going through. Longer velocity is this jobs circumstance or water," Banga said in an interview taped on Friday.

WAR OVERSHADOWS OTHER CONCERNS

Thousands of finance officials from around the globe will gather in Washington this week for the spring meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund under the shadow of the US-Israel war with Iran that threatens to slow global growth and jack up inflation. The extent of the hit to the economy will depend on the durability of a two-week ceasefire announced by

President Donald Trump last week, just hours before promised strikes that Trump said would destroy Iran's civilization. The ceasefire has halted most attacks. But it has not ended Iran's effective blockade of the Strait of Hormuz, which has caused the biggest-ever disruption to global energy supplies, or calmed a parallel war between Israel and Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon.

IMPROVING JOB CREATION

The World Bank's governing body, the Development Committee, outlined plans to work with developing countries to streamline policy and regulatory conditions that have hampered investment and job creation for years.

Discussions will touch on transparency around permits, anti-corruption, labor law, land law, impediments to opening a business, logistics, better trade systems, and non-price barriers in trade, Banga said.

He is upbeat that solutions can be found to help find employment — and dignity — for young people and create opportunities for private companies catering to their needs. "I don't know that you can ever get to a situation of utopia and everybody is taken care of in the coming 15 years. I would doubt that's going to happen, but if you don't do it, the implications are quite severe in terms of illegal migration and instability," Banga said. United Nations data showed more than 117 million people were displaced worldwide as of 2025.

Banga said companies in developing countries themselves were starting to expand globally, including India's Reliance Industries and the Mahindra Group, and Dangote in Nigeria.

France, UK to convene talks on Hormuz navigation mission

AP

Paris, Apr 13: France and the UK will organise a conference with partners ready to contribute to a peaceful multinational mission to help restore navigation in the Strait of Hormuz, President Emmanuel Macron said.

In a post on X, Macron stressed "the need to restore free and unimpeded navigation through the Strait of Hormuz as

quickly as possible".

He called for a "peaceful multinational mission," adding: "This strictly defensive mission, separate from the warring parties to the conflict, is intended to be deployed as soon as circumstances permit."

France and the UK have in recent years been working to set up an operation that would allow ships to cross the Strait of Hormuz once the fighting ends.



Record prize fund of Rs 82 crore announced for Women's T20 World Cup



take home USD 2,340,000 (Rs 21.8 crore approx), while the runners-up will receive USD 1,170,000 (Rs 10 crore approx). The losing semi-finalists will earn USD 675,000 (Rs 6.29 crore), while every group match win will earn teams USD 31,154 (Rs 29 lakh).

"All 12 participating teams will earn an assured minimum prize pot of USD 247,500 (Rs 2.06 crore approx)," said ICC in a release.

The tournament will get underway with hosts England taking on Sri Lanka at Edgbaston, Birmingham, on June 12.

The other teams in the fray are Australia, Bangladesh, India, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Scotland, South Africa and the West Indies, with the 33-match event set to be played over 24 days.

Meanwhile, the T20 World Cup trophy will tour the host cities before culminating in London, with Scotland set to be the first stop from May 7 to 10.

"The growth of women's cricket continues to accelerate, and the expansion of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup to 12 teams, combined with a record prize pool, underlines our commitment to building a stronger, more competitive global game," said ICC CEO, Sanjog Gupta.

PTI

Dubai, Apr 13: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Monday announced a record prize pool of Rs 82 crore for the upcoming Women's T20 World Cup, set to be held in England and Wales in two months' time.

The total purse has been increased by 10 per cent from the previous edition.

The tournament will feature

12 teams -- up from 10 in 2024 -- and will be played from June 12 to July 5 across seven venues, with the final scheduled at Lord's Cricket Ground.

While the total prize fund for the previous edition in the UAE stood at USD 7,958,077 (approximately Rs 74 crore), it has now risen to USD 8,764,615 (around Rs 82 crore), marking a 10 per cent increase over the 2024 edition. The winners will

Movies *Schedule*

Tuesday, 14 April

PROJECT HAIL MARY (U/A)
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
05:30 PM

DHURANDHAR THE REVENGE (A)
HINDI - 11:05 AM, 12:20 PM, 04:45 PM
HINDI ATMOS - 02:15 PM, 06:40 PM

DACOT (U/A)
HINDI - 11:00 AM

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