



Article 370 abrogation ended uncertainty in J&K: Amit Shah

- PM Modi did what none could
- Cong, Communists, others kept it in place for 75 years
- Present dispensation hit terror hard through strikes, Op Sindoor

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 23: Asserting that the abrogation of Article 370 led to complete integration of Jammu and Kashmir with the rest of the country, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said PM Modi led regime gave befitting reply to terrorists and their mentors by hitting them hard.

Addressing election rallies in Balagarh, Hooghly



district, West Bengal, Shah, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said PM Modi led regime's decision to abrogate Article 370 ended uncertainty in J&K. "For 75 years, the Congress, Communists, Mamata Banerjee, Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Samajwadi Party and DMK kept Article 370 in place. Prime Minister Narendra Modi ended

Article 370 and made J&K an integral part of India," he added. "During the Manmohan Singh government and Mamata Banerjee's tenure, attacks were carried out in the country repeatedly. The present government responded through surgical strikes, air strikes and Operation Sindoor. Terrorism and Naxalism have been curbed. Once a BJP government is formed, infiltrators will be identified and deported from across the country," Shah said Jammu and Kashmir now operates under the same constitutional framework as the rest of India following the abrogation of Article 370.

He said the government has adopted a policy of retaliation against terrorism and strengthened border management.

He added that steps taken in recent years have led to a decline in incidents linked to terrorism and Left-wing

NEP potent tool to meet national needs, accelerate economic growth: LG Sinha

'Teachers must promote communication skills to improve lives of new generation'

Yogesh

Jammu, Apr 23: Terming National Education Policy (NEP) as a potent tool to meet national needs, boost societal capacity, and accelerate economic growth, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday called on students to blend science with values for progress.

Speaking at an inaugural function of the New School Building of Swami Pranavanand Vidyamandir in Panjgrain, Nagrota, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "To bridge rural-urban and regional-social gaps, NEP is a powerful tool, societal asset, and reliable partner for meritorious students. India will emerge as a robust knowledge economy, nurturing generations with scientific temper,



moral strength, cultural values, skills, and a spirit of service and sacrifice."

He said a student's view of the external world depends on self-perception, shaped

by experiences. "True education balances both, equipping students with knowledge and skills for outer world, plus self-awareness and emotional resilience for inner world.

This holistic approach is every school's core duty.

Every student must blend science and values for progress. NEP measures guarantee Viksit Bharat; for the first time in decades, our talented children, teens, and youth are policy priorities," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Pertinently, Swami Pranavanand Vidyamandir in Panjgrain, Nagrota is run by Bharat Sevashram Sangha, a renowned socio-cultural and philanthropic organisation. Bharat Sevashram Sangh started pre-primary to Class 8 education here in 2014 under 'Har Ghar Shiksha'. Over half the students are from poor families; they have illuminated countless lives.

The Lieutenant Governor said that new higher secondary building and skill infrastructure will ensure disadvantaged

Committed to responsive governance: CM Omar



KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 23: Several public and trade deputations on Thursday called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah here, presenting a wide spectrum of developmental and industry-related matters, while seeking continued policy support and facilitation.

A deputation led by President Jammu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Arun Gupta, engaged with the Chief Minister on key issues concerning trade

and commerce. The delegation highlighted matters impacting business activity and emphasized the need for a more conducive environment to further boost economic growth and streamline operations.

The industry delegation also expressed gratitude to the Chief Minister for restoring the Darbar Move, noting that the session has significantly invigorated economic activity in the region, particularly across markets, rental properties, hotels and the



Horsemen riding their horses in renowned tourist destination, Pahalgam in south Kashmir. Pic: Jahangir Shah (KNO/KT)

NIA attaches property under UAPA in Pulwama



Jahangeer Ganaie

Pulwama, Apr 23: The National Investigation Agency on Thursday attached an immovable property under UAPA in Rajpora area of south Kashmir's Pulwama district.

An official told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the NIA team attached the property belonging to Tanveer Ahmad Wani son of Ghulam Ahmad Wani under the provisions of section 33 (1) of the unlawful activities (Prevention)

The property comprises land measuring 3 Kanals and 4 Marlas, recorded

Mass mock drills held in districts to boost disaster preparedness

'Aim to ensure effective response during difficult situations'

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 23: Large-scale civil defence mock drills were conducted across multiple districts of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday to strengthen disaster preparedness, improve inter-agency coordination, and enhance emergency response mechanisms, officials said.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) in Kishtwar, a major mock drill witnessed participation from police, State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), Red Cross, local NGOs, NCC cadets, CRPF and CISF, along with



civil administration officials. The exercise focused on testing rescue operations, evacuation

procedures, response time and public safety measures. Officials said the objective

was to improve coordination among departments and ensure a quick and effective response during emergencies. They added that such drills play a key role in preparing teams to handle real-life situations and minimise risks to life and property.

GANDERBAL
A similar large-scale civil defence mock drill was conducted in Ganderbal at Government Degree College, organised by the district administration in coordination with police. The exercise simulated emergency scenarios, including blackout situations, to enhance awareness and preparedness among students, staff and

LG attends foundation day of Sarv Shakti Chandi Mata Mandir

Pays obeisance at holy temple; prays for peace, prosperity of all

KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 23: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Thursday attended the foundation day of Sarv Shakti Chandi Mata Mandir at Dhammi, Nagrota. He paid obeisance at the holy temple and prayed for peace, prosperity and well-being of all.

The religious proceedings were marked by the lighting of the Akhand Jyot and the traditional reciting of Ved Path.

During his visit, the Lieutenant Governor also



reviewed the ongoing construction works of Yatri Halls, being developed by the Temple

Committee, to facilitate the devotees traveling to the Shri Amarnath Ji and

Intermittent rain spells, gusty winds likely across J&K till April end: MeT

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 23: Weatherman on Thursday predicted that Jammu and Kashmir is likely to witness intermittent spells of light rain and thundershowers till end of April.

A MeT official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that no major weather activity is expected during the period, except brief spells of rain and thundershowers around April 24-25 and again on April 28.

On April 23, the weather is likely to remain partly cloudy, with a possibility of brief light

rain, thunder and gusty winds at isolated places towards the late afternoon.

For April 24 and 25, the MeT office has predicted partly to generally cloudy conditions, with one or two brief spells of light rain or thundershowers at scattered to many places. Gusty winds are also likely at a few locations during afternoon and evening hours.

The weather is expected to remain largely dry on April 26 and 27, although brief light rain may occur at isolated places during the afternoon.

On April 28, generally cloudy conditions are

J&K set to spread red carpet for International Film Festival this year

KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 23: In a significant initiative to promote cinema, culture, and tourism, the Government of Jammu & Kashmir has initiated plans to host a prestigious international film festival through the Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR).

The decision was taken during a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, which was attended by the Additional Chief Secretary, Finance; Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism; Commissioner



Secretary, Information; Director, Information & Public Relations, and other senior officers.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary directed the

Information Department to begin preparations for this maiden film festival in the Union Territory. He emphasized the need for a professionally managed event of

national stature, drawing parallels with the International Film Festival of India held in Goa.

To ensure seamless execution, it was decided that a dedicated committee will be constituted at the earliest to oversee all arrangements related to the festival. The committee will be responsible for planning, coordination, and overall supervision to ensure the smooth and successful conduct of the event.

The Chief Secretary further instructed that a competent and experienced agency be identified and engaged for

efficient management of the festival. He stressed the importance of exploring best practices by studying similar events organized across the country.

Underscoring the importance of adhering to timelines, he directed that the process be initiated promptly, with the issuance of the work order to the selected agency targeted before the end of May.

The Commissioner Secretary, Information, while addressing logistical and financial aspects, informed that the National Film Development

Languages guardians of our history, identity, culture: Sakeena Itoo

Delivers Keynote Address on 'Relation of Urdu with Regional Languages' at Jammu University



KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, APRIL 23: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo on Thursday remarked that languages are not merely a means of expressing thoughts but they are the guardians of our history, identity and culture.

The Minister, as per an official statement, stated this while delivering the Keynote address during One-day Seminar on 'Relation of Urdu with Regional Languages' at University of Jammu here.

The seminar was organised by Department of Urdu, University of Jammu in collaboration with National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL).

In her address the Minister said that this seminar is not just a formal event, but a reflection of our identity, as languages are not merely a means of expressing thoughts, they are the guardians of our history, identity, and culture.

"Urdu is a language that has evolved through centuries and has absorbed the influences of various civilizations and cultures. Lucknow and Delhi are considered the birthplaces of Urdu but Jammu and Kashmir has equally nurtured this unique language", she stated.

The Minister highlighted that the Urdu's bond with local languages like Kashmiri, Dogri, Gujri, Pahari, Bhadarwahi, Kishtwari, isn't just neighbourly, but a deep linguistic relationship.

"Urdu adopted words, idioms and tone from local languages and in return gave them a wider platform. J&K is a land where Urdu not only got official

patronage, but Sufis, Rishis, Sanskrit and Persian scholars played a key role in taking it to the masses", she said.

Sakeena Itoo further said that Urdu acts as a bridge connecting different communities here and helps reach each other's hearts. "Urdu language is the silken thread that unites our colorful culture", she said.

Reaffirming the government's commitment, Sakeena Itoo stated that sustained efforts are being made to promote and preserve regional languages, including Kashmiri, Dogri, Gujri, Pahari, and others. She stressed the importance of inclusive policies that encourage multilingual education and safeguard linguistic identities.

She also assured the NCPUL and Urdu Department of Jammu University that Government is firm in its resolve for promotion of Urdu language as well as regional languages.

The Minister also underscored the need for academic research and community participation in documenting and revitalizing indigenous languages. She called upon scholars, educators, and students to actively engage in initiatives that celebrate linguistic diversity.

On the occasion, the Minister also released a Urdu magazine.

Addressing the gathering, Vice Chancellor Jammu University, Prof. Umesh Rai said that Urdu is a diverse language and is spoken in several parts of the country. He added that languages are a powerful tool to bind communities.

Prof. Rai highlighted that languages are connecting different cultures and traditions, and we need to promote languages for National integration.

Speaking on the occasion, Director NCPUL, Dr. Shams Equbal said that J&K is not only famous for its beautiful landscapes and valleys, but also for its culture and traditions. He highlighted that the strong bond of different languages is evident in Jammu and Kashmir with varied number of languages spoken in its different parts.

He also highlighted that NEP-2020 has also outlined the importance of regional languages.

Speaking on the significance of this seminar, Dr. Shams said that this seminar is a good platform to deliberate on impact of Urdu on Regional Languages.

In his welcome address, HoD, Department of Urdu, University of Jammu, Prof. Shohab Inayat Malik lauded the Education Minister, Sakeena Itoo for bringing new dimensions and upgradation in Higher Education sector. He underlined that the Education Minister has realised the dream of Sher-i-Kashmir, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah by playing a major role in the introduction and passage of Private University Bill in recently concluded Budget Session of J&K Legislative Assembly.

He also spoke in length about the basic contours of this one day seminar. He also spoke about the importance of Urdu language and its connection with the cultural roots of our country, highlighting that Urdu is binding the Indian Civilization and culture together.

Noted writers and poet, Prof. Qudus Javed and Dr. Khalid Husain also spoke on the occasion and spoke about the multilingual, multicultural and multi-religious aspects of our Country.

National Chintan Shivir: Satish Sharma reviews arrangements at SKICC

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 23: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, Science & Technology and ARI & Trainings, Satish Sharma, Thursday conducted a detailed inspection of the arrangements being put in place for the upcoming national-level Chintan Shivir at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC), Srinagar.

During the visit, the Minister, as per an official statement, undertook a comprehensive review of all the logistical, administrative and security arrangements being put in place for smooth and successful conduct of the prestigious event. He inspected the main



conference venues, breakout halls, seating arrangements, digital and IT infrastructure, media facilities, accommodation plans for the visiting dignitaries, transportation logistics, sanitation, power backup and emergency response mechanisms.

The Minister was apprised of the preparedness of various departments, including

coordination between civil administration, police, hospitality, transport, and tourism wings to ensure seamless execution of the event.

The Chintan Shivir is expected to be attended by the Sports Ministers from across the country, along with senior officers and policy experts, who will deliberate on a wide range of issues concerning development of sports in India. Key areas of discussion will include strengthening grassroots sports ecosystems, improving access to modern infrastructure, promoting inclusivity in sports, leveraging technology in sports management, talent identification and nurturing mechanisms and enhancing the role of sports in youth engagement and nation-building.

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS SOPORE
In the case of: Sajad Ahmad Khan S/o: Mohammad Shafi R/o: Logirpora Tehsil Zaingeer
Versus
C.E.O Municipal Council Sopore/BDO Sangrama/BDO Sopore
(Registrar of Birth and Death) ...Non Applicant

NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE
Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of Birth event of the applicant's Son namely Mohammad Saad S/o: Sajad Ahmad Khan as 03-04-2023 at Mother & Child Hospital Sopore.
Whereas through the medium of this proclamation the public at large is informed that in case any one has any objection for issuance of direction with respect to the registration of aforementioned Birth event he /she shall file the same before this court in person or through counsel within 7 days from the date of the publication of this proclamation. If the date fixed is declared holiday, the matter will be taken on the next working day.
Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS SOPORE
In the case of: Shameema Begum S/o: Mehraj un din Lone R/o: Shalpora Wagus Tehsil Khoie.
Versus
C.E.O Municipal Council Sopore/BDO Sangrama/BDO Sopore
(Registrar of Birth and Death) ...Non Applicant

NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE
Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of Birth event of the applicant's Son namely Affan Mehraj S/o: Mehraj un din Lone as 26-04-2017 at Mother & Child Hospital Sopore.
Whereas through the medium of this proclamation the public at large is informed that in case any one has any objection for issuance of direction with respect to the registration of aforementioned Birth event he /she shall file the same before this court in person or through counsel within 7 days from the date of the publication of this proclamation. If the date fixed is declared holiday, the matter will be taken on the next working day.
Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

World Book Day-2026 Libraries Dept organises events to rediscover magic of books

Showcases rare collection of literary resources

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 23: A series of events were organized by the Department of Libraries & Research Thursday across Kashmir division to commemorate the World Book & Copyright Day-2026. World Book and Copyright Day, is celebrated on April 23 every year to promote the love for reading and writing; power of publishing, making reading accessible for all and the importance of protecting intellectual property through copyright laws. The Day also signifies the potential of books and literature in shaping minds, uniting people, and inspiring social transformation.

Proclaimed by UNESCO in 1995, the day commemorates the passing away of literary legends including William Shakespeare, Miguel de Cervantes, and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, all of whom passed away on this day.

This year's theme for World Book and Copyright Day, as per an official statement, is - "Literacy through multilingualism and access to books for

all". To mark the day, Thursday's main event was organized at SPS Central Library complex with an Exhibition of Special Literary Collections including Manuscripts, Rare Books and Miniature Paintings.

The exhibition was opened to public by Mrs Rubina Kousar, Director General, Libraries & Research, J&K. The main attractions of the exhibition, jointly organized by SPS Library Srinagar & the Oriental Research Library (ORL) Srinagar, were the historic manuscripts like Qarabai-Din, Sadh PandLuqman and Shahnama Firdous. Some of the rare books including Mahabharata & Ramayana, Rajtarangni by Kalhana, Tareekh-e-Rasheedi, Gazetteer of India and Kashmir - a history of Kashmir were also displayed at the exhibition. Speaking on the occasion, Director General Libraries & Research, J&K said the Oriental Research Library, Srinagar established in 1904, is a repository of around 6000 rare manuscripts in 17 languages encompassing varied fields. The library also has around 500 rare books and miniature paintings.

all". To mark the day, Thursday's main event was organized at SPS Central Library complex with an Exhibition of Special Literary Collections including Manuscripts, Rare Books and Miniature Paintings.

IS AVAILABLE AT ALL LEADING STALLS

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS SOPORE
In the case of: Basit Rashid S/o: Ab Rashid Ganie R/o: Hathishah Sopore.
Versus
C.E.O Municipal Council Sopore/BDO Sangrama/BDO Sopore
(Registrar of Birth and Death) ...Non Applicant

NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE
Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of Birth event of the applicant's Self namely Basit Rashid S/o: Ab Rashid Ganie as 16-10-2007 at Home.
Whereas through the medium of this proclamation the public at large is informed that in case any one has any objection for issuance of direction with respect to the registration of aforementioned Birth event he /she shall file the same before this court in person or through counsel within 7 days from the date of the publication of this proclamation. If the date fixed is declared holiday, the matter will be taken on the next working day.
Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

Office of the Superintending Engineer PMGSY (JKRRDA) Circle Srinagar

Engineering Complex, Block-C, Rajbagh, Srinagar -190008

Tel/Fax:-0194-2311814, 01943517511, se-pmgsysrinagar@jk.gov.in

NOTICE INVITING E- TENDERS

e-NIT NO:- 01/SE/PMGSY/S/E-TENDERING-OF 2026-27 Dated:- 22-04-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of UT of Jammu & Kashmir, Superintending Engineer PMGSY Circle Srinagar invites e-tender (Single Cover) on Percentage Basis for the following works from the eligible & approved contractors of J&K Govt. CPWD, Railways and other States/Central Governments for the following work.

S. No	Name of Work with Package No.	Total Advertised Cost including GST, (Rs in Lacs.)	Cost of document (Amt in Rupees.)	Earnest Money (Bid Security) (Rs in Lacs.)	Time for completion (Days)	Tender Call	Time and Date of opening of Bis online	Class of Contractor
1	Permanent restoration of road from T03-High Level Diversion Chichkoot to Nanil Package No. JK01-320, PMGSY Division Anantnag, under Capex Budget 2025-26.	198.12	2600	3.96	75	1 st	(10:30 Hrs) on or after 02-05-2026 in the Office of Superintending Engineer PMGSY Circle Rajbagh Srinagar.	"A" Class in PWD or equivalent in CPWD/ Railways and other state Governments

Position of AAA: -Accorded
Position of T.S: -Obtained
Position of Funds: Available.
Head of Account: MH-5054, SH-2181

SPECIAL CONDITIONS:-

- Performance security shall be furnished by the contractor within 07 days of issuance of LOA, Opening of Bid, failing which the concerned tender issuing authority shall forfeit the performance security and recommend contractor for blacklisting and issue fresh tender forthwith.
- The contractor shall start the work after 07 days after issuance of NTP/Allotment, failing which the penalties viz, forfeiting performance security shall be recommended for blacklisting.
- The work shall be completed by the concerned contractor as per the timeline stipulated in NIT/agreement, failing which action shall be initiated against contractor by forfeiting performance securities and shall be recommended for blacklisting.
- If the contractor / firms fails to complete the work within the time mentioned in the NIT / Contract, then the allotted contract will automatically have to be treated as canceled after forfeiting the performance securities of the contractor / firm and work put to fresh tender without serving any notice from this office.
- The Bidding Documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website as per below schedule: -

S. No.	Particulars	Date
1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	22-04-2026
2.	Period of Downloading of bidding documents	From 23-04-2026 (900) Hours To 02-05-2026 (1630) Hours
3.	Prebid Meeting	At 11:30 AM on 24-04-2026, Venue Office of Superintending Engineer, Pmgsy Circle Srinagar, Rajbagh.
4.	Bid submission Start Date	From 24-04-2026 (4:30PM Hours)
5.	Bid Submission End Date	To 01-05-2026 (1630) Hours
6.	Date and time of opening of Bids (online)	02-05-2026 on or after (1030) Hours In the office of Superintending Engineer (PMGSY) Circle Srinagar at Rajbagh Srinagar.

Note: The participating Bidders shall be deemed to have gone through Bid Document and accepted all terms and conditions mentioned therein.

SE/PMGSY/S/DB/e-Tendering/340-41
Dated:- 22-04-2026

DIPK-713/26
DATED: 23-04-2026

Sd/-
Er. Najmun Sahar
Superintending Engineer
PMGSY Circle Srinagar

CS reviews Rs 3440.43 Cr flood restoration works plan

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 23: The Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Thursday chaired a high-level meeting to review the comprehensive plan for utilization of funds earmarked for works related to the permanent restoration of damages caused by floods and associated calamities in 2025.

The meeting besides the ACS, PDD; ACS, Finance; ACS, PWD; Principal Secretary, DMRR&R was attended by Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD; Commissioner Secretary, Y&S; Commissioner Secretary, School Education Department.

The Deputy Commissioners also attended the meeting through video conferencing from their respective offices.

The Chief Secretary emphasised upon all Departments to accord necessary administrative approval and technical sanction to ensure that works are tendered and completed without any delay.

He called for submission of work-wise completion details in due course and stressed that each project must be executed strictly as per the approved list and within the prescribed estimates. He enjoined upon the Departments to expedite approvals so that tendering is completed promptly and execution of works is taken up by June this year.

The Chief Secretary stressed the importance of strict adherence to the guidelines issued by the Disaster Management Division, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) for recovery and reconstruction. He observed that the Ministry is going to have its focus on the execution of these



works therefore demands high-priority on our part as well. He directed all departments to ensure that project proposals are aligned with the PDNA findings and that there is no duplication of funding across different schemes, particularly between R&R and SASCI components.

The Additional Chief Secretary, Finance, Shaileendra Kumar, underscored the need to fix strict timelines for each stage of implementation to ensure timely completion of all projects. He assured that the UT share would be made available without any hindrance to facilitate smooth execution of these works.

He advised the departments that necessary department-wise allocations would be made on BEAMStofacilitate timely uploading of works taken up under these additional components, over and above the budgetary allocations. He further stressed that this

would help in ensuring their early execution and completion.

During the meeting, a detailed presentation was made by Principal Secretary, DMRR&R, Chandraker Bharti outlining the component-wise allocation of 3440.43 Cr, structured across multiple funding streams to address both immediate relief and long-term resilience.

Highlighting the need for capacity building, the Principal Secretary further revealed that the National Institute of Disaster Management (NIDM) has been requested to conduct training programmes for officers and officials of line departments and districts. These programmes aim to strengthen institutional capacity for effective project formulation, implementation, and monitoring.

The Principal Secretary apprised that the largest share of 1579.09 Cr has been approved under the Recovery & Reconstruction (R&R) component of the UT Disaster Response Fund (UTDRF)

as Central Financial Assistance based on the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA). This includes ₹ 1421.118 Cr as Central share and ₹ 157.909 Cr as UT share.

Moreover it was divulged that the funds are aimed at permanent restoration of critical infrastructure such as roads, bridges, irrigation systems, and public assets, with a focus on adopting a "build back better" approach to enhance disaster resilience. The Central share is to be released in three installments of 30%, 40%, and 30%, subject to utilization conditions.

In addition, ₹ 330.34 Cr has been approved by the High-Level Committee (HLC) under SDRF/NDRF norms to cater to immediate and residual impacts of disasters including floods, flash floods, landslides, and cloudbursts. This component is intended to meet urgent restoration and relief requirements in accordance with prescribed norms

and sector-specific needs.

The meeting further reviewed the strategy to spend 1431 Cr Special Additional Central Assistance under SASCI component, which provides supplementary support for critical gaps and resilience-oriented interventions not fully covered under other funding mechanisms.

It was emphasized that this funding window would be utilized judiciously for priority sectors requiring additional financial backing, while ensuring no overlap with R&R allocations. The component constitutes funding for raising critical infrastructure in R&B Sector worth 860 Cr, Jal Shakti (₹315 Cr), PDD (₹173 Cr), Agriculture Production Department (₹51Cr) and Youth Services & Sports Department (₹ 32 Cr).

The CAPEX Budget 2025-26 was also highlighted as an important component of the overall outlay, with dedicated provisions for flood mitigation and restoration works.

These include strengthening of flood control infrastructure, construction of protective works such as embankments and drainage systems, and integration of disaster resilience into capital development planning.

The Chief Secretary underscored the urgency of expediting restoration works, particularly in critical sectors, to ensure timely recovery and enhanced resilience against future disasters. He called for close inter-departmental coordination, robust monitoring mechanisms, and outcome-oriented implementation of all projects under the ₹ 3440.43 Cr plan.

CJ flags off MUVs to boost legal aid outreach in J&K



KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 23: In a significant step towards strengthening access to justice and expanding outreach of legal services to the grassroots level, Justice Arun Palli, Chief Justice (CJ), High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh and Patron-in-Chief, J&K Legal Services Authority in the august presence of Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority and other Companion Judges of the High Court at Jammu on Thursday flagged off a fleet of Multi-Utility Vehicles (MUV) for District Legal Services Authorities of the Jammu Province, at High Court Complex, Janipur, Jammu.

These vehicles have been procured under the guidance of National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) with the objective of strengthening the delivery of legal aid and welfare services, particularly in far-flung, rural, remote and underserved areas of the Union Territory.

Chief Justice appreciated the initiative and observed that access to justice must not remain confined to courtrooms alone, but should meaningfully reach every citizen, especially those belonging to vulnerable and marginalized sections of society. He emphasized that such initiatives are essential for taking justice to the doorsteps of the people.

Justice Sanjeev Kumar, Executive Chairman, J&K Legal Services Authority, also appreciated the launch of the vehicles and stated that the same would greatly enhance the outreach and efficiency of District Legal Services Authorities. His Lordship further observed that this initiative marks another important step in making legal services more accessible to the common people. Justice Sanjeev Kumar also

expressed that similar Multi-Utility Vehicles are planned to be launched shortly for districts of Kashmir Province as well, so that the benefits of this initiative reach every region of the Union Territory in an equitable manner.

While interacting with media persons, Shazia Tabasum, Member Secretary, J&K Legal Services Authority, highlighted that the vehicles shall be utilized for conducting legal awareness programmes, facilitating outreach camps, extending assistance to beneficiaries under various legal aid schemes, supporting Para Legal Volunteers, and ensuring better coordination of legal services activities at the district level. She further stated that the initiative would significantly strengthen the institutional capacity of District Legal Services Authorities in serving the people more efficiently.

The vehicles shall also be used for carrying out awareness campaigns relating to legal aid, women and child rights, senior citizens' welfare, victim compensation, mediation, Lok Adalats, drug de-addiction awareness, child protection, and other welfare-oriented initiatives undertaken by Legal Services Institutions from time to time.

The programme was attended by M. K. Sharma, Registrar General, High Court of J&K and Ladakh, Judicial Officers, officers of the Registry, Muzamil Hayat Kabli, Administrative Officer, other officials of J&K Legal Services Authority, staff members and other dignitaries.

The initiative reflects the continued commitment of J&K Legal Services Authority towards ensuring that free legal aid and justice delivery mechanisms become more accessible, responsive and citizen-centric across the Union Territory.

NC Govt missing from ground, admin at standstill: LoP Sharma

REHAN QAYOUM MIR

Srinagar, Apr 23: Leader of Opposition (LoP) in Jammu & Kashmir Assembly and senior BJP leader Sunil Sharma on Thursday alleged that governance in the Union Territory has come to a standstill and ministers in the National Conference-led government remain absent from the ground amid mounting public issues.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a function at Sonwar here, LoP Sharma said the administration has become ineffective after the 2024 Assembly elections, while people continue to suffer due to shortages of electricity, drinking water, and poor road connectivity. He alleged that instead of addressing public grievances, those in power were busy with "marathons, cycling, skiing, and five-star dinners".

The BJP leader accused the administration of rampant corruption, claiming that common citizens are unable to get routine work done in government offices without paying bribes. "Send an ordinary person to a tehsildar or BDO office, no work gets done without money. The transfer industry is functioning openly," he alleged.

Targeting Omar Abdullah, Sharma said the Chief Minister is holding several departments but has failed to review their functioning. "He has around 17 departments, but no review meeting has been held so far," he said.

The LoP further questioned the NC government over what he termed unfulfilled election promises, including



free LPG cylinders, free electricity, and one lakh jobs for youth.

He also reacted to the recent security-related incident involving former chief minister Farooq Abdullah, demanding a thorough probe into the matter. He questioned whether any prior information regarding the threat was shared with police authorities and said the incident should be investigated from all angles. "The person involved has no criminal background. This needs proper investigation," he said.

The BJP leader further claimed there was no security threat to the Abdullah family and remarked that they already enjoy heavy security cover.

Expressing surprise over Omar Abdullah's renewed demand for restoration of statehood, Sharma said it was unusual that the demand was being raised after assuming office as Chief Minister. "I am surprised that Omar Abdullah became Chief Minister first and then started demanding statehood," he said—(KNO)

PDP bore brunt of political changes post-2019: Mehbooba



WARIS FAYAZ

Baramulla, Apr 23: Former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti on Thursday alleged that the Bharatiya Janata Party dismantled the People's Democratic Party politically alongside the abrogation of Article 370, asserting that her party was specifically targeted as a key challenger in Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing a gathering in Baramulla,

Mehbooba said the PDP bore the brunt of political changes post-2019. She claimed the move was not limited to constitutional restructuring but aimed at weakening her party's base on the ground.

The PDP chief accused the National Conference of failing to meet public expectations despite securing a strong mandate. She said there has been little improvement in the daily lives of people, with unemployment rising and economic distress deepening across sections.

Mehbooba while describing the situation as "grim", stated that youth are grappling with joblessness while even older generations are facing uncertainty. She flagged rising electricity tariffs as an added burden on households already under financial stress.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Dy CM calls for safety alignment of Ramnagar accident site

KT NEWS DESK

Udhampur, Apr 23: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary on Thursday called for safety alignment construction at Kaghoti Ramnagar accident site after detailed inspection of the spot.

Expressing deep sorrow over the loss of lives in the recent bus accident, the Deputy Chief Minister called for immediate road safety alignment and a comprehensive safety audit of concrete parapet and protection walls across the 13 kilometres long Udhampur-Ramnagar stretch.

"We have lost many innocent lives in the unfortunate accident, however, responsibility shall be fixed on it," he said.

The concerned Chief Engineer were instructed to prepare a plan after due consultation with the consultancy and ensure that the measures are enforced to prevent such tragic mishaps in the future.

The Deputy Chief Minister who conducted an extensive tour of to assess progress of ongoing infrastructure works across Udhampur District stressed strict adherence to quality standards, timely completion, and



accountability at all levels.

He inspected the under-construction PWD Dak Bungalow at Udhampur and emphasized timely completion of the renovation works. He directed the officials to ensure that all the works are completed by May 2026.

As part of the day-long tour, the Deputy Chief Minister also inspected several key road and bridge projects across the district, including Majalta Bridge, Doder Nallah Gudar Bridge and the Dhana-Bunol road.

He directed the concerned to expedite the pace of work while maintaining the highest quality standards to ensure timely completion.

Additionally, he reviewed the ongoing permanent protection works along the Sidra-Suransar-Mansar

road, emphasizing durable and resilient construction at all flood-affected stretches.

Reiterating the government's commitment to robust infrastructure development, the Deputy Chief Minister called for strict adherence to the set guidelines and quality benchmarks across all projects. He asserted that accountability must be ensured for any lapses, warning that action including blacklisting of contractors would be considered in cases of substandard work.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the government remains focused on strengthening the infrastructure, enhancing road safety and ensuring sustainable development across Jammu and Kashmir.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

MP Ruhullah denies reports of forming new political party

REHAN QAYOUM MIR

Srinagar, Apr 23: Member of Parliament Aga Ruhullah Mehdi on Thursday denied reports that he is forming a new political party, saying he had no knowledge of any such move.

Speaking to reporters, MP Ruhullah said he was unaware of any party being formed in his name. "Tell me as well which party carries my name. I also don't know who is forming it. If there is one, I will also submit an application," he said.

The remarks came amid speculation over possible political realignments in Jammu and Kashmir.

On the reservation issue, he said the government response is awaited and he has been informed that the file had been sent to the



Lieutenant Governor's office.

He said the government should clarify when the file would be brought back and what concrete steps would be taken. "The government should not stop at merely acknowledging the matter. It must clearly state when the file will return," he said—(KNO)

Women's reservation must mean real law-making role: Rathore



REHAN QAYOUM MIR

Srinagar, Apr 23: Senior Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Rajasthan minister Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore on Thursday said women's reservation must translate into real participation in law-making and governance, asserting that the Narendra Modi-led government has taken steps for its implementation.

Addressing a press conference at Church Lane, Sonwar here, Rathore, accompanied by LoP Sunil Sharma, said the issue of women's reservation had been discussed for decades, but earlier attempts did not succeed. He said similar proposals were brought in 1996, 1998, 1999, and again in 2008, but were not passed.

"There was discussion for years. The difference is clear: who discusses and who

implements," Rathore said. He said the women's reservation legislation was passed by Parliament in 2023. The implementation of the law was linked to census and delimitation and those steps were necessary under the framework, he added.

The minister said fresh legislative measures were later introduced in April 2026 to help ensure that reservation for women could be implemented before the 2029 Lok Sabha elections. "If the process waited for census and delimitation in the ordinary course, it would have taken several years," he said.

Rathore said even with present technology, the census process could take around one-and-a-half to two-and-a-half years, while delimitation would require additional time. He said the government believes in fulfilling commitments through execution.

Targeting opposition parties, the BJP minister alleged that some parties were opposing the move and raising objections despite the need for timely implementation. Referring to concerns over the representation of states, he said such apprehensions were misplaced.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

EDITORIAL

Friday Brief: Justice As A True Measure Of Faith

In the Islamic moral universe, justice (Adl) is a binding, non-negotiable command that permeates every facet of a believer's existence. The Quran and Hadith establish justice as the very purpose of divine revelation and the measure of true faith. Without justice in daily interactions, prayers and fasts become hollow rituals, disconnected from the ethical core of Islam. The Quran declares with absolute clarity: "Indeed, Allah commands you to render trusts to whom they are due, and when

you judge between people, to judge with justice" (4:58). This verse addresses not judges alone but every human being. Whether in the marketplace, the workplace, the family, or the street, the Muslim is commanded to act justly. The Prophet Muhammad (Peace Be Upon Him) embodied this principle in every transaction, every dispute, and every relationship. He taught that the just person will be seated on pulpits of light near Allah on the Day of Judgment. Justice demands honesty

in speech. The Quran commands believers to "stand firmly for justice, as witnesses to Allah, even if against yourselves, your parents, or your close relatives" (4:135). The husband must deal fairly with his wife, the parent with his children, the sibling with his sibling. The Prophet (PBUH) declared: "Fear Allah concerning women. You have taken them as a trust from Allah." Justice within the home is the foundation of justice in the community. In the marketplace, the Quran commands:

"Give full measure and do not be of those who cause loss. And weigh with an even balance" (26:181-182). Cheating customers, hiding defects, exploiting desperation—these are not minor business tactics but acts of injustice that destroy barakah (blessing) from wealth. The Prophet (PBUH) said that the fraudulent merchant will be raised on Judgment Day as a traitor. Justice demands that we treat employees and servants with dignity, paying wages on time and never overburdening them. The

Prophet (PBUH) warned: "The wages of a hired worker must be paid before his sweat dries." Justice also means giving people their due respect, not mocking, slandering, or humiliating others. The true measure of our faith is not how intensely we pray but how justly we live. In every transaction, every word, every judgment, let us embody the divine command. Let us be of the muqsiteen—those who establish justice—for they are beloved to Allah. This is Islam lived. This is faith proven.

From Panchayat To Parliament: Women's Leadership, Digital Governance And The Vision Of Viksit Bharat

We salute the more than 14 lakh women representatives who work tirelessly every day to make their villages and their country a better place. This is Nari Shakti. This is the preparation of Naya Bharat.

Prof. S. P. Singh Baghel

When a nation nurtures its roots, its branches reach for the sky. The roots of India are its Panchayats, and the soul of those Panchayats today is its women. On 24 April 1993, the 73rd Constitutional Amendment gave constitutional recognition to village governance, writing a new chapter in Indian democracy. Over three decades later, Panchayati Raj Institutions have evolved far beyond administrative units – they have become living laboratories of social transformation, economic development and democratic participation. Under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi, Panchayati Raj has been infused with new energy and purpose. He has ensured that power reaches not merely the corridors of Delhi, but the doorstep of the last village in the country. The vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 is built on the foundation of over 2.5 lakh Gram Panchayats, which serve as the lifeline for nearly 64 per cent of India's population.

The School of Democracy: The Rise of Women's Leadership

National Panchayati Raj Day 2026 is being celebrated with a special sense of pride. At the Nari Shakti Vandan Sammelan, Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi called Panchayati Raj Institutions the greatest school of women's leadership in the country – an acknowledgment of a transformation that unfolds every single day across rural India.

Across the country, the total number of elected representatives in Panchayati Raj Institutions exceeds 32 lakh. As per the latest available data, of the 24,41,781 elected representatives currently in office, 12,14,885 are women, accounting for nearly 49.75 per cent of the total. Twenty-one States and two Union Territories have extended reservation for women to 50 per cent, going beyond the constitutionally mandated one-third. Over the past four years, 33.50 lakh women representatives



have received specialised leadership and governance training. In 2025-26 alone, 9.37 lakh women representatives were trained – a 47.7 per cent increase over the previous year. Their focused work on education, health, sanitation, nutrition and women's safety has given rural development a new and purposeful direction.

Sashakt Panchayat Netri Abhiyan and the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam

The Sashakt Panchayat Netri Abhiyan equips elected women representatives with awareness of their constitutional rights, responsibilities and leadership capabilities. Complementary initiatives – Women-Friendly Gram Panchayat and Nirbhaya Raho, implemented under the Nirbhaya Fund – integrate legal awareness, social sensitisation and technological empowerment to build a safe environment for women in rural governance. The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, envisaging 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies, permanently anchors their role in Indian democracy. The women leaders forged in the school of Panchayats will become the

harbingers of change in legislatures and Parliament.

Sixteenth Finance Commission: A Quantum Jump in Resources

Financial empowerment is the lifeblood of any institution's effectiveness. The Sixteenth Finance Commission has made an unprecedented allocation of Rs 4.35 lakh crore for rural local bodies for 2026 to 2031 – approximately 84 per cent higher than the Fifteenth Finance Commission. In 2026-27 alone, grants of Rs 1.40 lakh crore have been allocated. The thrust on Own Sources of Revenue (OSR) and performance-based grants has together fostered accountability and healthy competition among Panchayats.

Inclusive and Transparent Governance

The guiding mantra of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas aur Sabka Prayas underlies every initiative of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. Through the eGramSwaraj platform, Gram Panchayats have cumulatively processed online payments of over Rs 3 lakh crore, with more than 2.5 lakh Panchayats and 1.6 crore vendors linked to the platform. Under the Gram Panchayat

Development Plan framework, over 2.5 lakh Panchayats prepared their own development plans in 2025-26, localising the Sustainable Development Goals across 9 thematic clusters to make inclusive and sustainable development in rural areas target-oriented and outcome-focused.

PESA Rankings: A New Chapter in Governance of Scheduled Areas

In a landmark initiative, the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, for the first time, released State-wise rankings on the performance of States under the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996 (PESA) for 2024-25 on 25 January 2026. The rankings aim to promote healthy competition, strengthen transparency and accountability, and reinforce Gram Sabha-based self-governance in Scheduled Areas.

In the 2024-25 rankings, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh emerged as front runners; Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Telangana were placed in the performer category, while Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat featured in the aspirant category. The rankings cover all ten PESA States and are intended as a constructive tool to highlight progress, institutional capacity and future potential. In the spirit of cooperative federalism, the Ministry continues to work closely with States to support the effective implementation of PESA.

SabhaSaar and AI-Enabled Governance: Democracy in Every Language

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj has brought artificial intelligence to the heart of grassroots governance. SabhaSaar, launched on 14 August 2025, is an AI-powered voice-to-text tool that records Gram Sabha proceedings in 23 Indian languages. By January 2026, 1,11,486 Gram Panchayats had already adopted it – language is no longer a barrier to participation in local governance.

SVAMITVA: Economic Empowerment Through Property Rights

The SVAMITVA Scheme has established property rights through drone-based surveys across approximately 3.30 lakh

villages, with over 3.13 crore property cards prepared. It is linking rural households with bank credit and the formal financial system, enabling property to be leveraged as an economic asset, reducing land and property-related disputes, and emerging as a sustainable and transparent source of revenue for Gram Panchayats.

Building Institutional Capacity

Under the Rashtriya Gram Swaraj Abhiyan, a cumulative total of over 1.62 crore elected representatives and functionaries have been trained since 2022-23 – with over 45.24 lakh trained in 2025-26 alone. Partnerships with IIMs and IITs for Leadership and Management Development Programmes reflect a commitment to equipping Panchayat leaders with modern governance skills. Under the Meri Panchayat, Mera Adhikar campaign, over 2.15 lakh Panchayats have prepared citizen charters covering 954 services. The National Panchayat Awards recognise excellence and inspire a culture of continuous improvement.

Viksit Bharat 2047: A New Dawn Rising from the Villages

The vision of Viksit Bharat 2047 encompasses social justice, environmental balance and inclusive progress – not economic growth alone. Women's participation reaching 50 per cent in 21 States, digital transactions of over Rs 3 lakh crore, the voice of Gram Sabhas resonating in 23 languages, the historic allocations of the Sixteenth Finance Commission, and the Sashakt Panchayat Netri Abhiyan – together these are the building blocks upon which the edifice of Viksit Bharat 2047 will rise. On this occasion of National Panchayati Raj Day, we salute the more than 14 lakh women representatives who work tirelessly every day to make their villages and their country a better place. This is Nari Shakti. This is the preparation of Naya Bharat.

The author is Union Minister of State for Panchayati Raj

Faith & Spirituality

How To Control Anger In Islam

Anger is a natural human emotion in Islam, but it is something that should be managed with patience, self-control, and consciousness of Allah (taqwa). The Qur'an and Sunnah both acknowledge anger, but they strongly guide believers toward restraint and forgiveness rather than impulsive reactions.

The Prophet Muhammad (SAW) taught that true strength is not in physical power, but in self-control. In a well-known hadith, he said:

"The strong is not the one who overcomes people by his strength, but the strong is the one who controls himself while in anger." (Sahih al-Bukhari, Sahih Muslim)

This shows that managing anger is not only a personal virtue in Islam—it is a sign of spiritual strength.

1. Seeking refuge in Allah (SWT)

One of the first and most immediate teachings in Islam when feeling anger is to seek protection from Shaytan, because anger can be inflamed by him.

The Prophet (SAW) advised: "I know a word which, if he were to say it, what he feels would go away: A'udhu billahi min ash-shaytan ir-rajim (I seek refuge in Allah from the accursed devil)." (Riyad



as-Salihin 46)

This reminder helps a believer pause and reconnect with Allah instead of reacting emotionally.

2. Changing physical state

Islam also gives practical steps for controlling anger. The Prophet advised:

If you are standing, sit down

If sitting, lie down

This physical change helps interrupt the

emotional escalation and gives time for calmness to return.

Modern psychology supports this idea as well—changing posture and environment can reduce emotional intensity.

3. Making wudu (ablution)

The Prophet (SAW) said: "Anger comes from Shaytan, and Shaytan was created from fire. Fire is extinguished by water, so when one of you becomes angry, let him

perform wudu." (Abu Dawood)

Performing wudu is both symbolic and practical. It cools the body and serves as a spiritual reset, reminding the believer to regain control and purity of intention.

4. Practicing silence

The Prophet (SAW) also advised that when angry, a person should remain silent. Speaking in anger often leads to regret, broken relationships, and harmful words.

Silence allows time for reflection and prevents immediate emotional reactions from becoming permanent consequences.

5. Remembering the reward of patience (Sabr)

In Islam, patience is highly rewarded. Allah says in the Qur'an: "Indeed, Allah is with those who are patient." (Qur'an 2:153)

Controlling anger is part of sabr (patience), and it is a quality of the righteous. A believer is reminded that every moment of restraint can be rewarded by Allah, even when no one else sees it.

6. Forgiveness and letting go

One of the highest moral traits in Islam is forgiveness. Allah praises those who: "...restrain anger and pardon people. And Allah loves the doers of good." (Qur'an 3:134)

Forgiveness does not mean weakness. It means choosing a higher response over retaliation. It frees the heart from resentment and prevents anger from turning into long-term bitterness.

7. Strengthening faith and self-awareness

Anger becomes easier to control when a person strengthens their relationship with Allah through:

Regular salah (prayer)

Dhikr (remembrance of Allah)

Reading Qur'an

Reflecting on accountability in the Hereafter

A mindful believer knows that every action, even words spoken in anger, is recorded and will be accounted for.

In Islam, controlling anger is not about suppressing emotion—it is about guiding it with wisdom, faith, and discipline. The teachings of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW) provide a complete framework: seek refuge in Allah, pause physically, purify yourself, remain silent, practice patience, and choose forgiveness.

By following these principles, anger transforms from something destructive into an opportunity for spiritual growth and self-mastery.

Source: IslamiCity

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

Urban forests key to environmental health, community well-being: Javed Rana

Inaugurates City Forest Park in Batote

KT News Desk

RAMBAN, APRIL 23: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmad Rana on Thursday inaugurated the City Forest Park at Batote, Ramban marking a significant step towards strengthening the green infrastructure and promoting ecotourism in the region.

He was accompanied by Legislators Sajjad Shaheen and Arjun Singh Raju, Chief Conservator of Forests, Jammu, Dr. V. Senthil Kumar, Conservator of Forests, Chenab Circle, Dr. A. D. Singh and other officers from the forest department.

Developed by the Jammu and Kashmir Forest Department, the City Forest Park has been established over an area of 12 hectares at an estimated cost of 62 lakh.

The initiative is aimed at creating a vibrant recreational green space for both the residents and the visitors, while simultaneously advancing ecological conservation and fostering environmental awareness.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister, as per an official statement, underscored the growing



importance of urban forest spaces in improving the environmental quality and public well-being. He emphasized that such initiatives not only encourage the community participation in conservation efforts but also serve as catalyst for nature-based tourism.

Highlighting the broader environmental impact, he noted that projects like the City Forest Park contribute meaningfully to climate resilience while offering accessible, healthy recreational avenues for the public.

The park has been thoughtfully designed with eco-friendly amenities to enhance the visitor experience while maintaining sustainability.

Key features included scenic

viewpoints offering panoramic vistas of the surrounding landscape, a 50-metre walking trail for nature enthusiasts, a wooden bridge adding both functionality and aesthetic appeal and soil and moisture conservation measures such as Dry Rubble Stone Masonry (DRSM).

Outlining the future plans, the Minister announced several proposed enhancements to further enrich the park. These included the construction of an additional wooden bridge, development of a dedicated children's park, establishment of a thematic Nagar Van, creation of a selfie point to attract younger visitors and addition of more viewpoints to elevate the overall visitor experience.

Satish Sharma reviews functioning of Transport Department

Asks for strict compliance to traffic rules

KT News Desk

JAMMU, APRIL 23: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Information Technology, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, and Science & Technology, Satish Sharma, Thursday convened a review meeting regarding functioning of the Transport Department for Jammu Division at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu.

The meeting was attended by all Regional Transport Officers (RTOs) and Assistant Regional Transport Officers (ARTOs) of the division.

The Minister, as per an official statement, had a detailed review of the departmental functioning across key domains, emphasizing transparency, efficiency and strict enforcement of transport regulations.

Taking serious note of recent road accidents, the Minister stressed that vehicle fitness must be ensured without any compromise. He directed the officers to strictly enforce the fitness norms, with special attention to critical components



such as tyres, mirrors, front glass and emergency exits in public transport vehicles.

Satish Sharma called for stringent action against the defaulting officers and warned that any negligence in enforcement would not be tolerated. He further directed the enforcement teams to curb the use of retreaded tyres and unauthorized vehicles plying without valid fitness certificates.

Highlighting road safety as a top priority, the Minister issued directions for zero tolerance against overloading and repeat offenders, strict check on school buses, including CCTV compliance and speed limiting devices besides re-evaluation of hilly route permits to ensure passenger safety identification and mitigation of accident-prone black spots. He emphasized the need for

coordinated efforts with the concerned agencies to reduce road accidents and ensure safer transport systems.

The Minister directed the department to intensify awareness campaigns under the road safety initiatives, including promotion of helmet use, seat belts and child safety measures. He also instructed the officers to organize special campaigns against drug abuse (Nasha Mukh Abhiyan) in collaboration with the stakeholders, including youth organizations and educational institutions.

Satish Sharma stressed the need to resolve the operational issues in the online platforms such as Vahan and Sarathi and ensure seamless service delivery to citizens. He also called for improving integration with digital services and reducing delays in issuance of

documents like driving licences and registration certificates.

He emphasized time-bound disposal of e-challans, grievances and public complaints, directing the officers to enhance accountability and responsiveness.

The Minister reviewed revenue collection trends and directed the officers to meet the annual targets while addressing the gaps and leakages. He also sought updates on pending dues and instructed for strict monitoring of revenue-generating heads.

The Minister reviewed staffing position, infrastructure gaps and availability of enforcement equipment, directing for timely augmentation wherever required. He stressed the continuous capacity building and training of staff to improve the departmental performance.

Tribal Sub Plan

KVK Budgam organizes Input Distribution programme

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, APRIL 23: Krishi Vigyan Kendra (KVK) Budgam, under the leadership of Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-K, Prof. Nazir Ahmad Ganai and in collaboration with the TSP-ICAR project 'Promotion of Natural Farming in Tribal farmers of Kashmir' successfully conducted a comprehensive training and input distribution programme to tribal farmers belonging to villages Tral and Sangerwani of district Pulwama.

The initiative, as per an official statement, was designed to empower tribal farmers by equipping them with high-quality inputs to boost productivity and ensure sustainable livelihoods through Natural Farming practises.

The programme was presided over by Prof. Raihana Habib Kanth, Director Extension, SKUAST-K, who was the chief guest on the occasion besides Prof. Javed Ahmad Muglo, Professor & Head, ETC & KVK Pulwama and Scientists from both KVKs were also present.

In her address, Prof. Raihana highlighted SKUAST-Kashmir's continued efforts towards the upliftment of tribal farming communities. She emphasized the critical role of Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs) in promoting climate-resilient agriculture and improving livelihood security. She added that KVKs are

playing a pivotal role in transforming the lives of tribal farmers by introducing innovative, sustainable practices and providing timely access to quality agricultural inputs. She stressed on the importance of adopting scientific practices for achieving sustainable agricultural growth and improving rural livelihoods.

Prof. Javed Ahmad Muglo, Head, ETC & KVK Pulwama in his address highlighted the objectives of the Tribal Sub Plan, emphasizing the commitment of ICAR and SKUAST-Kashmir towards improving the livelihoods of tribal farming communities through location-specific technologies, capacity building and input support. He urged farmers to adopt scientific farming practices and make the best use of the inputs provided. He also outlined the Kendra's mission to advance sustainable farming and enhance access to technology for marginalized communities.

During training sessions Dr. Shazia Ramzan (PI of project) and Dr. Shabeer Ahmad Ganie (Co-PI of project), KVK Budgam covered various topics like need and importance of Natural Farming, pillars and practises of Natural Farming and strategies for climate-smart agriculture.

A major highlight of the event was the distribution of inputs like drums, buckets, shoes, gloves etc., to participating tribal farmers for practising Natural Farming on their fields.

DC Srinagar assesses progress of major developmental project

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, APRIL 23: In order to review the status of proposed major developmental projects and ongoing infrastructure works in the district, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Thursday chaired a comprehensive meeting of senior Officers here at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office complex.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Chief Engineer SSCI, Abdul Qayoom Kirmani, Superintending Engineer R&B, Tatheer Manzoor, Joint Commissioner, SMC, Suhail ul Islam, Collector Land Acquisition R&B, Syed Farooq, SDM West, Irfan Bahadur, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Umar Gulzar, Executive Engineers of R&B, PHE, KPDC, City Drainage, UEED & SMC Tehsildars South, Tehsildar Shalteng and other Officers.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner undertook a comprehensive assessment of the progress in planning and execution of utility shifting for both proposed and ongoing works, emphasizing the need to further expedite the process to accelerate overall project execution.

The DC was given project



wise appraisal regarding the current status of estimate preparations and utility shifting for key development projects and ongoing infrastructure works including 4L Flyover from Parimpora to Dalgate Junction, Parimpora-Shalteng Flyover, Vehicle Under Pass (VUP) at Moominabad, Panthachowk flyover, FOB at Children's Hospital Bemina, expansion of Boulevard road and Vehicle Under Pass (VUP) at Nowgam Railway Crossing.

The DC was apprised that the encouraging progress has been achieved in the preparation of estimates of proposed major infrastructural projects with several key projects at advanced stages of finalization.

On the occasion, the DC emphasized the importance of inter-departmental coordination in timely addressing issues related to land acquisition, clearances and utility relocation. He stressed the need to work diligently on designs, technical feasibility and cost estimates to ensure that DPRs are robust, accurate and ready for timely submission and approval.

The DC directed Officers and Engineers to work with due diligence and ensure that all projects incorporate land acquisition costs in their DPRs for seamless and uninterrupted execution of major infrastructure development projects across the district within set timelines.

CEO KDA reviews development works across key tourist spots



KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, APRIL 23: Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Kokernag Development Authority (KDA), Mohammad Rouf Rahman, yesterday conducted an extensive tour of various important tourist locations under KDA to review the on-ground progress of ongoing work.

Accompanied by staff and R&B engineers, the tour commenced at Mirza Swami Kaakh Temple Trust, Hangalgund, where the CEO, along with members of the Kashmiri Pandit community, inspected the premises. On the occasion, a newly constructed 4-seater toilet block was handed over to the Trust, addressing a long-pending requirement for pilgrims visiting the temple in large numbers.

Later, the CEO visited Vailoo Main Chowk and conducted a

spot inspection to resolve issues related to the location and construction of toilet blocks near the main road and Jamia Masjid. The matter was settled amicably on the spot.

The CEO, as per an official statement, also visited Daksum, where he reviewed the progress of the KDA cafeteria and the construction of concrete steps leading up to the hutment area of KDA, Tourism Department, and JKTDC. The visit was attended by local residents, shopkeepers, hoteliers, and officials from R&B and KDA.

During the tour, the CEO also visited Dandipora Park and directed KDA officials to ensure its proper upkeep and maintenance. He emphasized preparing the park to welcome tourists and visitors from across Jammu & Kashmir and beyond, with improved facilities and a clean aesthetic environment.

Nasha Mukh J&K Abhiyan

DYSSO Srinagar organises activities to mark Earth Day

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, APRIL 23: In line with the ongoing 100 Days "Nasha Mukh J&K Abhiyan" the District Youth Services and Sports Office (DYSSO) Srinagar Thursday organised a series of activities across various educational institutions to mark Earth Day and Open Mic Day.

The programme was conducted, aiming to promote a healthy and drug-free lifestyle among the youth.

The initiative, as per an official statement, focuses on sensitising young minds about the harmful effects of substance abuse and encouraging them to adopt positive life choices.

Students from different institutions actively participated in pledge ceremonies, awareness programmes, open mic sessions, and talk shows.

The events highlighted the



importance of a pollution-free environment and a drug-free society, reinforcing the message "Choose Life, Not Drugs."

As part of the campaign, an open mic talk show was also organised at the iconic Zero Bridge, symbolising heritage and unity. The platform provided an opportunity for youth and the general public to express their views openly and discuss the adverse effects of drug abuse.

District Youth Services and Sports Officer Srinagar, Ghulam Hassan Lone, along with officials and field staff of the Youth Services and Sports Department, personally participated in the programme, encouraging youth engagement and boosting their morale.

The initiative witnessed enthusiastic participation and served as a meaningful step towards building a healthier, aware, and responsible generation.

DC Bandipora reviews VVP-II, aspirational block programme

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, APRIL 23: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Thursday chaired a comprehensive review meeting at Guest House R&B Badgam, Tulail, to assess the implementation of Vibrant Village Programme (VVP-II), Aspirational Block Programme and CAPEX works, as part of her ongoing tour of Sub-Division Gurez.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by senior officers including PO ICDS Bandipora, SDM Gurez, Principal GDC Tulail, ACP, CMO, CEO, DSHO, Executive Engineers of PMGSY and KPDC, officers from Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, NRLM, Forest, ITI, Tourism, Banking and other line departments.

During the meeting, officers presented detailed proposals and sector-wise plans for inclusion under the Vibrant Village Programme. It was informed that 29 villages are being covered under the programme across four thematic areas, with 26 villages already



covered and 3 pending.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed proposals related to infrastructure development, tourism promotion, agriculture and allied sectors, education, skill development and livelihood generation.

Threadbare discussions were held on key projects including PMGSY Phase-IV roads, electrification under RDSS, mobile connectivity in border areas, and strengthening of health and education infrastructure. The DC emphasized timely completion of works, better

inter-departmental coordination, avoidance of duplication in funding, and efficient utilization of resources.

Reviewing sectoral issues, the Deputy Commissioner directed departments to focus on tangible infrastructure improvements rather than mere procurement, and asked all departments to submit revised action plans within a stipulated timeframe. She also stressed the need for saturation of developmental indicators, including completion of girls' toilets in schools, health-care facilities, and essential

services in remote areas.

The meeting also deliberated on livelihood generation initiatives under NRLM, promotion of agriculture, animal husbandry, wool processing, and development of medicinal plants. Officers were directed to identify beneficiaries, ensure bank linkage, and facilitate skill training and entrepreneurship among youth.

Issues related to connectivity, including road access for heavy vehicles on Bandipora-Gurez road, mobile network gaps, and requirement of ATMs and transport facilities for students, were also discussed. The Deputy Commissioner directed concerned authorities to take necessary steps for early redressal.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner also listened to public grievances and demands. Locals raised concerns regarding winter hardships, health infrastructure, staff shortages, transportation, and other basic amenities. She assured that all genuine issues would be addressed in a time-bound manner.

CEO SSCL inspects Goni Khan Market; directs swift resolution of civic issues

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Apr 23: In a continued effort to strengthen field-level monitoring and ensure efficient civic service delivery, Faz Lul Haseeb, Chief Executive Officer, Srinagar Smart City Limited (SSCL), conducted an on-site inspection of Goni Khan Market, one of the city's prominent and busiest commercial centres.

During the visit, the CEO interacted with traders, shopkeepers, and local stakeholders to assess the condition of civic infrastructure and obtain first-hand feedback on issues affecting the day-to-day functioning of the market. Various concerns relating to sanitation, drainage management, and public utility services were brought to his notice during the interaction.

Taking immediate cognizance of the issues raised, the CEO issued on-the-spot directions to the concerned wings for their prompt redressal. The Drainage Wing was instructed to clear existing bottlenecks and ensure the proper functioning and regular maintenance of the drainage network in and around Goni Khan Market to prevent inconvenience to traders, commuters, and pedestrians.

The inspection also included a review of the proposed connection of a feeder pillar with the main power cabling. It was informed that the work had faced interruptions due to objections raised by the Goni Khan Market Coordination Committee. Taking note of the matter, the CEO directed the Chief Engineer, SSCL, to engage



with the concerned stakeholders and the committee to resolve the issue amicably and ensure that the feeder pillar is connected with the main power cabling at the earliest, facilitating the smooth functioning of the electrical infrastructure. The visit underscores the

administration's continued emphasis on proactive field engagement, coordinated departmental action, and time-bound grievance redressal aimed at strengthening civic amenities and enhancing the overall urban experience in Srinagar. The CEO was accompanied by

the Chief Engineer, SSCL; Chief Sanitation Officer, Srinagar Municipal Corporation; Executive Engineer (MCD Wing); AEE Mechanical (Left Sub-Division); Executive Engineer (CDC); along with other senior officials from SSCL and SMC.

Secretary RDD reviews draft O&M, FSSM policies

Describes source segregation as cornerstone of effective waste management

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Apr 23: Secretary, Rural Development Department (RDD) and Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad on Thursday chaired a meeting to review the draft Operations and Maintenance (O&M) and Faecal Sludge and Septage Management (FSSM) policies, which are in the final stages prior to notification, under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G).

The meeting was attended by Director General Rural Sanitation Anoo Malhotra, Director Finance Umar Khan, Superintending Engineers REW (Jammu/Kashmir), Deputy Directors Rural Sanitation and other senior officers.

The Secretary directed that key features be refined and aligned before notification, particularly with regard to enforcement provisions and a clear appellate mechanism. He emphasized that the Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACP) should act as the appellate authority, with oversight at the Directorate level.

Reviewing alignment with the Solid Waste Management Rules, he reiterated that Panchayats will be empowered to levy user charges and impose penalties for non-compliance, especially for failure to ensure source segregation.

"Source segregation is the cornerstone of effective waste management and must be strictly enforced," he said, stressing segregation into dry, wet, sanitary and special waste streams.

The Secretary



underscored the role of Deputy Commissioners, as heads of District Sanitation Committees, in strengthening the monitoring frameworks, particularly for door-to-door collection systems and ensuring elimination of visible litter. He also called for preparation of district-specific waste management plans, detailing logistics such as vehicle deployment, manpower, collection frequency and ward-wise schedules.

On financial sustainability, he stressed the rationalisation and enforceability of user charges, noting limited willingness to pay in rural areas.

The meeting also discussed provisions related to the Bulk Waste Generators (BWGs),

including incorporation of Extended BWC Responsibility in the policy framework.

Highlighting the need to sustain SBM-G gains, the Secretary called for a robust, community-driven O&M framework to maintain sanitation assets, particularly in over 5,900 ODF Plus villages across the UT.

The officials informed that 10 percent of PRI Capex allocation has been earmarked for O&M of sanitation and SLWM assets.

Regarding FSSM, he emphasized the importance of a structured system for safe collection, transportation, treatment and disposal of faecal sludge, noting that nearly 60 percent of rural households rely on on-site sanitation systems.

Two drug peddlers arrested, contraband substances seized: Police

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Apr 23: Continuing its sustained crackdown on drug trafficking under the ongoing Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, Police have arrested two drug peddlers in Anantnag, Sopore and recovered contraband substances from their possession.

According to a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), in Anantnag, acting on a specific tip-off, Police conducted a raid at the residential house of Farooq Ahmad Wani son of Ghulam

Rasool Wani resident of Nowbugh Veeri Bijbehara. During search, 371 grams of charas powder-like substance weighing 371 was recovered from the premises. The accused was arrested on the spot, and further investigation into the matter is underway.

In Sopore, a police party during naka checking in Hygam intercepted a suspicious person. During personal search, contraband charas-like substance was recovered from his possession. He has been identified as Farhad Yousef Mir son of

Mohammad Yousef Mir resident of Hygam.

Accordingly, cases under relevant sections of law have been registered at respective police stations and further investigation have been initiated.

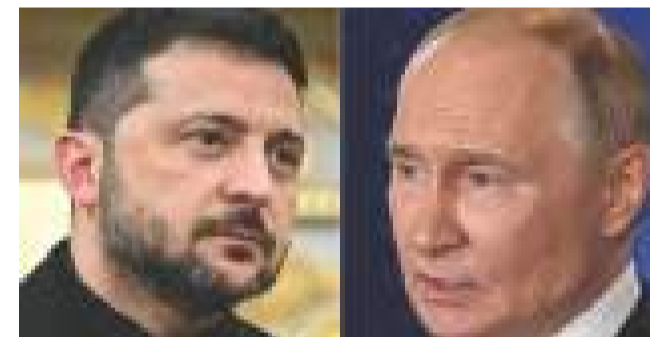
These successful operations reflect J&K Police's firm resolve to eradicate the menace of drugs from society. Police reiterate its commitment to safeguard the youth from substance abuse and urges the community to extend cooperation in this collective mission against drug trafficking.

Kremlin says Putin can meet Zelensky only to agree final conflict arrangements

KT News Desk

MOSCOW: Russian President Vladimir Putin can only meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky for the purpose of finalizing agreements on the conflict, Russian news agencies quoted Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying on Wednesday.

Peskov's comments on state television, reported by Russian news agencies, came after Ukraine's Foreign Minister, Andrii Sybiha said Ukraine asked Turkiye to host a meeting



between the two leaders to reinvigorate stalling peace talks. "The main thing is the goal of this meeting. Why should they meet? Putin has said

he is ready for a meeting in Moscow at any moment," the news agencies quoted Peskov as saying. "The main thing is that there

should be a reason to meet, and the main thing is that the meeting should be productive. And it can only be for the purpose of finalizing agreements."

Peskov said any such meeting required careful preparation and "political will from the Kyiv regime. And for now, we see no such political will."

He said Russia's main aim in its military drive, known as a "special military operation" was to ensure its vital interests and guard against Ukrainian attacks on energy and other targets which he described as "the danger of terrorism from the Kyiv region."

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Article 370

extremism.

Targeting the Trinamool Congress government in West Bengal, Shah alleged corruption in recruitment processes and misuse of public funds, and said those involved would face action if his party forms the government in the state.

He also spoke about border security and said illegal infiltration would be addressed through identification and deportation measures. Shah said sealing of borders and coordination among agencies would be ensured.

Outlining proposals for north Bengal, he referred to plans for health and education infrastructure, including institutions such as an AIIMS, IIT and IIM, along with a cancer hospital and road connectivity projects.

Shah said support measures for farmers, women and youth would be implemented, including financial assistance schemes and employment-related initiatives.

Shah said issues related to Gorkha communities would be addressed and cases registered against them would be reviewed if his party comes to power in the state.

He said the Centre had held meetings to resolve matters related to Darjeeling but claimed the state government did not participate.

He added that efforts would continue to address political and administrative concerns in the region. (KNO)

NEP potent tool

students get quality education.

"Once all the floors of building are complete, it will serve more than 1,500 students transform thousands of lives. With future residential facilities for 100 boys, local economy will get a boost, backward areas will be transformed, and society will advance with new confidence," the Lieutenant Governor said.

LG Sinha called upon students and teachers to contribute to nation-building and adapt classrooms to today's changing global landscape,

positioning India as the world's leading knowledge economy.

"We must strengthen cultural awareness in students, as unity in diversity defines global society. Promote communication skills for clear expression, enabling the new generation to improve lives, uphold democratic values, and foster collaboration for a prosperous J&K," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that every student talented in art, craft, music, or entrepreneurship deserves equal respect and opportunity.

"Teachers must recognize that education focused solely on marks and narrow academics, sidelining art, sports, and skills, is unfit for the future. We must prepare students for irreplaceable human capacities like creativity, critical thinking, moral decision-making, collaboration, and lifelong learning which no machine can replace," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said the world is changing rapidly and unlike the stable careers in the past, professional workforce requires continuous learning, skilling and upskilling.

"We are at a threshold where AI and automation is transforming industries, offices, hospitals, and schools and our human resource need to be a step ahead," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The initiative of Bharat Sevashram Sangha is supported by Indian Oil, Hindustan Petroleum and other donors.

Srimat Swami Biswatmanandaji Maharaj General Secretary, Bharat Sevashram Sangha; Srimat Swami Ambarishanandaji Maharaj, Joint Secretary, and senior sanyasins of Bharat Sevashram Sangha; and senior officials were present.

Jugal Kishore Sharma, Member of Parliament; Ms Devyani Rana, Member of Legislative Assembly from Nagrota; Dr Nirmal Singh, former Deputy Chief Minister; Rashmi Govil, Director HR, Indian Oil Corporation Limited; Vilas Zode, Executive Director-HR, Hindustan Petroleum; Chander Mohan Gupta, former

Mayor JMC and other prominent citizens also attended the inaugural ceremony. (KNO)

NIA attaches

under Khewat No. 98, Khata No. 527, and Survey No. 1678/858, at Abhama and Draklaran. (KNO)

Committed to responsive

transport sector.

Another deputation, the Pir Panjal Welfare and Development Trust, led by Vivek Verma, called on the Chief Minister. The delegation brought forth a range of developmental priorities, reflecting the aspirations of the region's residents.

The members underscored the immense tourism potential of Pir Panjal region and called for focused efforts to harness it sustainably. They also highlighted the importance of strengthening health and education infrastructure, ensuring reliable drinking water supply, and expanding employment opportunities, particularly for youth in border areas. Issues pertaining to the construction of community and individual bunkers, as well as further strengthening of the administrative framework in these areas, were also brought to the fore.

The Chief Minister gave a patient and attentive hearing to all the deputations and individuals. He assured them that their genuine concerns would be addressed on priority, reaffirming the government's commitment to inclusive development and responsive governance across all regions.

LG attends foundation

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine. He assured all the necessary support and assistance from the administration.

Sanjay Gandotra, President, Sarv Shakti Chandi Mata Mandir, and temple committee members including Dr DS Jamwal, Vikas Singh Jamwal, Praveen Singh, Balwan Singh were present.

Devyani Rana, Member of Legislative Assembly from Nagrota; Dr Nirmal Singh, former Deputy Chief Minister; Purnima Sharma, former Deputy Mayor, JMC, senior officials and devotees in large number also attended the foundation day ceremony.

Mass mock drills

the general public.

Participants were guided through evacuation protocols, crisis communication and coordinated response strategies. Officials said the drill provided a practical platform to understand how timely intervention and coordinated action can reduce risks during unforeseen situations. The exercise saw participation from civil administration, SDRF and traffic police, reflecting a unified response framework.

BUDGAM

In Budgam district, another high-intensity mock drill was held at Government Degree College in the presence of Deputy Commissioner Athar Aamir Khan and senior officials from police, SDRF, National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), fire and emergency services, and the health department.

The exercise simulated real-time emergency conditions and included demonstrations of search and rescue operations, evacuation drills and emergency medical response. Students and staff actively participated in the programme.

Officials said the drills aimed to assess the preparedness and efficiency of response agencies and to create awareness among the public, particularly students, about the importance of disaster readiness.

They said coordinated efforts and timely action can significantly reduce risks and save lives during emergencies. The participation of multiple agencies highlighted a well-synchronised disaster response system in the districts.

Authorities across the districts reiterated their commitment to strengthening disaster management systems and said such mock drills would continue to be conducted regularly to

ensure preparedness at both institutional and community levels.

They stressed that awareness, preparedness and coordination remain key to effective disaster response and risk mitigation. (KNO)

Intermittent rain spells,

expected, with light rain or thunder at a few places. Similar conditions are likely to continue on April 29 and 30, with brief spells of light rain at isolated locations, mainly during late afternoon hours. For May 1 and 2, the MeT has forecast generally cloudy skies with brief spells of light rain or thundershowers at a few places towards late afternoon.

Meanwhile, the Meteorological Centre issued an advisory for farmers, asking them to suspend farm operations on April 24 and 25 in view of the expected weather conditions.

The department has also cautioned about possible gusty winds during afternoon and evening hours on some days. (KNO)

J&K set to spread

Corporation of India has indicated reasonable financial requirements for organizing the event. She added that the Department has already undertaken the necessary groundwork and is well-prepared to ensure its success.

The proposed festival is envisaged to be held after the conclusion of the annual Amarnath Yatra, with final dates to be decided by the concerned department.

Highlighting the importance of inclusive development and tourism promotion, it was also decided that the festival will not be confined to Srinagar alone. Film screenings and related events will be organized across multiple scenic locations, including Bhaderwah, Pahalgam, Gulmarg, and Jammu, thereby boosting both emerging and established tourist destinations.

This initiative marks a major step towards positioning Jammu & Kashmir as a vibrant hub for film tourism and cultural engagement at the national level.

Voter turnout figures in Bengal so far make me certain that BJP set for landslide victory: Modi



PTI

Krishnanagar, Apr 23: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday congratulated the people of West Bengal for their massive turnout in the ongoing first phase of assembly elections, and called the vote figures so far indicative of an "overwhelming mandate for change".

Addressing a poll rally in Krishnanagar in Nadia district, Modi also congratulated the Election Commission for keeping "violence during the assembly polls in the state at a minimum".

"This is the first time in the last 50 years of poll history in Bengal that incidents of violence were kept at a minimum. The information I have received so far about the record-breaking turnout makes me certain that this is going to be an overwhelming mandate in favour of a change which Bengal's voters have already decided to bring about," the PM said.

Referring to the voter turnout figures elsewhere in the country, the PM claimed the BJP achieved decisive victories

individuals a thunderous jolt," the PM said, "I had 'jhalhuri', but it seems that the TMC leaders are feeling heat of the chillies."

Referring to "people's disgust with TMC's syndicate, criminal and Mafia nexus", Modi claimed that the party will not win even a single seat in certain districts of the state.

Speaking in an area which has a significant concentration of the Hindu Namasudra Matua community members and where SIR deletions have led to perceptible angst, the Prime Minister said that post elections, the process of awarding citizenship to persecuted refugees from Bangladesh would be expedited.

"The TMC mantra is Ghuspetiyo ke saath, ghuspetiyo ka vikaas (stay with infiltrators to promote their development. We must stop this conspiracy of granting citizenship to outsiders with false documents which endangers our land. A new guarantee of security will begin in Bengal after May 4," the PM said.

Invoking Matua religious leaders Hari Chand and Guru Chand Thakur, Modi said no Matua family needs to fear persecution from the TMC.

"Modi stands with all those who have sought refuge in India following religious persecution. The process of granting citizenship through CAA will be expedited further after the BJP assumes power in Bengal," the PM assured. Focusing on the issue of women's safety in the state, Modi referred to the 2022 gangrape and murder of a teenager in Hanskhali in Nadia, calling it an example of TMC's model of fear which it has spread across the state.

whenever people turned up to vote in massive numbers.

Bengal has recorded an average voter turnout of nearly 90 per cent till 5 pm.

Reports of sporadic violence were received from some pockets of the state during the first half of polls taking place across 152 assembly seats amid unprecedented security arrangements, where over 2400 companies of central paramilitary troops have been deployed.

Modi said that the BJP's Bengal unit would hold victory celebrations on May 4 after the counting of votes gets over where the party would distribute among people not just sweets, but also 'jhalhuri', the popular street snack which the PM savoured at an unscheduled stop during his visit to Jhargram last week.

Referring to that incident, Modi took a dig at TMC leaders after Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee termed the PM's extended stay as "drama" and claimed that "the entire episode was scripted".

"I have heard that even jhalhuri has given certain

PM to inaugurate indoor cricket infrastructure in 6 NE states on April 28

PTI

Gangtok, Apr 23: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to virtually inaugurate indoor cricket infrastructure in six states of the North Eastern region during his visit to Sikkim on April 28, BCCI Secretary Devajit Saikia said on Thursday.

The PM will attend a function at Paljor Stadium here on April 28 to mark the conclusion of the year-long celebrations of 50 years of Sikkim's statehood.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) Secretary visited the indoor cricket stadium site to inspect the infrastructural development ahead of the inauguration.

"The honourable Prime Minister, during his upcoming visit to Sikkim, will virtually inaugurate the indoor cricket facility at Rangpo, along with similar facilities across five other North Eastern states," Saikia told reporters.

The Indoor Cricket Academy in Sikkim is part of a broader BCCI initiative to strengthen cricket infrastructure across the region, with similar facilities developed in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram and Nagaland.

The foundation stones for these projects were laid on May 20, 2024.

The Indoor Cricket Academy project at Rangpo in East Sikkim district is now complete, said Saikia who was accompanied during the visit by IPL Governing Body member Mamom Majumdar and Sikkim Cricket Association President Tika Subba.

He said that indoor infrastructure was necessary in the region, as it rains for almost six to seven months a year.

"These facilities will now ensure that players have access to year-round training opportunities," Saikia said.

The BCCI secretary undertook an inspection of the state-of-the-art Indoor Cricket Academy at Mining in Rangpo and expressed satisfaction with the quality of infrastructure developed, the state cricket body said in a statement later.

West Asia conflict, supply chain disruptions may create challenges to economy: RBI bulletin



PTI

Mumbai, Apr 23: Persistent conflict in West Asia and supply chain disruptions could pose challenges to the domestic economy in the form of higher energy costs, input cost pressures, disruption in trade flows and financial market spillovers," the article said.

Though inflation remains within the tolerance band, upside risks have increased, driven by supply-side disruptions, including weather-related uncertainties, it pointed out.

"Possible second-round effects with the supply shock transforming itself into a demand shock also warrant careful and continuous assessment. The temporary two-week ceasefire between the US and Iran has, however, provided some breather to the global economy," it said.

The strong macroeconomic fundamentals should support the Indian economy to maintain its resilience to withstand such shocks, according to the article.

The RBI said the views expressed in the Bulletin article are of the authors and do not represent the views of the central bank.

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India's strong commitment to multilateralism underscored during meeting with UN chief



PTI

United Nations, Apr 23: A senior Indian diplomat met UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres here and underscored India's "strong commitment" to multilateralism.

Secretary (West) in the Ministry of External Affairs Ambassador Sibi George called on Guterres at the UN headquarters Wednesday.

"Both exchanged views on UN reforms and imparting greater voice to the Global South, which India has consistently championed including through initiatives such as India-UN Development Partnership Fund," MEA official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said in a post on X.

George arrived here Monday and commenced his official visit to the UN by paying floral tributes at the bust of Mahatma Gandhi at the UN Headquarters.

During the week, he held a series of discussions with top UN officials and addressed key meetings where he highlighted the need for greater representation in the permanent membership of the Security Council, particularly of countries from the Global South.

George also participated in the interactive dialogues with candidates for the post of the next Secretary General of the United Nations, who will assume charge in January 2027.

Guterres will complete his tenure on December 31 this year, after having served two consecutive five-year terms as the world's top diplomat.

No plan yet to raise petrol, diesel prices: Oil Min

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 23: The government on Thursday dismissed reports suggesting petrol and diesel prices may be hiked by Rs 25-28 a litre soon after assembly elections, saying there is no such proposal under consideration.

"There are some news reports suggesting a price hike of petrol and diesel. It is hereby clarified that there is no such proposal under consideration by the government," the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said in a post on X.

The clarification came after a report by Kotak Institutional Equities hinted of a steep increase in petrol and diesel prices once the polling for assembly elections in states like West Bengal ends



on April 29. Kotak projected a Rs 25-28 a litre increase in price based on crude oil staying close to USD 120 per barrel.

The ministry said such reports are "designed to create fear and panic amongst the citizens and are mischievous and misleading."

"In fact, India is the only country where petrol

retaliation that effectively shut the Strait of Hormuz - one of the world's most critical energy arteries, linking the Persian Gulf to global markets and handling roughly a fifth of global oil trade along with significant volumes of liquefied natural gas.

After the Iran war, oil prices spiked from around USD 70 per barrel to USD 119 before seeing some correction. Renewed tensions have pushed Brent - the world's most known crude oil benchmark - to USD 103-106 per barrel.

Despite a more than 50 per cent rise in input crude oil prices, petrol and diesel rates have remained unchanged in India. Petrol is priced at Rs 94.77 a litre in the national capital and diesel comes for Rs 87.67.

and diesel prices haven't increased in the last four years," it said. "Government of India and oil PSUs have taken relentless steps in order to insulate the Indian citizens from steep increases in international prices."

International oil prices spiked after US and Israel attacked Iran on February 28, and Tehran's sweeping

West Asia crisis

India, Qatar discuss ways to boost trade, strengthen supply chains

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 23: India and Qatar on Thursday held discussions on ways to boost bilateral trade and strengthen supply chain resilience, which has been disrupted due to the West Asia crisis.

The meeting was held between Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and Qatari Minister of State for Foreign Trade Affairs Ahmed bin Mohammed Al Sayed.

"We discussed ways to further enhance our bilateral trade and investment ties while strengthening supply chain resilience. Looking forward to deepening our strategic partnership in the times ahead," Goyal said in a post on social media. Both had virtual interaction.

The bilateral trade between the countries stood at USD 14 billion in 2024-25. Both sides have aimed at doubling it by 2030.

They are also looking at negotiating a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA).



Goyal recently discussed trade and supply chain related issues with trade ministers of other GCC members also. It included Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait. All these countries are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) with which India is in the process negotiating a free trade agreement.

The US and Israel attack on Iran

has led to severe disruptions in the movement of cargo ships in international waters, particularly to the West Asian nations.

The conflict has posed challenges for exporters to ship goods to the Gulf region, with which India had a bilateral trade of USD 178 billion in 2024-25 (USD 56.87 billion exports and USD 121.67 billion imports).

India great country: Trump after controversial social media repost

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 23: The US on Thursday sought to control the damage done by a controversial social media repost by US President Donald Trump, putting out a message that the American leader believes India is a "great" country led by a "good friend of mine".

The President has said "India is a great country with a very good friend of mine at the top", the spokesperson of the US embassy said.

The spokesperson's statement came in response to queries from the Indian media about the controversy

created by Trump reposting on social media comments by radio show host Michael Savage that referred to India, China and some other countries as "hellholes".

The spokesperson did not specify where and when Trump made the remarks that India is a great country.

Savage had made the comments in the context of a case in the US supreme court challenging birthright citizenship.

When asked about the controversy, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said: "We have seen some reports. That is where I leave it."

Gold falls Rs 900, silver plunges Rs 5,300 in Delhi



PTI

New Delhi, Apr 23: Gold prices declined by Rs 900 to Rs 1.56 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Thursday, and silver plunged to Rs 2.50 lakh per kilogram amid weak global trends.

The yellow metal had finished at Rs 1,57,000 per 10 grams in the previous market session.

Gold of 99.9 per cent purity depreciated by Rs 900 to Rs 1,56,100 per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes) on Thursday, according to the All India Sarafa

Association. Silver prices fell Rs 5,300 to Rs 2,50,000 per kg (inclusive of all taxes) from Wednesday's closing level of Rs 2,55,300 per kg.

"Gold prices extended their decline as a stronger US dollar and rising oil prices weighed on sentiment," Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst - Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

In the international market, spot silver fell nearly 2 per cent to USD 76.37 per ounce while gold traded marginally lower at USD 4,738.40 per ounce.

Trump orders US military to 'shoot and kill' Iranian small boats choking Strait of Hormuz

AP

Dubai, Apr 23: President Donald Trump said Thursday he has ordered the US military to "shoot and kill" small Iranian boats that deploy mines to choke traffic through the Strait of Hormuz.

Trump's post on social media came shortly after the US military seized another tanker associated with the smuggling of Iranian oil, ratcheting up a standoff with Tehran over the strait through which 20 per cent of all crude oil and natural gas traded passes.

"I am ordering the United States Navy to shoot and kill any boat, small boats though they may be...that is putting mines in the waters of the Strait of Hormuz," Trump posted. "There is to be no hesitation. Additionally, our mine sweepers are clearing the Strait right now."

"I am hereby ordering that activity to continue, but at a tripled up level!" Trump added.

He also said the military is intensifying mine clearing operations in the critical waterway.

The move comes a day after Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guards attacked three cargo ships in the strait, capturing two of them. The Defence Department released video footage



earlier on Thursday of US forces on the deck of the Guinea-flagged oil tanker Majestic X, which was seized in the Indian Ocean. "We will continue global maritime enforcement to disrupt illicit networks and interdict vessels providing material support to Iran, wherever they operate," a Pentagon statement said.

Ship-tracking data showed the Majestic X in the Indian Ocean between Sri Lanka and Indonesia, roughly the same location as the oil tanker Tifani, earlier seized by American forces. It had been bound for Zhoushan, China.

The vessel previously had been named Phoenix and had been sanctioned by the US Treasury Department in 2024 for smuggling Iranian crude oil in contravention of US sanctions on the Islamic Republic.

There was no immediate

government's behaviour will change and "you're going to deal with people who all of a sudden have become pragmatists."

Pahlavi, 65, has been in exile for nearly 50 years. His father, Iran's shah, was so widely hated that millions took to the streets in 1979, forcing him from power. Nevertheless, Pahlavi is trying to position himself as a player in his country's future.

Since the Feb. 28 start of the war between Iran, Israel and the United States, over 30 ships have come under attack in the waters of the Persian Gulf, the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman.

The threat of attack, rising insurance premiums and other fears have stopped traffic from moving through the strait. Iran's ability to restrict traffic through the strait, which leads from the Persian Gulf to the open ocean, has proved a major strategic advantage.

The ceasefire has been strained by duelling US attacks on Iranian ships and those by Iran on commercial vessels. It also remains unclear when, or if, the two sides will meet again in the Pakistani capital Islamabad, where officials say they are still trying to bring the countries together to reach a diplomatic deal.

Iran's exiled crown prince Reza Pahlavi splattered with red liquid in Berlin

PTI

Berlin, Apr 23: Iran's exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi was splattered with red liquid on Thursday as he left a building in Berlin.

Pahlavi had just departed a news briefing, during which he criticised the ceasefire between the United States and Iran, when the incident occurred outside Germany's federal news conference building.

He appeared unhurt by the liquid coating the back of his blazer and neck, and waved to his supporters before he got into a car that drove away. Police said the liquid appeared to be tomato juice.

The alleged perpetrator, whose name was not released in line with German privacy rules, was immediately detained by police.

Pahlavi, 65, is the son of Iran's former shah, who was so widely hated that millions took to the streets in 1979 to force him from power. Nevertheless, Pahlavi is trying to position himself as a player in his country's future, though it's unclear how much support he has in Iran after he has been in exile for nearly 50 years.

Hundreds of his supporters demonstrated Thursday near Germany's parliament building, according to German news agency dpa. Pahlavi,



who was not invited to meet with any government representatives during his visit to Berlin, argued Thursday that the ceasefire agreement assumes the Iranian government's behaviour will change and "you're going to deal with people who all of a sudden have become pragmatists."

"I don't see that happening," he said. "I'm not saying that diplomacy should not be given a chance, but I think diplomacy has been given enough chance."

Pahlavi is jockeying for a return to power should the Shiite theocracy fall and has supported the US-Israeli military intervention in the Middle East.

Pahlavi in Berlin called on Europeans to do more to support Iranian people fighting

for democracy. He claimed 19 political prisoners were executed by Iranian authorities in the past two weeks and another 20 people have been sentenced to death.

"Will the free world do something, or watch the slaughter in silence?" Pahlavi said.

Meanwhile, more than an hour after the incident, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz released a statement saying the government welcomes the extension of the ceasefire.

"This presents an important opportunity to resume diplomatic negotiations in Islamabad with the aim of making peace and averting further escalation of the war," the statement said. "Tehran should seize this opportunity."

Starc cleared by CA to play IPL, likely to be available for DC's game on May 1

PTI

Sydney, Apr 23: Mitchell Starc has been cleared by Cricket Australia to feature in the Indian Premier League with the pacer expected to be available for Delhi Capitals' match against Rajasthan Royals on May 1.

The left-arm quick has been sidelined since January due to elbow and shoulder niggles. He played a key role across all five Ashes Tests, earning the Player of the Series honour, before featuring in five Big Bash League games for Sydney Sixers later that month.

"Starc is expected to build up his workloads on the ground in India and is on track to make his debut for the 2026 season in Delhi's May 1 match against Rajasthan Royals," Cricket.com.au reported. The 36-year-old's absence from the early phase of the IPL had sparked debate over the commitment of overseas players, prompting Starc to address the issue on social media and clarify what he termed "heavily misinformed opinions".

"Despite the opinions and views of certain individuals with their platforms in and through the Indian media, I'm currently rehabbing and managing an injury in my shoulder and elbow of which I didn't know the extent of during the Australian summer," Starc had posted on Instagram.

Sports Ministry to organise 'Chintan Shivir' in Srinagar from today

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 23: The Sports Ministry will organise a three-day 'Chintan Shivir' in Srinagar from Friday, bringing together sports and youth affairs ministers from states and Union Territories to deliberate on strengthening sports governance and youth development frameworks through enhanced Centre-State collaboration.

The event, which will conclude on Sunday, will be held at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre and will be led by Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviva, along with Minister of State for Youth Affairs and Sports Raksha Khadse.

"The Chintan Shivir will serve as a high-level platform for structured deliberations



aimed at strengthening sports governance and youth development frameworks through enhanced Centre-State collaboration, policy alignment and institutional convergence," said a ministry statement.

"The deliberations will place significant emphasis on strengthening the sports ecosystem in the country, with focused discussions on medal strategies and athlete

development pathways under the Khelo India Mission, improving Centre-State coordination through the proposed Khelo Bharat Niti, and advancing systems for talent identification and grassroots sports development," it added.

Among the key issues on the agenda will be promoting clean sport and exploring ways to position the country as a global hub for sports

goods manufacturing.

"Issues related to sports governance, promotion of clean and safe sport, and the development of a robust sports goods manufacturing ecosystem will also be taken up. The Shivir will further review the Action Taken Report of previous editions to ensure continuity, accountability and measurable outcomes," it said.

The Shivir will also include activities aimed at promoting holistic engagement, including Yoga sessions, a Fit India Cyclathon and a cultural programme, along with opportunities for informal consultations among participating States and Union Territories.

Besides sports, the Shivir will also deliberate on youth affairs, with a focus on expanding engagement, strengthening delivery frameworks, and enhancing institutional impact.

Nepal President suspends Parl session of both houses without convening

PTI

Kathmandu, Apr 23: Nepal President Ramchandra Paudel on Thursday suspended the session of both houses of the Federal Parliament without even convening.

Earlier, Paudel had summoned the parliamentary session for April 30 on the recommendation of the cabinet on April 21. The president cited "special reasons" for suspending the session of both the houses, the House of Representatives and the National Assembly, on the recommendation of the Nepal government and the council of ministers, Ritesh Kumar Shakya, spokesperson of the Office of the President, said. No further details were disclosed regarding the reasons behind the suspension.

Senior-most Parliament Member and Nepali Congress leader Arjun Narsingh KC said that the government's decision to suspend the Parliament session even without convening was "unprecedented and surprising". The development comes a day after Nepal Home Minister Sudan Gurung tendered his resignation after allegations relating to his financial conduct while holding the office. On April 9, Prime Minister Balendra Shah sacked Minister for Labour, Employment and Social Security Dip Kumar Sah from his post at the recommendation of the ruling Rastriya Swatantra Party (RSP).

In March, Shah - popular only as Balen - and his RSP rode to power decimating the traditional parties in the first general elections since last year's violent Gen Z protests that sought generational change and a corruption-free regime.

Knight Riders home base to host Olympic cricket: ICC CEO



PTI

Los Angeles, Apr 23: ICC CEO Sanjog Gupta on Thursday termed the "ground breaking" of the cricket venue for the 2028 Olympics as the fulfilment of a long awaited "promise", noting that the facility, which also serves as the home ground of the Los Angeles Knight Riders, will bring the sport to the global showpiece.

"This is a moment in history because what we are breaking ground on today is not simply a cricket field. We are breaking ground on a promise. A promise that took 128 years to keep," Gupta said.

Gupta was speaking at the ground breaking ceremony of the venue for the Los Angeles 2028 Olympics.

Gupta said cricket's return to the Olympics after more than a century marked recognition of the sport's global appeal,

following the International Olympic Committee (IOC) approving its inclusion in the Los Angeles Games.

"That's how long the world's second most popular sport, a game played and passionately followed by more than 2.5 billion people, has been missing from the Olympic stage.

"When the International Olympic Committee formally approved cricket's inclusion in the Los Angeles 2028 Games, it wasn't just a scheduling announcement. It was a recognition that the Olympics should reflect the sports that billions of people love," he said.

"The International Cricket Council humbly accepted that recognition with our full commitment."

Cricket returns to the Olympics for the first time since 1900.

ICC chairman Jay Shah welcomed the development and said, "These are very exciting times for

the game of cricket as it makes giant strides in establishing itself as a global sport.

"Our focus has been on expanding the footprint of cricket and being part of the Olympic movement is something that brings both pride and dreams with it.

"The groundbreaking marks an important milestone in cricket's return to the Olympics and is a proud moment for all ICC Members and stakeholders worldwide. We're confident this venue will take centre-stage during the Games and leave a legacy for cricket in the USA."

Referring to the venue at Pomona, Gupta said its community driven legacy made it an ideal choice for cricket's Olympic return.

"I can't imagine a better venue than Pomona for the coming together of this promise. The best things in sport happen when ambition meets community, and Pomona is both.

"This site has served the people of Los Angeles County as the home of the LA County Fair, as a gathering place for trade, culture, and celebration," he said.

"There is something fitting, almost poetic, about the fact that a venue built on the idea of community coming together will now host a sport that, at its very core, is all about community."

Gupta acknowledged the role of the Knight Riders group in developing the venue, highlighting its intent to grow cricket in the United States.

INOX SRINAGAR

Movie Watchlist

Friday 24th April

BHOOTH BANGLA (U/A16+)

HINDI ATMOS

03:15 PM, 06:30 PM

GINNY WEDSS SUNNY 2 (U/A16+)

Hindi

03:30 PM

MICHAEL (U/A 13+)

ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

04:25 PM

Dhurandhar: The Revenge (A)

Hindi

06:15 PM

LEE CRONINS THE MUMMY (A)

ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES

07:05 PM