



PM Modi crushed terrorism with 'iron fist': Amit Shah

Cites Pahalgam attack, Operation Sindoor, Art 370 abrogation

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 27: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi dealt a decisive blow to terrorism by taking bold steps like abrogation of Article 370, surgical strikes and Operation Sindoor.

Addressing an election rally in West Bengal, Shah, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "PM Modi crushed terrorism which no previous leader or regime could. Operation Sindoor after the Pahalgam terror attack sent a clear message to the adversary that terrorism won't be tolerated. The government had acted firmly against terrorism and crushed it with an iron fist."

He also attacked West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata



Banerjee, accusing her government of being soft on terrorism. "The PM Modi led regime has taken decisive action against terror, particularly in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Shah cited the abrogation of

Article 370 in 2019, stating that the move had strengthened the country's fight against terrorism and integrated Jammu and Kashmir more closely with the Union.

The Union Home Minister

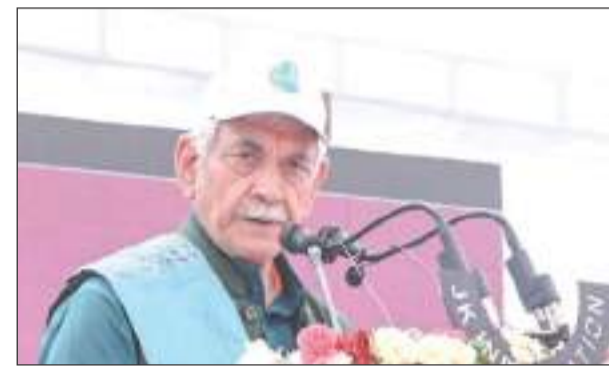
said the Centre's approach marked a shift from previous governments, asserting that strong measures had been taken to counter terror threats.

"Modi Ji ended Article 370, which was protected by the Congress and its ally TMC. Modi Ji dealt a decisive blow to terrorism through a surgical strike, airstrike, and Operation Sindoor. But the TMC and the Congress fed biryani to terrorists when they were in power," Shah said.

He also hit out at Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge over remarks against PM Modi.

"PM Modi who ended terrorism, Congress's president calls him a terrorist. Due to his proximity to Rahul Gandhi, the public conduct of Kharge Ji has deteriorated. Form a BJP government in West Bengal, and we will end terrorism here | More on P6

J&K rising with renewed strength to reject drug menace: LG Sinha



LG dedicates Indoor Stadiums to youth

KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 27: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday inaugurated the state-of-the-art Baba Jitto Indoor Stadium at Marh and Indoor Sports Stadium at Jourian, Akhnour.

Dedicating the sports facilities to the youth, the Lieutenant Governor said that new indoor Sports Stadiums, equipped with modern shooting ranges and versatile indoor courts, are designed to inspire excellence and cultivate the champions of tomorrow.

He said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Jammu & Kashmir is emerging as a sports powerhouse where world-class facilities are no longer restricted to | More on P6

I assure people spirit of our land will not be stifled

Let every village, hamlet become fortresses of resistance

Yogesh

Jammu, Apr 27: Stating that

Jammu and Kashmir is now rising with renewed strength to reject the drug menace, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday took a pledge to shield the youth from its grip.

Speaking at Nasha-Mukt Jammu Kashmir Abhiyan at Udhampur, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said, "Jammu Kashmir is now rising with renewed strength to reject the drug menace that corrodes our | More on P6

Ahead of HM's visit, Ladakh gets 5 new districts

Raja Syed Rather

Jammu, Apr 27: Ahead of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's visit to Ladakh, the administration of the Union Territory on Monday created five new districts, taking the total number of districts in the UT to seven.

In a post on X, LG of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), announced the creation of five new districts.

"A historic day for Ladakh. I have approved the notification for the creation of five new districts in Ladakh, fulfilling the aspirations and long-pending demand of the people of Ladakh," the LG announced.

The LG said the creation of five new districts — Nubra, Sham, Changthang, Zaskar, and Drass — means Ladakh will now have seven districts, up from the existing two. | More on P6

Union Min Chouhan announces mega package of Rs 4,568 cr for J&K

UT to get 330 roads, housing & horticulture boost

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Apr 27: Asserting that no village in Jammu & Kashmir will be left behind in the race for development, Union Minister for Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Monday announced a mega package for the Union Territory, including Rs 4,568 crore rural livelihood funding, 330 new roads, housing assistance and major horticulture initiatives.

The Union Minister began a two-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir on Monday. During his visit he will launch various development projects.

Addressing a press conference here, Chouhan, according to the news agency—Kashmir



News Observer (KNO), said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to the progress of Jammu & Kashmir and wants every remote village to be connected with development.

He said the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY)-IV Batch-II will be formally launched on April 28 at SKICC Srinagar in the presence of

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Kumar Choudhary.

"Under the scheme, 330 roads covering nearly 1,600 kilometres will be constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 3,568

crore, benefiting 363 habitations across Jammu & Kashmir," he said.

He said the roads will mainly connect far-flung and mountainous | More on P6

Direct Jammu–Srinagar train to boost tourism, capacity must rise: CM Omar

Says would place suggestions, concerns with Rly Min, pitches startup ecosystem in J&K

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Jammu, Apr 27: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday said the direct Jammu–Srinagar train service would significantly improve connectivity and give a major push to the tourism sector, while asserting that the frequency and carrying capacity of trains should be enhanced further to meet public demand.

Speaking to reporters here, CM Abdullah, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the direct rail link between Jammu and Srinagar is an important development for the Union Territory, which would ease travel for



residents as well as tourists and help economic activity.

When asked how much the tourism sector would benefit from the train service, Omar said, "It will make a difference."

The CM said he had repeatedly raised the issue of inadequate passenger | More on P6

Cloudy weather, rain likely in Kashmir

Heat wave grips Jammu parts

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 27: The Meteorological Department on Monday forecast generally cloudy weather with spells of light rain and thundershowers across Jammu and Kashmir over the next two days, while parts of the Jammu region are likely to experience heat wave conditions.

According to the MeT Centre Srinagar, scattered to many places in the Union Territory are expected to receive light rain or thundershowers accompanied by gusty winds and possible hailstorm towards afternoon or evening hours on April 27 and 28.

The department, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the weather is likely to remain partly cloudy on April 29 and 30, with brief spells of light rain or thunder at a few places, mainly during late afternoon hours.

From May 1 to 2, conditions are expected to remain largely dry, although brief showers in the afternoon cannot be ruled out. Another spell of | More on P6

With 20-40 cases per lakh, Kashmir in high-risk 'Asian oesophageal cancer belt': Experts

Flag noon chai, tobacco, fungal contamination as risk factors

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Apr 27: Kashmir continues to witness a relatively high burden of oesophageal cancer, with medical experts attributing the trend to a mix of cultural practices, environmental exposure, and improved diagnostic capabilities over time.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), Dr Shahid Wani, Head of the Oncology Department



at Government Medical College (GMC) Anantnag, said that Kashmir forms part of the well-known "Asian oesophageal cancer

belt"—a geographical stretch with a high incidence of oesophageal squamous cell carcinoma. The belt extends from the

Caspian littoral of Iran, particularly Golestan Province, through Central Asia to northern China, with Kashmir sharing similar disease patterns.

Dr Wani explained that the prevalence of oesophageal cancer in the Valley was likely high even decades ago, but remained underreported due to limited diagnostic facilities. "Today, with better screening and advanced medical infrastructure, more cases are being | More on P6

Public Works (R&B) Department
UT of Jammu & Kashmir

Accelerating J&K's Growth Story

"Roads under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana are not just a piece of physical infrastructure. Each of these roads lift the rural economy and increase Ease of Living."

—Shri Narendra Modi
Hon'ble Prime Minister

Launch of

PMGSY-IV, Batch-II in J&K

Number of Roads	Road Length	Project Value	Habitations benefiting
330	1,600 Km	₹3,550+Cr	363

by

Shri Shivraj Singh Chouhan

Hon'ble Minister for Rural Development and Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Government of India

in the august presence of

Jenab Omar Abdullah

Hon'ble Chief Minister, J&K

&

Shri Surinder Kumar Choudhary

Hon'ble Deputy Chief Minister, J&K

April 28, 2026 | SKICC, Srinagar

Legacy of Connectivity in J&K since 2000

3,328 Roads Constructed | 19,851 km Road Network Created | 257 Bridges Built

DIPK-813/26 | Dated:27.04.2026

Deputy CM chairs Sub-Committee meet on Gair Mumkin Khads in Jammu



KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 27: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary on Monday chaired a meeting of the Sub-Committee constituted to examine the issues related to Gair Mumkin Khads in Jammu and Kashmir at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu. The Committee, as per an official statement, stressed on protection of all flood zone areas, however, asserted on identification of chronic areas of Gair Mumkin Khads to effectively address the

long-standing public concerns across all districts.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmad Rana and Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Departments, Javid Ahmad Dar, as members of the Sub-Committee.

Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti Department, Shaleen Kabra, briefed the Sub-Committee on the current status of

Gair Mumkin Khads.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed that chronic areas of Gair Mumkin Khads be identified on priority. Stressing on protection of all flood prone areas, he instructed the concerned departments to submit detailed reports in a time-bound manner. He further sought inputs and suggestions to address the issues faced by the public concerning Gair Mumkin Khads.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister underscored the importance of pro-public and practical decision-making to ensure the amicable redressal of genuine grievances. He directed the concerned authorities to expedite and ensure timely completion of zone-wise mapping, particularly in chronic areas.

The Sub-Committee held detailed deliberations on the existing status of Gair Mumkin Khads, daryas and nallahs, along with related concerns, with the objective of providing relief to the public wherever warranted.

The Deputy Chief Minister also called for sensitization of all stakeholders and emphasized the need for scientific mapping of Gair Mumkin Khads, nallahs and adjacent non-cultivable waste lands.

The members of the Sub-Committee put forth valuable suggestions and highlighted various public concerns requiring urgent attention.

Putting forward his suggestions, Minister of Irrigation and Flood Control Department, Javed Ahmad Rana said that coordinated efforts are required by the concerned departments to ensure timely resolution of public concerns.

Speaking at the outset, Minister Agriculture Production, Javid Ahmad Dar asserted on addressing the genuine concerns of the public.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Secretary Revenue Rajeev Ranjan, Chief Engineer I&FC, Special Secretary Revenue, and other concerned officers.

DC Kulgam visits Nandimarg, reviews progress of road projects

KT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, APRIL 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam on Monday visited the Nandimarg area to take stock of ongoing works and assess bottlenecks hindering the timely completion of key road projects.

During the visit, the DC reviewed the progress of Galman Road, Kanimarg Road, and other ongoing developmental works. He conducted on-site inspections and evaluated the pace of execution.

The DC was apprised by the concerned officials about the current status of the projects and the challenges affecting their timely completion.

Kahani Jeet Ki

DC Bandipora engages with local entrepreneurs

KT NEWS DESK

BANDIPORA, APRIL 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Monday held an interaction with successful local entrepreneurs under the ongoing "Kahani Jeet Ki" initiative at Bandipora, showcasing achievements under various government-supported livelihood programmes including Mission YUVA. The interaction featured entrepreneurs from diverse sectors including a manufacturing unit, poultry unit, hardware unit, departmental store and dairy units. A beneficiary running a Library also shared insights into providing educational spaces for students. During the session, entrepreneurs highlighted how govern-

ment support and schemes have enabled them to establish and expand their ventures, generating sustainable income and employment opportunities.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner spoke about initiatives such as indoor sports facilities and food units, which can provide constructive engagement for youth while promoting entrepreneurship.

Interacting with the participants, the DC appreciated their efforts and said that such success stories reflect the impact of government schemes at the grassroots level. He encouraged entrepreneurs to continue innovating and to motivate others to come forward and benefit from various livelihood programmes.

DC Shopian chairs DLTC meeting

KT NEWS DESK

SHOPIAN, APRIL 27: Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Shishir Gupta Monday chaired a meeting of the District Level Telecom Committee (DLTC) at the Mini Secretariat, Shopian, to review telecom infrastructure and ensure improved, reliable connectivity across the district.

The meeting, as per an official statement, assessed the current status of mobile and internet services, with emphasis on addressing persistent issues such as weak signals, call drops, and slow data speeds.

A detailed overview of ongoing initiatives and future expansion plans was presented, highlighting efforts to enhance digital access in both urban and remote areas.

A key development discussed during the meeting was the completion of surveys for installation of new telecom towers along Mughal Road and in weak and grey areas.

The concerned Telecom agencies informed that necessary ground-work has been finalized



and installation will be taken up shortly, which is expected to significantly improve connectivity in various weak and grey areas.

Other locations, known for their scenic value and increasing tourist footfall were emphasised to be prioritized to strengthen communication facilities, enable better access to emergency

services, and support the overall tourism ecosystem by ensuring seamless digital connectivity for visitors and service providers.

The Deputy Commissioner stressed the need for seamless network coverage, particularly in far flung and mountainous regions.

All telecom service providers, including BSNL, Airtel, and Jio, were

stressed to eliminate coverage gaps and ensure saturation in uncovered or weak signal zones.

The meeting was attended by SSP Shopian, Mushtaq Ahmad Chaudhary, ADC Shopian, Dr Zakir Hussain Faaz, ACD, other senior officers of district administration, representatives from telecom departments, and other concerned stakeholders.

NCORD Meeting

26 FIRs, 39 arrested, 65 vehicles seized under NDPS cases

DC Srinagar, SSP review anti-drug measures, call for intensified crackdown on drug networks

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR APRIL 27: Monthly District Level Committee on Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) was held Monday, under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo here at the Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex to assess the effectiveness of ongoing enforcement and preventive strategies being implemented in the district.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Dr. Sandeep Chakravarthy was also present in the meeting.

During the meeting, as per an official statement, it was emphasized that intensified enforcement actions must be taken against drug peddlers and their networks. The participants called for strengthened inter-agency coordination among enforcement, regulatory, and health departments to ensure sustained action against drug-related activities.

At the outset, the Committee conducted a comprehensive review of ongoing enforcement measures particularly under the ongoing 100 days campaign of Jammu and Kashmir Nasha Mukht Abhiyan.

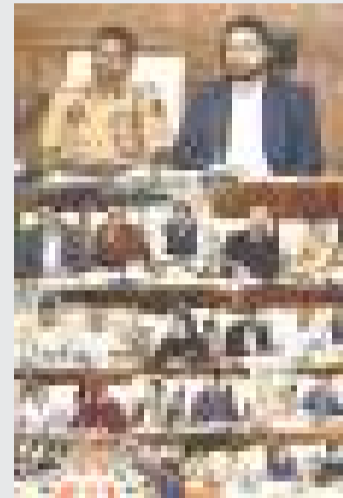
The Committee emphasized intensified enforcement actions against drug peddlers and their networks calling for a sustained crackdown on drug peddling and its networks. It also stressed stringent enforcement, stronger strategy to combat narcotics trafficking in Srinagar district, besides more NDPS-linked confiscations to crush the drug networks.

The Committee strongly emphasized the need to intensify Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities, particularly in educational institutions and coaching centres, to effectively sensitize youth about the severe and far-reaching consequences of drug and narcotic substance abuse. It further called for a sustained awareness drive to build resilience

among young people against drug addiction.

Directions were also issued to actively promote sports and recreational activities among youth, especially in identified drug-sensitive and hotspot areas, as a proactive preventive strategy to channelize their energy in constructive pursuits and safeguard them from the menace of substance abuse.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner



er emphasized the need to further strengthen inter-agency coordination among enforcement, regulatory, health departments and other stakeholders to ensure sustained, coordinated and effective action against drug-related activities in the district. He highlighted the critical need to systematically dismantle the logistical and support networks facilitating drug peddling operations.

The DC also directed the RTO, Drug Controller and Police authorities to continue strict and resolute action against the persons found involved in drug trafficking or facilitating drug peddling, making it clear that no leniency would be tolerated. He further called for the comprehensive approach comprising focused enforcement, preventive awareness campaigns, and robust rehabilitation interventions to effectively address and eradicate the drug menace in Srinagar district.

DC Srinagar leads plantation drive

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 27: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo on Monday led a plantation drive at Lasjan-Panthachowk integrating environmental conservation with social reform and reinforcing the message of a cleaner, greener and drug-free society under ongoing 100-day intensive Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan.

The plantation drive, as per an official statement, was organized by the District Administration Srinagar in collaboration with the Urban Forestry Division, signifying a collective responsibility towards environmental sustainability and a shared commitment to achieving the objectives of a drug-free society.

The event witnessed the participation of Additional Deputy Commissioner, Mir Imtiaz Ul Aziz; Additional Deputy Commissioner, Aadir Fareed; Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar; District Social Welfare Officer, Dr. Mukhtar Ahmad; DFO Urban, Dr. Mehraj Ud Din Sheikh; other senior officers from the District Administration and Forest Department, as well as enthusiastic College and School students.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner planted a deodar sapling and highlighted the importance of such initiatives in increasing green cover, mitigating the effects of climate change and fostering environmental awareness among citizens.

The DC emphasized that the plantation drive reflects the administration's sustained commitment to realizing the objectives of the Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan, while also reaffirming its shared responsibility towards fostering greener surroundings and enhancing the overall well-being of society. He further stated that the initiative promotes environmental sustainability and reinforces continued efforts towards achieving the goals of the 100-day Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan. The plantation drive witnessed overwhelming support from the local community, environmental volunteers and social activists, who joined hands with officials at the venue, adding a spirit of collective responsibility and public enthusiasm to achieve the objectives of a Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan.

GOVT. DENTAL COLLEGE & HOSPITAL (PURCHASE SECTION) SHIREEN BAGH, SRINAGAR, KASHMIR

Fax: 2504703 Email:- gdc@srinagarqik.gov.in

Short Term Tender Notice

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, sealed tenders affixed with Revenue Stamp of Rs. 5/- are invited from the registered/ approved/authorized dealers/suppliers/firms for supply of the following Essential Dental Material items required for day to day smooth running of the Hospital on the terms & Conditions mentioned below.

S. No.	Name of the item
01	10PAR X-Ray films
02	X-Ray Developer (Liquid/Powder)
03	X-Ray Fixer (Liquid/powder)

Terms and Conditions:

- 01 Sealed tenders accompanied with CDR/FDR worth Rs.10000/- (Rupees Ten Thousand only) pledged to Accounts Officer, GDC&H Srinagar should reach to the office of the undersigned within 7 days from the publication in the daily newspaper up to (01.00 PM).
- 02 The rates quoted for the items with all specifications must be typed without any cuttings/corrections and shall be inclusive of all taxes/charges whatsoever and FOR stores GDC&H Srinagar.
- 03 The tenders received after the prescribed date and time will not be entertained.
- 04 The sealed tenders /bids so received shall be opened on the same day in the office chamber of the Medical Superintendent, Govt. Dental College, & Hospital, Srinagar or any other date convenient to the committee constituted for the purpose.
- 05 In case any of the representatives intends to be present, he/she will be allowed only after having the authorization from the tenderer duly signed/stamped.
- 06 The successful bidder/Firm(s) shall have to supply the ordered item within (07) days from the date of issuance of supply order as the items are being of urgent nature.
- 07 The tender shall remain valid for three (03) months from the date of finalization of tenders or till the supplies are received through JKMSCL whichever is earlier. The items floated in this tender notice are not available at present with JKMSCL & NOC has also been obtained from JKMSCL.
- 08 The product specification of the above required items are not available at present on GeM portal due to repairs of category as GeM AR&PTS certificates generated from Gem Portal.
- 09 The successful firm/Bidder has to provide a copy of the PAN card, Aadhar card, GST details and bank account details of the firm.
- 10 The tenderers shall have to deposit the sample of quoted items.
- 11 The committee shall have the right to reject any / all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Dr. Ashiq Hussain Qureshi
Purchase Officer
GDC&H Srinagar

No: GDC/Pur/2026/724-30

Dated: 27-04-2026

DIPK-814/26 Dated: 27-04-2026

No permission granted for tree felling in last 5 years: SMC tells NGT



RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Apr 27: Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) has informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT) that no permission has been granted for cutting or felling of trees within its jurisdiction over the past five years. The submission was made in response to a case arising from reports of large-scale tree felling at the historic Amar Singh College campus.

In its reply filed before the Principal Bench of the NGT in Original Application No. 360/2024, the SMC stated that its Tree Authority has not issued any approval for cutting, felling, or removal of trees from the financial year 2020-21 to 2024-25.

The case pertains to a report alleging felling of around 234 trees on the century-old Amar Singh College campus, which triggered environmental concerns and legal scrutiny.

According to the SMC, the Tree Authority, constituted under the Jammu and Kashmir Municipal Corporation Act, 2000, has not granted permission to any individual or department for tree removal during the said period.

The corporation further submitted that a formal mechanism for processing applications seeking permission for tree felling, including the prescribed format and fee structure, has been forwarded to the government and is currently under examination. It assured the tribunal that it will implement the procedure once it receives approval from the government.

The response has been backed by an affidavit filed by SMC Commissioner Faz Lul Haseeb (IAS), stating that the information provided is based on official records and no material facts have been concealed.

The matter is under consideration before the NGT—(KNO)

CM Omar Abdullah calls for leveraging AI in tourism, cultural preservation

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 27: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday inaugurated the 11th National Conference and Exhibition on Emerging and Innovative Trends in Engineering Technology (NCEIETET) at Government College of Engineering and Technology (GCET), Jammu, underscoring the need to harmonize technological advancement with cultural heritage while fostering innovation-driven growth among youth.

The two-day event is being organised by GCET Jammu in technical collaboration with Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Kharagpur and in association with World Consortium of Universities.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also inaugurated the newly constructed School of Architecture (SoA) building at GCET, developed at a cost of 19.71 crore, and extended his best wishes to the faculty and students. Emphasizing the significance of architecture, he urged students to adopt a forward-looking approach while staying rooted in the region's cultural and historical identity.

"While it is important to embrace modernity, it is equally important to remember where we come from. Not every building needs to be made of glass and steel. Our structures must reflect our heritage and preserve our cultural ethos," he said, expressing concern over the declining focus on heritage conservation in both public and private construction across Jammu and Kashmir. Highlighting the conference theme, the Chief Minister described it as relevant and thought-provoking, particularly for its focus on emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and machine learning. He termed the deliberations as an "eye-opener," especially in the context of tourism. Reflecting on his experience as Tourism Minister,



he noted that leveraging AI could significantly enhance visitor experience, destination management and service delivery in Jammu and Kashmir. However, he cautioned that technological integration must be balanced with employment generation.

"In a region like ours, where unemployment remains a concern, we must ensure that technology complements human effort rather than replacing it. Tourism is not just an economic driver but also a major source of livelihood across regions and sectors," he said.

The Chief Minister emphasized that while attracting tourists to Jammu and Kashmir is not difficult, ensuring repeat visits requires delivering a consistently enriching experience. He cited diverse tourism segments including pilgrimage tourism such as Mata Vaishno Devi, border tourism at places like Suchetgarh, and leisure tourism across the Valley and other regions, stressing the need to enhance infrastructure and services across all segments.

Addressing infrastructure gaps at GCET, the Chief Minister announced that funds shall be

provided this year for the construction of an auditorium to provide better facilities for students and academic events.

He also responded positively to a student's request for an incubation centre, assuring that the government would make every effort to establish such a facility within the institution and for which work to be started from this year. He underscored the importance of nurturing a startup ecosystem and enabling youth to become job creators. "We may not be able to provide jobs to everyone, but we can certainly create an environment where our youngsters become entrepreneurs and innovators. It is our responsibility to support those who dare to dream and execute," he said.

Reaffirming the government's commitment, he assured that all necessary steps would be taken to strengthen institutional infrastructure and support systems, ensuring that GCET continues to evolve as a premier institution.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Senior army officers, delegation call on CM Omar



KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 27: Lieutenant General Prashant Srivastava, General Officer Commanding (GOC) 15 Corps, and Lieutenant General Balbir Singh, GOC (Designate), called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Monday. During the meeting, they dis-

cussed issues of mutual interest, with particular focus on the security scenario and developmental priorities in the region.

Separately, a deputation of Paras Healthcare Limited met the Chief Minister and apprised him of various healthcare-related matters.

3 school girls injured in Qazigund accident

UMAISAR GULL GANIE

Qazigund, Apr 27: At least three school girls were injured in a road accident in Qazigund area of south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Monday, officials said. An official said that the accident took place at Kulbagh-Qazi Mohalla Link Road when an i20 car, driven by one Rayees Ahmad Rather, hit the students while moving towards Qazigund.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

HC quashes detention of MLA Doda



REHMAN QAYOOM MIR

Jammu, Apr 27 (KNO): The High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh on Monday set aside the detention of Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MLA Mehraj Malik, ruling that there was no apprehension that the detenu was likely to act in a manner prejudicial to "social order."

Setting aside the detention order of Malik, the Court directed his release from preventive detention.

Malik, who represents Doda Assembly segment, was detained under Public Safety Act in September 2025. The Court observed that there was no apprehension that the detenu was likely to act in any manner prejudicial to "social order." "The allegations against the petitioner/detenu covered under the numerous FIRs are presently before the authorities/courts," Justice Mohd Yousuf Wani said in the judgment as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

The Court held that the detention order was not driven by malice or emotions. Instead, the Court said, it showed a lack of proper application of mind, stating that the grounds relied upon did not justify forming an opinion that the petitioner had acted, or was likely to act, in a way prejudicial to public order. "The alleged actions of the petitioner no doubt amount to infraction of normal criminal laws for which the legal mechanism in place was already pressed into service. The invocation of the provisions of the PSA to detain the petitioner rather than to pursue the prosecution against him appears to be an unjustified exercise tantamounting to violation of the fundamental rights of the petitioner. Under these circumstances, the non-application of the mind is discernible in the matter," the HC observed.

The Court said that it is a settled legal position that a detention order suffering from non-application of mind of the detaining authority cannot sustain under law. The Court further observed that the detention of the petitioner, in the facts and circumstances of the case, appeared to be punitive rather than preventive. "The detention of the petitioner also on the basis of 16 DD Reports of Police Stations Gandoh, Thathri, and Doda is unjustified, as the contents of the said reports are unverified and do not disclose the commission of cognizable offences," the Court observed—(KNO)

MCA to examine issues flagged by J&K stakeholders: Mishra



REHMAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Apr 27: Stating that direct engagement helps in assessing ground realities and aligning policy responses, Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) Regional Director (North) Ramesh Mishra on Monday said issues raised by stakeholders in Jammu & Kashmir reflected genuine operational challenges and would be examined.

Mishra made these remarks during an interactive session with the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) in Srinagar.

KCCI president Javid Ahmad Tengga welcomed the visiting officials and said it was the first time that a Regional Director from the Ministry had visited the Chamber office for direct interaction with the business community.

During the meeting, KCCI demanded that the RoC office in Srinagar be made fully functional on the earlier Darbar Move pattern. It said the office had become largely inactive with no effective staff presence, and stakeholders were being asked to route issues through the Jammu office, causing delays and inconvenience.

The Chamber said the issue was significant as nearly 55 per cent of the total companies in the Union Territory are based in Kashmir Valley. It also sought a camp office or at least a functional helpdesk in Ladakh to facilitate access to RoC services.

KCCI also raised concern over the low participation of J&K-based

companies in the Prime Minister's Internship Scheme, saying that only J&K Bank figures among the 2,000 participating companies. "While a large number of applicants from J&K are seeking opportunities, local openings remained limited," the Chamber said. It urged the Ministry to facilitate greater participation of companies from other states to benefit local youth.

The KCCI further highlighted persistent technical glitches on the MCA21 portal, including server downtime, non-availability of forms, failed SRN generation, payment failures and issues in uploading or retrieving documents. The problems, it said, were causing delays in company incorporation, approvals and access to historical company records.

The Chamber flagged delays in approval of charge forms, complications in Section 8 company registrations, pendency in adjudication and compounding matters, recurring issues in Director KYC filings, DIN activation and DSC validation. It also sought clarity in compliance requirements for small companies, startups and producer companies.

It reiterated concern over multiple Director Identification Numbers (DINs) issued in the past due to a lack of awareness, saying current provisions impose a fixed penalty of Rs 50,000 along with an additional Rs 500 per day. It demanded a one-time amnesty scheme to resolve such legacy cases.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Div Com Kashmir finalizes Nasha Mukht J&K Pad Yatra arrangements



KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, Apr 27: As part of the intensified efforts under the Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyaan, a mega Pad Yatra will be held in Srinagar on May 3, 2026, to raise mass awareness against drug abuse.

The event will be flagged off by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha.

In this regard, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, chaired a comprehensive meeting with officers from various government departments at TRC to finalize arrangements and assign responsibilities to ensure smooth conduct of rally and maximum public participation.

Addressing the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner emphasized the need for a coordinated and proactive approach by all departments to mobilize staff and stakeholders. He stated that the Pad Yatra aims to send a strong and unified message

against drug abuse and dismantling the networks involved in drug peddling.

"Over 35,000 participants from different sections of society are expected to join the event for a collective commitment towards building a drug-free Jammu and Kashmir" the Div Com said.

He added that the initiative follows a "Whole-of-Government" approach focusing on prevention, treatment, and strict enforcement to eliminate drug abuse.

Highlighting the broader significance of the event, the Div Com remarked that the fight against drug abuse is not merely a policy initiative but a moral and societal responsibility to safeguard the social fabric of the region.

During the meeting, detailed arrangements were reviewed, including the singing of the National

Anthem and National Song, screening of anti-drug awareness videos, organizing cultural programmes, holding of pledge ceremony, and a signature campaign.

Besides, the Div Com reviewed necessary arrangements for venue decoration and route management.

Departments were directed to ensure adequate logistical support, including transportation, drinking water facilities, distribution of caps and T-shirts, installation of pandals, deployment of medical teams and ambulances, as well as fire safety measures.

Meanwhile, he also extended an open invitation to the general public to participate in large numbers and contribute to the collective fight against drug abuse.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Commissioner SMC, Directors and HoDs of departments besides SSP Traffic and Police officers.

EDITORIAL

The Gift That Keeps Giving, And Saving Lives

The Lieutenant Governor has asked people to pledge that they will donate their organs after death. This is a reminder of the greatest gift one human being can give to another — life itself. The numbers are sad. In India, lakhs of patients are waiting for organ transplants. They need kidneys, livers, and eyes. But very few people come forward to donate. Why? Because of a lack of awareness, wrong

beliefs, and fear. Each one of us holds the extraordinary power to save lives even after we are gone. Think about that. One person can save many lives after death. A kidney patient gets another chance. A blind person sees again. A burn victim gets healthy skin. The government organised an event called 'Naman Diwas' to honour donors and their families. For too long, the families of donors have grieved in silence,

unaware that their loved one's passing could bring joy and vision to multiple others. By publicly celebrating their sacrifice, the government sends a powerful message: organ donation is not a taboo but a legacy of compassion. It tells people that organ donation is not a shameful thing. It is a beautiful legacy. The LG's own example — registering as an organ donor on the Ayushman Bharat portal — is leadership by

example. When a leader does this, it becomes normal for others to follow. He also cleared a big confusion — that all religions respect organ donation. Giving selflessly is a virtue in every faith. The State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (SOTTO) in Jammu and Kashmir is doing good work. They run campaigns, partner with hospitals, and train doctors. Every citizen must spread this message — in schools,

colleges, offices, and neighbourhoods. Every eye donor brings sight back to someone. Imagine the joy of seeing your child's face again. Every kidney donor gives someone a second chance to work, love, and dream. These are not just medical procedures. These are miracles. So let us listen to the LG's appeal. Let us take the pledge today. Organ donors are not just heroes. They are what is best in humanity.

Small Hydro Power Development Scheme

Strengthening Energy Security for Sustainable Development

Press Information Bureau

Hydro Power, generated from the natural flow of water, is one of the most reliable and mature renewable energy sources in the world. Amid India's rapidly evolving energy landscape, it plays a pivotal role in ensuring grid stability, energy security, and system resilience. Unlike intermittent sources such as solar and wind, hydro power provides firm, round-the-clock (RTC) electricity, along with the operational flexibility. As the country accelerates its transition towards a cleaner energy mix, Hydro Power remains indispensable.

Recognising this strategic importance, the Union Cabinet has approved the Small Hydro Power (SHP) Development Scheme that will support small hydro projects (between 1-25 MW capacity) to come up in different states. The scheme will especially benefit hilly and North Eastern states with high potential for such projects. The approval is for the period FY 2026-27 to FY 2030-31, with a total outlay of ₹ 2,584.60 crore. The scheme aims to unlock approximately 1,500 MW of new SHP capacity, with a strong focus on hilly regions and the North Eastern States rich in untapped small hydro potential and often constrained by energy access challenges. By promoting decentralised and locally generated power, the scheme seeks to deliver reliable electricity to remote and difficult-to-access regions while reducing dependence on conventional fuels.

Beyond energy generation, the initiative has the potential to catalyse inclusive growth. Small hydro projects, with their minimal ecological footprint, limited land requirements, and long operational life, offer a sustainable pathway for development. By fostering local investment, generating employment, and strengthening regional economies, the scheme is going to position small hydro as a cornerstone of India's sustainable and self-reliant energy future.

Did You Know?
In India, the primary distinction between large and small hydropower projects lies in their installed capacity and the respective ministerial jurisdiction. Small Hydropower Projects (SHP) are defined as those with an installed capacity of up to 25 MW and are administered by the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE). In contrast, large hydropower projects, with capacity exceeding 25 MW, fall under the purview of the Ministry of Power.

Key Features of the Small Hydro Power Development Scheme

The scheme outlines a set of targeted measures to support implementation, improve project viability, and ensure a steady pipeline of SHP projects across regions. It focuses on addressing key constraints related to financing, project readiness, and execution, particularly in challenging geographies. Together, these measures are intended to enable faster and more efficient deployment of SHP capacity.

Financial Support Structure:
Financial assistance to North Eastern States & International Border Districts of 3.6 crore per MW or 30% of project cost (whichever is lower), subject to a ceiling of 30 crore per project.

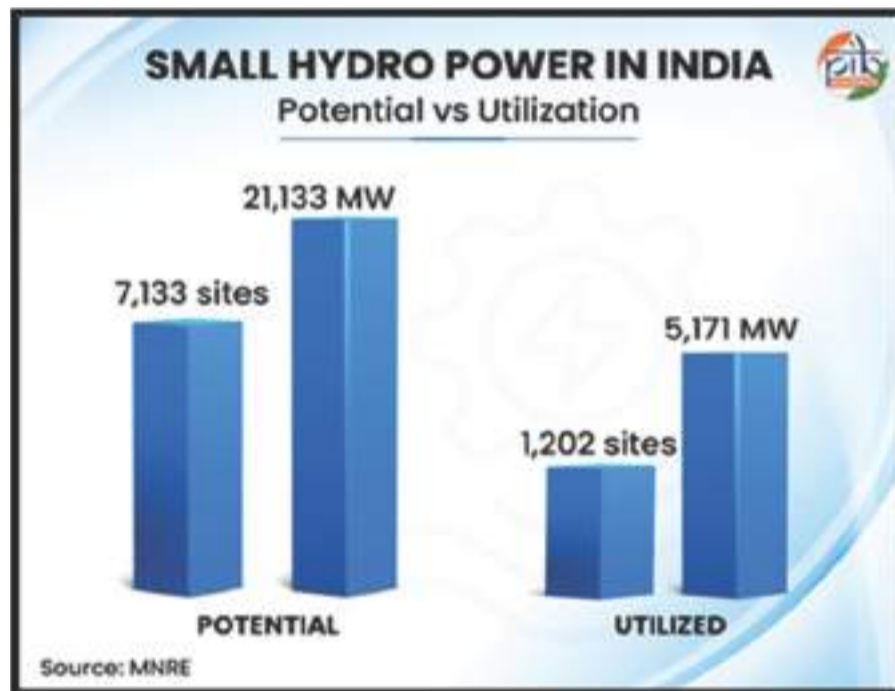
Financial assistance to other locations of 2.4 crore per MW or 20% of project cost (whichever is lower), with a cap of 20 crore per project.

Investment and Economic Impact:
The scheme is expected to attract investments of around ₹ 15,000 crore in the small hydro sector.

It will also promote the use of indigenous plant and machinery, contributing to the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat while boosting local manufacturing and supply chains.

Pipeline Development and DPR Support:
To ensure long-term sector growth, the scheme provides support for the preparation of Detailed Project Reports (DPRs) for a minimum of 200 projects. An allocation of ₹ 30 crore has been made separately to assist central and state agencies in developing a strong future project pipeline.

Employment Generation:



The scheme is expected to generate approximately 51 lakh person-days of employment during the construction phase. In addition, it will create sustained employment opportunities in the operation and maintenance of projects, particularly in rural and remote regions.

The approval of the SHP Development Scheme marks a significant step towards unlocking India's untapped small hydro potential. By combining targeted financial support, infrastructure development, and sustainability, the scheme is set to strengthen clean energy capacity while driving inclusive growth in underserved regions.

Significance of Small Hydro Power for Sustainable Energy Development
Small hydro power plays a vital role in advancing clean, reliable, and decentralised energy in India. Particularly suited for remote and hilly regions, these projects utilise locally available water resources to generate electricity close to consumption centres. This not only improves energy access but also reduces dependence on long transmission networks and enhances overall efficiency.

Decentralised and Efficient Power Supply: Located near demand centres, these projects minimise transmission losses, improve voltage stability, and ensure reliable power in geographically challenging areas, including border and hilly regions.

Clean and Cost-Effective Energy
Source: Small hydro power generates

electricity without fuel consumption or emissions, making it a sustainable and economically viable long-term solution.

Driver of Rural Development: By improving electricity access in underserved areas, these projects support infrastructure development and act as a catalyst for local economic growth.

Employment and Livelihood Generation: They create both direct and indirect employment opportunities during construction and operation, while also promoting small-scale industries and self-employment.

Environmentally Sustainable: With minimal land requirement and negligible displacement, small hydro power projects have a low ecological footprint and limited social impact. Their long operational life further strengthens their sustainability.

SHP offers a balanced solution that combines energy security with sustainable development. By delivering reliable, round-the-clock power and strengthening grid resilience, especially in remote areas, they contribute significantly to inclusive growth. Their ability to integrate environmental sustainability with socio-economic benefits makes them a key component of India's clean energy transition.

Small Hydro Power Potential and Prospects in India

SHP is emerging as a vital and reliable component of India's clean energy transition. It is particularly well-suited for hilly, remote, and difficult terrains where

decentralised generation can deliver sustainable power, enhance energy access, and support local livelihoods.

India possesses a significant SHP potential of 21,133.61 MW across 7,133 identified sites. As of early 2026, approximately 5,171 MW (around 24.5%) has already been harnessed, demonstrating steady progress. The remaining over 15,960 MW represents a substantial opportunity for accelerated development through focused policy support and public-private collaboration.

The regional distribution of this potential further reflects India's rich geographical diversity and offers unique strengths across the country. The Northern region has 7,978 MW of SHP potential (around 38%) particularly across mountainous terrains. The North-Eastern region holds 3,262 MW (approximately 15%), positioning it as a key frontier for expansion, especially in hilly regions and the North Eastern States. The list is followed by Southern region with 5,490 MW of SHP (about 26%), supported by well-developed river systems and infrastructure. The Western region has a potential of 2,963 MW of SHP (around 14%), while the Eastern region accounts for 1,440 MW (about 7%), with strong potential in rural and tribal areas.

This distributed potential allows for a balanced, region-specific strategy. While the Northern and North-Eastern regions offer large untapped resources, the Southern and Western regions are better positioned for quicker implementation due to stronger infrastructure. With the recently approved Small Hydro Power Development Scheme, the Government of India is committed to harnessing this diverse potential through targeted incentives, simplified procedures, and enhanced financial support.

By adopting a focused yet inclusive approach, India is poised to unlock the full benefits of small hydropower strengthening energy security, promoting inclusive growth, and advancing the nation's goal of a sustainable and self-reliant energy future.

Northern region

The Northern region forms the backbone of India's SHP landscape, driven by its mountainous terrain, perennial rivers, and favourable hydrology, making it particularly significant for development in hilly regions. States such as Himachal Pradesh (3,460 MW), Uttarakhand (1,664 MW), and Jammu & Kashmir (1,312 MW) dominate the region's potential, with Ladakh (395 MW) adding strategic importance. Despite this strong resource base, utilisation levels remain moderate, indicating substantial untapped capacity.

Did You Know?

Run-of-the-river projects generate electricity by using the natural flow of river water without building large dams. A portion of water is diverted through channels and pipes to run turbines and is then released back into the stream, ensuring minimal ecological disruption.

North-East region
The North-Eastern region represents a high-potential growth frontier, particularly critical for expanding renewable energy in hilly regions and the North Eastern States.

Arunachal Pradesh (2,064.92 MW) constitutes the largest share of the regional potential, followed by Meghalaya (230.05 MW), Assam (201.99 MW), Nagaland (182.18 MW), Mizoram (168.90 MW), Manipur (99.95 MW), and Tripura (46.86 MW). With the inclusion of Sikkim (266.64 MW), the regional potential increases further.

SHP development in this region offers strong opportunities for decentralised and off-grid energy solutions, particularly in remote and tribal areas. It can significantly enhance energy access, promote local employment, and reduce reliance on conventional fuels. With targeted policy interventions, improved connectivity, and community-driven models, the North-Eastern region can emerge as a major engine of growth for India's SHP sector.

Southern region

The Southern region is a key contributor to SHP development, supported by strong infrastructure, established energy systems,

and favourable river basins. Karnataka leads with 3,726.49 MW, accounting for nearly 68% of the regional potential, followed by Kerala (276.52 MW) and Tamil Nadu (123.05 MW). The region has achieved relatively higher utilisation levels compared to others, reflecting efficient project execution and strong grid connectivity.

With its robust infrastructure base, the Southern region is well-positioned to scale further through optimisation of existing assets and integration with other clean energy sources. It will continue to play a stabilising role in India's SHP expansion, complementing growth in hilly regions and the North Eastern States.

Eastern region
The Eastern region offers moderate but strategically important SHP potential, particularly for decentralised development in rural and tribal areas.

States such as Bihar (526.98 MW) and West Bengal (392.06 MW) lead the region, though overall utilisation remains relatively low. The region's river systems and terrain provide favourable conditions for small-scale hydro projects.

Expanding SHP in this region can improve local energy access, agricultural productivity, and rural livelihoods, while supporting inclusive development. With targeted interventions, improved financing mechanisms, and decentralised deployment models, the Eastern region can complement national growth.

Western region
The Western region presents unique opportunities for SHP development, particularly through its extensive irrigation and canal-based infrastructure.

Maharashtra leads with 786.46 MW potential, followed by Rajasthan and Gujarat. The state has achieved relatively higher utilisation levels, while others continue to offer scope for expansion.

The region's focus on canal-based and dam-toe projects provides a cost-effective pathway for scaling SHP capacity. By leveraging existing infrastructure and promoting innovative deployment models, the Western region can strengthen decentralised renewable energy generation. Alongside advancements in hilly regions and the North Eastern States, it can play a critical role in ensuring a balanced and diversified SHP growth trajectory.

Did You Know?

SHP projects on canal falls or dam toe utilize the drop in water levels in irrigation canals or just below dams and barrages to generate electricity. Water is diverted to the powerhouse and returned to the main canal after power generation, making use of existing water infrastructure.

Conclusion

The Small Hydro Power Development Scheme (2026-31) marks a decisive policy intervention by the Government of India to harness the unique strengths of small hydropower in the country's clean energy journey. With an outlay of ₹ 2,584.60 crore aimed at adding 1,500 MW of new capacity, the scheme prioritises reliable, decentralised power generation, especially in challenging terrains where other renewable sources face limitations.

Beyond capacity creation, the initiative is designed to deliver broader developmental outcomes. By combining targeted financial support, streamlined project preparation, and promotion of indigenous manufacturing, it will stimulate private investment, strengthen domestic supply chains, and generate meaningful employment opportunities in remote and rural regions. This integrated approach positions small hydropower as an effective tool for inclusive growth and regional equity.

As India advances towards greater energy self-reliance and a sustainable future, small hydro power offers a balanced solution that combines environmental responsibility with socio-economic progress. With this focused push, the Government of India is confident that the scheme will illuminate underserved areas, enhance grid resilience, and contribute meaningfully to building a cleaner, stronger, and more self-sufficient India.

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

Rural economy, livestock sector key focus of Govt policies: Javid Dar

KT News Desk

JAMMU, APRIL 27: The Jammu and Kashmir Veterinary Doctors Association, Jammu, Monday organized a one-day technical conference at the Convention Centre, Jammu, on the theme "Veterinarians: Guardians of Food and Health."

Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar was the chief guest on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister, as per an official statement, lauded the indispensable role of veterinarians in safeguarding the animal and public health. He highlighted that veterinary professionals render critical services across diverse domains including field operations, farms, clinics, laboratories and aquaculture, thereby ensuring livestock well-being and strengthening food safety systems.



Emphasizing the sector's economic significance, the Minister stated that healthy and productive livestock are key towards enhancing food production, increasing farmers' income, generating employment and fostering sustainable

economic growth. He underlined that a robust and well-equipped veterinary network is vital for strengthening the rural livelihoods and building resilience within the agricultural ecosystem. Javid Dar further stated that

under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, the government is consistently formulating policies aimed at the growth and development of the rural economy, with a strong focus on the livestock sector.

The Minister assured that the issues and demands raised by various speakers during the conference would be addressed on a priority basis.

Earlier, the Minister inspected an exhibition stalls set up at the venue and interacted with the veterinary doctors and other stakeholders, appreciating their contributions and innovations in the field.

The conference witnessed participation from veterinary experts, professionals and stakeholders, who deliberated on the emerging challenges and explored innovative solutions in the livestock sector, reaffirming the pivotal role of veterinarians as true guardians of food and health.

J&K Relief Organisation rebuts news regarding ration distribution among migrants

KT News Desk

JAMMU, APRIL 27: The Relief Organisation, J&K government, has strongly refuted the news item published in a local daily on April 26, 2026, regarding the ration distribution in terms of the Special Relief Ration Scheme for Kashmiri/Jammu Migrants.

"The report presents an incomplete picture and creates an unwarranted propaganda regarding implementation of the scheme," clarified the organisation while issuing an official rebuttal in this regard.

The organisation, as per an official statement, further clarified that ration distribution is being carried out by the Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs Department in accordance with the Special Relief Ration Scheme for Kashmiri/Jammu Migrants notified vide Government Order No. 15-JK(FCS&CA) of 2026

dated 05.03.2026, from all 32 designated ration depots in Jammu district, including Mini Township Jagti which houses 5,252 migrant families.

All Relief Ration Card holders, whether PHH, NPHH, or Special Category, continue to receive 11 kg of free ration per person per month along with 1 kg of sugar, while migrants under the non-relief category such as pensioners, categorized as NPHH, are entitled to ration at government-approved NFSA rates. The Government of J&K, through S.O. 392 and S.O. 393 of 2024 dated 13.08.2024, has amended the J&K Food Security Rules, 2021 and the Targeted Public Distribution (Control) Order, 2023 to integrate migrant ration cards into the NFSA database, thereby enabling the migrants to avail benefits of various social sector schemes. Further, Government Order No. 27-JK(DMRRR) of

2025 dated 16.05.2025 has clarified that the existing scale of ration distribution and norms for inclusion, deletion, bifurcation, conversion and corrections will continue under the Relief Organisation without change.

These clarifications have been widely communicated through public notices and information campaigns and approximately 450 migrant families have already availed benefits of social security and welfare schemes after this integration.

The department reiterated that the integration of migrant ration cards on the NFSA database scheme is being done in compliance with the relevant Government Orders and rules and the concerns raised in the said article are unfounded, misleading and contrary to facts, published without obtaining official version.

DC Baramulla inaugurates T20 Hazil Memorial Cricket Tournament



KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, APRIL 27: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla S.F Hamid, Monday inaugurated the T20 Hazil Memorial Cricket Tournament at Bipin Rawat Stadium, Baramulla.

The tournament is being organized by Baramulla Cricket Forum in collaboration with the District Administration under the banner of Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan.

A total of 64 cricket clubs from across the district are participating in the tournament, with all matches scheduled to be played at Bipin Rawat Stadium, Baramulla.

On the occasion, the DC, as per an official statement, interacted

with the players and appreciated the efforts of Baramulla Cricket Forum for organizing the tournament in memory of an individual who recently passed away due to cardiac arrest.

Highlighting the significance of the ongoing Nasha Mukht Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, the DC emphasized that such sporting events play a vital role in engaging youth in positive activities and steering them away from substance abuse.

The event witnessed participation from Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Chief Planning Officer Baramulla, Chairman Save Youth Save Future, officials, and sports lovers, marking a vibrant start to the tournament.

DC Budgam oversees Censes 2027 training programme

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, APRIL 27: As part of the ongoing preparations for Census 2027, a three-day training programme for the first batch of Enumerators and Supervisors commenced Monday at RSETI Budgam.

The programme was attended by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam Athar Aamir Khan, who is also the Principal Census Officer of the district. Among others present were Additional Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner Development, BDO Budgam, master trainers, and participating enumerators and supervisors.

The training programme, as per an official statement is aimed at equipping field functionaries with the necessary skills and knowledge required for the smooth, efficient, and error-free conduct of the upcoming census exercise.

On the first day, master trainers imparted extensive training to participants, focusing on key aspects such as enumeration procedures, use of digital technology, ensuring data accuracy, and adherence to prescribed guidelines.



Special emphasis was laid on clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of Enumerators and Supervisors.

During the sessions, practical demonstrations were conducted to enhance participants' understanding of field operations. The trainees were also sensitized about the importance of accurate data collection, maintaining confidentiality, and ensuring timely submission of information.

The DC interacted with the trainees and trainers during his visit to the training venue. He reviewed the ongoing sessions and underscored the significance of Census as a vital exercise

for evidence-based planning and governance. He stressed that the success of the Census depends largely on the dedication, accuracy, and professionalism of the field staff.

He further emphasized the need for maintaining the highest standards of data integrity and urged participants to carry out their responsibilities with sincerity and commitment.

The DC said that the training is being conducted in a structured and interactive manner, incorporating hands-on exercises and open discussions to address queries and strengthen the overall preparedness of the field staff for the upcoming Census operations.

Capacity Building Programme under NMBA launched in Budgam

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, APRIL 27: District Administration Budgam Monday marked the successful commencement of a comprehensive Training and Capacity Building Programme under the Nasha Mukht Abhiyan, reaffirming its commitment to building a drug-free society through strengthened grassroots interventions.

The inaugural session was organized under the guidance of the District Administration Budgam and coordinated by the Office of the District Social Welfare Officer Budgam. The programme witnessed active participation of counselors from the Education Department, who played a pivotal role in identifying, guiding, and supporting vulnerable youth across the district.

The event was presided over by the Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, who attended the event as the Chief Guest.

Addressing the gathering, the DC underscored the need for a coordinated, sustained, and multi-pronged approach to curb the growing menace of substance abuse.

He reiterated the administration's zero-tolerance policy against drug peddling, emphasizing that strict and decisive action will be taken against those involved in the illegal drug trade.

The DC further stressed the importance of a balanced approach, highlighting the need for rehabilitation, counseling,



and community support systems to ensure effective recovery and reintegration of affected individuals into society.

On the occasion, the DC administered a pledge, wherein all participants resolved to work collectively towards making Budgam a drug-free district. The pledge reflected a shared commitment to intensify awareness, prevention, and intervention efforts at every level of society.

The DC said that the training programme is designed to equip participants with essential knowledge and practical skills related to early identification of substance abuse, counseling techniques, community outreach, and effective intervention strategies.

He said that the District Administration is committed towards implementing the objectives of the Nasha Mukht

Abhiyan in letter and spirit, emphasizing the critical role of counselors and frontline workers as key agents of change in society.

He added that the programme will continue over the coming days with focused modules aimed at building a robust, responsive, and community-driven framework to effectively tackle substance abuse across the district.

The DC said that District Administration is working in close coordination with all stakeholders to ensure a healthier, safer, and drug-free future for the youth and the society at large.

Also, Resource Persons elaborated on the social, psychological, and economic dimensions of drug abuse, while interactive sessions ensured active engagement and exchange of ideas among participants.

Bandipora intensifies anti-drug campaign

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, APRIL 27: District Administration Bandipora Monday intensified its efforts under the ongoing 100-Day Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan by conducting a series of awareness programmes, community outreach activities, and student engagement initiatives across the district.

Awareness sessions were organised at multiple educational institutions, focusing on sensitising students about the harmful effects of substance abuse and the importance of leading a healthy and disciplined life. These sessions included lectures, interactive discussions, and IEC-based activities aimed at building awareness about the physical, mental, and social consequences of drug addiction.

Essay writing competitions were widely held in various schools as part of the campaign calendar, encouraging students to express their views on themes related to drug abuse, peer pressure, and the importance of a drug-free society. Students participated enthusiastically, presenting thoughtful and impactful ideas promoting positive lifestyle choices.

In several institutions, Parent-Teacher Meetings (PTMs) were also convened, providing a platform for meaningful interaction between parents and teachers regarding students' academic

progress, behaviour, and overall development. The meetings emphasised the importance of parental involvement, regular monitoring, and a supportive home environment in shaping responsible and aware individuals. Parents were also sensitised about their role in preventing substance abuse among youth.

Pledge-taking ceremonies formed an integral part of the campaign, with students, staff, and community members collectively reaffirming their commitment towards a drug-free society. Awareness rallies and community-level IEC programmes were also conducted in various panchayats, further strengthening grassroots outreach and public participation.

The district also witnessed awareness programmes in remote and rural areas, ensuring that the message of the campaign reached every section of society. Activities such as yoga sessions, public interactions, and awareness talks were organised to promote healthy lifestyles as a preventive measure against substance abuse.

Overall, the day-long activities witnessed active participation from students, parents, teachers, and members of the community, reflecting a collective resolve to combat drug abuse and support the vision of a Nasha Mukht Bandipora.

NASHA Mukht J&K Abhiyan

GCW Nawakadal organizes awareness rally, marathon



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, APRIL 27: Under the banner of Nasha Mukht Abhiyan, an Awareness Rally and Marathon were organised Monday by the College Wellbeing and Anti-Substance Cell (CWASC) in collaboration with the College Sports Committee and NCC Unit of Government Degree College for Women (GCW), Nawakadal, Srinagar.

The programme, as per an official statement, commenced with an awareness rally from the college campus to Safakadal Chowk, aiming to disseminate a strong message against drug abuse and promote a healthy, drug-free lifestyle among the youth.

This was followed by a marathon in which students and faculty members participated with great enthusiasm, showcasing their collective commitment to the cause.

The event was attended by Nodal Officer CWASC, Dr. Nuzhat Jan; Convenor College Sports Committee, Rukhsana Shawl; NCC Officer, Prof. Humeera Yousof, along with faculty members from CWASC and the Sports Committee.

On the occasion, the Principal, Prof. (Dr.) Huda Galzai, appreciated the efforts of the organisers and participants. In her message, she underscored the importance of collective responsibility in combating drug abuse and encouraged students to act as ambassadors of a drug-free society that such initiatives play a vital role in building awareness and fostering a culture of health, discipline, and social responsibility among the youth.

The event concluded with participants taking a pledge to support and uphold the vision of a drug-free society.

Awareness camp, rally held in Baramulla

KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, APRIL 27: In a significant step towards building a drug-free society, District Administration Baramulla, in collaboration with the Street Vendors Association Baramulla, organised an awareness camp followed by a rally under the ongoing Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan.

Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, S.F Hamid presided over the awareness camp held at Aqaf Market, wherein Additional Deputy Commissioner, Chief Planning Officer and other district officers were present, followed by participation of street vendors, shopkeepers, and members of the local community.

The camp focused on sensitising participants about the harmful effects of drug abuse, its impact on families and society, and the importance of awareness and prevention at the grassroots level.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the administration's sustained efforts to curb drug abuse and safeguard the youth. He urged people from all sections of society to actively join the campaign and

extend their full support in eliminating the drug menace. Emphasizing collective responsibility, he called upon parents, teachers, traders, and community leaders to remain vigilant and contribute towards spreading awareness.

A pledge was also administered on the occasion, reaffirming commitment to a drug-free society.

Following the camp, an awareness rally was flagged off with banners and placards, passing through various markets of Baramulla town. The rally witnessed enthusiastic participation from local street vendors, shopkeepers, and members of the public, who actively joined hands to spread awareness against drug abuse.

The Deputy Commissioner along with other officers also joined the rally, interacting with participants and encouraging them to act as ambassadors of change by taking the message to their respective communities.

The initiative reflects the continued commitment of District Administration Baramulla to strengthen public awareness and ensure active community participation in the fight against drug abuse under the Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan.

Sensex jumps 546 points, Nifty reclaims 24,000 mark in early trade

Mumbai, Apr 27: Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty rebounded in early trade on Monday after three days of decline, tracking a rally in Sun Pharma and a positive trend in global equity markets.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 546.64 points to 77,210.85 in early trade. The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 169.55 points to 24,067.50.

From the 30-Sensex firms, Sun Pharma climbed over 4 per cent after the company said it will acquire US-based Organon & Co in an all-cash deal at an enterprise valuation of USD 11.75 billion.

Adani Ports, Kotak Mahindra Bank, Tata Steel and Mahindra were also among the major gainers.

Axis Bank, Bharat Electronics, Bajaj Finance and Reliance Industries were the laggards from the blue-chip pack.

In Asian markets, South Korea's benchmark Kospi, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index were trading higher. US markets ended mostly higher on Friday.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 1.18 per cent higher at USD 106.6 per barrel.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 8,827.87 crore on Friday, according to exchange data.

On Friday, the Sensex dropped 999.79 points or 1.29 per cent to settle at 76,664.21. The Nifty slumped 275.10 points or 1.14 per cent to end at 23,897.95.

India, New Zealand ink free trade agreement



PTI

New Delhi, Apr 27: India and New Zealand on Monday inked a free trade agreement, aimed at boosting two-way commerce and investments.

The pact was signed by Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal and visiting New Zealand's Trade and Investment Minister Todd McClay.

The FTA provides duty-free access for 100 per cent of India's exports to New Zealand, covering all tariff lines or produce categories, and is expected to significantly boost MSMEs and employment by enhancing competitiveness in labour-intensive sectors such as textiles, apparel, leather, footwear, gems and jewellery, engineering goods, and

processed foods.

Earlier, New Zealand maintained peak tariffs of up to 10 per cent on key Indian exports, including ceramics, carpets, automobiles, and auto components.

With zero-duty market access from entry into force as New Zealand's other trade partners, Indian products will be fully competitive in that country, enjoying a level playing field.

Significantly, India also secured duty-free inputs for its manufacturing sector, including wooden logs, coking coal, and waste and scraps of metals, lowering production costs and enhancing the global competitiveness of the Indian industry.

On the other hand, India has offered tariff liberalisation on 70.03 per cent of

tariff lines covering 95 per cent of bilateral trade value, while keeping 29.97 per cent of tariff lines excluded to protect India's sensitive sectors.

The products that are kept in exclusion are mainly -- dairy (milk, cream, whey, yoghurt, cheese etc.), animal products (other than sheep meat), agricultural products (onions, chana, peas, corn, almonds), sugar, artificial honey, animal, vegetable or microbial fats and oils, arms and ammunition, gems and jewellery, copper and articles thereof (cathodes, cartridges, rods, bars, coils), aluminium and articles thereof (ingots, billets, wire bars) among others.

On 30 per cent of tariff lines of New Zealand, India will provide duty elimination on goods such as wood, wool, sheep meat, and leather-raw hides.

Similarly, 35.60 per cent of tariff lines are subject to phased elimination over 3, 5, 7, and 10 years, including petroleum oil, malt extract, vegetable oils, selected electrical and mechanical machinery, and peptides.

New Zealand products which enjoy tariff reductions include wine, pharmaceutical drugs, polymers, aluminum, iron and steel articles, and goods that only 0.06 per cent fall under tariff rate quotas, including Manuka honey, apples, kiwi fruit, and albumins, including milk albumin.

The FTA also includes a commitment to facilitate USD 20 billion in investment into India.

President Murmu arrives in Shimla for five-day visit



PTI

Shimla, Apr 27: President Droupadi Murmu on Monday arrived in Shimla for a five-day visit to the state during which she is scheduled to visit the Atal Tunnel and attend a banquet at the Lok Bhavan here.

She landed at the Kalyani helipad in Chharabara, about 14 kilometres from the state capital, and was taken to Rashtrapati Niwas, Mashobra.

Governor Kavinder Gupta, Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu, along with other dignitaries, welcomed the President.

Himachal Pradesh Assembly

Speaker Kuldeep Singh Pathania, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Anirudh Singh, designated as the Minister-in-Waiting for the President's visit, and Mayor Surinder Chauhan were also present.

During her visit from April 27 to May 1, Murmu is likely to visit Palampur Agriculture University in Kangra district and Atal Tunnel Rohtang in Kullu-Lahaul and Spiti districts.

About 1,000 police personnel have been deployed in Shimla for the President's visit and the city has been divided into three sectors for regulating the traffic movement, officials said.

Central forces to stay in Bengal for seven more days after polls: Shah



PTI

Kolkata, Apr 27: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday said that central forces would remain deployed in West Bengal for at least seven more days after the assembly elections.

Shah was addressing a gathering after leading a road show in Behala, where voting will take place in the second and final phase on April 29. The first phase of elections to

the 294-member West Bengal assembly was held on April 23. Votes will be counted on May 4.

"Brothers and sisters, go and vote on the 29th, do not worry about the goons. The Election Commission has made extensive security arrangements, and I am telling you that even though the BJP will come to power, central forces will remain here for seven days," he said.

The road show was held on

the final day of campaigning in support of BJP candidates for Behala Purba and Behala Paschim, turning the south Kolkata neighbourhood into a sea of saffron.

Standing atop an open-hood vehicle, Shah waved at supporters and showered flower petals on crowds lining both sides of the road.

Thousands of BJP workers and supporters, carrying party flags and orange-green balloons, thronged the route, raising slogans of "Jai Shri Ram" and "Bharat Mata ki Jai".

Later, Shah took part in another colourful road show at Chandannagar in Hooghly district, drawing huge crowds.

Speaking on the occasion, the home minister said there is a strong wave in favour of the BJP and once voted to power, it would "push back all infiltrators".

He also alleged large-scale corruption in social welfare schemes by the TMC government, and asserted that those involved would not be spared.

Shah said it was essential to bring the BJP to power in West Bengal to transform the state into a "sonar Bangla (golden Bengal)".

RS Chairman accepts merger of 7 AAP MPs with BJP



PTI

New Delhi, Apr 27: Rajya Sabha Chairman C P Radhakrishnan on Monday officially accepted the merger of seven Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MPs with the BJP, reducing the strength of Arvind Kejriwal's party in the Upper House to three.

After this transition, the BJP's strength in the Upper House has increased to 113. Raghav Chadha, Ashok Mittal, Harbhajan Singh, Sandeep Pathak, Vikramjit Sahney, Swati Maliwal, and Rajinder Gupta are the seven MPs who have merged.

The Rajya Sabha website now shows that the seven MPs are part of the BJP list of members.

The seven MPs had on Friday petitioned the Rajya Sabha

Chairman to be treated as BJP MPs after the merger and the same has been accepted, sources said.

The AAP had on Sunday moved a petition before the RS Chairman seeking the termination of the membership of the seven MPs, who had switched sides.

Aam Aadmi Party MP Sanjay Singh said he has submitted a petition to Chairman Radhakrishnan seeking the disqualification of the seven party MPs in the Upper House, who recently quit the AAP and announced their merger with the BJP.

On Friday last, the AAP suffered a jolt when the seven Rajya Sabha MPs quit and announced merger with the BJP, alleging that the Kejriwal-led party had strayed from its principles, values and core morals.

The seven MPs had on Friday petitioned the Rajya Sabha

Row over Cong MLA's remarks, BJP alleges Cong 'wishing for attack' on PM



PTI

New Delhi, Apr 27: A row erupted over remarks by Maharashtra MLA Vijay Wadetiwar on the shooting at an event attended by US President Donald Trump in Washington on Saturday as the BJP demanded a condemnation from Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, alleging that his party legislator justified the incident and is "praying" for a similar "attack" on Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In a video shared by the ruling party, Wadetiwar purportedly says, "As you sow, so shall you reap. Whatever one does, one has to face the consequences," while alleging that Trump, during his tenure in the highest office, has sought to dominate other countries and has "disturbed" global peace. He allegedly went on to add that a "similar sentiment" exists in India.

Trump, First Lady Melania Trump, Vice President JD Vance and other top officials were evacuated unharmed from the annual dinner of the White House Correspondents' Association at Washington Hilton after a man armed with multiple weapons fired shots outside the hotel ballroom.

Posting a video clip of Wadetiwar's remarks, BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla alleged that the Congress has gone beyond political criticism and has endorsed the attack.

"In opposing Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the Congress party is now going against the country. Vijay Wadetiwar has justified the shooting attempt on Trump and said that a similar sentiment exists in India. In a way, he is hoping that such an incident happens here too," he said in a video post on X.

Poonawalla also accused the MLA of making controversial remarks earlier, including on "Operation Sindoor", and allegedly giving a clean chit to Pakistani terrorists in the 26/11 attacks. "He has now gone beyond and made the most obnoxious comment," he said.

The BJP spokesperson

accused the Congress leaders, including its president Mallikarjun Kharge, of repeatedly using abusive language against Prime Minister Modi, saying such statements reflect a "dangerous and irresponsible mindset".

"You can hate the BJP, but why would you wish such things to happen in this country? And why would you pray or hope for it?"

"They have abused the prime minister over 150 times and issued threats against him. And now they have stooped to this. Only because they oppose the BJP, they would even justify such incidents involving someone holding a constitutional position," he said.

In another post on X, he also referred to alleged remarks by Kharge in which he described the BJP and the RSS as "poisonous snakes" that must be finished and called Modi a "terrorist".

Demanding an apology, Poonawalla said this reflects the "true face" of the Congress and amounts to an insult to the Constitution.

"This is a party that has lost a prime minister to the bullets of terrorists, and despite that, they are making such statements. This is not 'mohabbat ki dukaan' but 'samvidhan ka apmaan' and 'nafrat ke bhaijaan'. This is the true face of the Congress party," he said.

Another BJP national spokesperson, Pradeep Bhandari, called the Congress a "front of the tukde-tukde gang (anti-nationals)". "Congress is an urban naxal party. If Congress cannot defeat Prime Minister Narendra Modi democratically, it now wishes for an attack on him," he said in a post on X.

In the video, Wadetiwar is heard saying, "He (Trump) also ruined his own country, what has happened now was bound to happen." Wadetiwar said that the people in the US have come out on the streets in protest, whereas in India, the absence of protests creates the impression that "everything is fine", even though, according to him, "a similar sentiment exists".

Consumer panel orders restaurant to compensate woman after AC malfunction ruins birthday bash

PTI

Mumbai, Apr 27: A consumer commission here ordered a restaurant to compensate a client for a non-functioning AC that left guests "suffocating" during a birthday party, holding that air conditioning is an "essential component" of venue booking.

The Additional District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (Suburban) earlier this month directed the restaurant to pay Rs 22,557 for deficiency in service due to the non-functioning AC in its banquet hall, plus six per cent interest per annum starting from August 2024.

It has also asked the restaurant to pay the complainant Rs 10,000 for mental agony and Rs 5,000 for legal expenses.

The complainant, a Ghatkopar resident, had booked the restaurant's banquet hall in Lower Parel for a relative's birthday party in July 2024, paying Rs 3.63 lakh for food and services. She alleged that the air-conditioning system failed during the event, causing guests to suffer "from suffocation and considerable discomfort". Though the management made temporary arrangements by installing fans, it was insufficient. Several guests allegedly left the function without consuming food, causing embarrassment and inconvenience, the complainant claimed.

'One-third of animal habitats could experience extreme events by 2085 under continued warming'

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 27: Under continued global warming, over one-third of animal habitats on land could face climate-driven extreme events, such as heatwaves or forest fires, by 2085, according to a new study.

Published in the journal Nature Ecology and Evolution, the findings also add that rapidly cutting emissions to net zero could largely avert these impacts.

Researchers, led by those from the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research in Germany, analysed climate projections and species data, including those from the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species.

They found that in a scenario in which warming starts to reverse in the latter part of the century, only nine per cent of land animals' habitat could be expected to



experience extreme events by 2085.

"I think climate change, and in particular extreme events, are still really being underestimated when it comes to conservation planning. It's not just going to be a gradual shift of temperature over many years," lead author Stefanie Heinicke, a postdoctoral researcher at the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, said.

Multiple extreme events can have compounding effects and create "synergistic" threats to biodiversity.

For example, a study on the 2019-2020 Australian fire showed a 27-40 per cent greater decline across plant and animal species when the fire was preceded by a drought, the researchers said.

The team predicted changes in exposure to droughts, heatwaves, river floods and wildfires for 33,936 terrestrial vertebrate species and

794 ecoregions (ecological regions).

"By 2050, under a medium-high emission scenario, on average 74 per cent of the area within species' current geographic ranges are projected to be exposed to heatwaves, 16 per cent to wildfires, eight per cent to droughts and three per cent to river floods," the authors wrote.

Species-rich areas, including those in the Amazon basin, Africa and Southeast Asia, could be affected, they said.

The researchers also projected that by 2050, 22 ecoregions, primarily in mid-latitudes, could be estimated to have at least 50 per cent of their area exposed to two or more types of extreme events, increasing to 236 ecoregions by 2085.

"By 2085, 36 per cent of the area within species' ranges are projected to be exposed to multiple event types," the authors wrote.

Iran FM blames US for failure of talks after landing in Russia

AFP

Saint Petersburg, Apr 27: Iran's top diplomat blamed Washington on Monday for the failure of talks after landing in Russia as part of a whirlwind diplomatic tour, with direct negotiations between the warring parties seemingly at an impasse.

Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi made the remarks in Saint Petersburg, where he is expected to meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin, having sandwiched a trip to Oman in between visits to main mediator Pakistan over the past few days.

Islamabad played host to the first and only round of unsuccessful talks between Washington and Tehran, and Araghchi's visit had fanned hopes for fresh negotiations over the weekend, until US President Donald Trump scrapped a planned trip by his envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner.

"The US approaches caused the previous round of negotiations, despite



progress, to fail to reach its goals because of the excessive demands," Araghchi said Monday.

After calling off his emissaries' trip, Trump told Fox News that if Iran wanted talks, "they can come to us, or they can call us," though he has said the cancellation does not signal a return to hostilities.

"If they want to talk, they can come to us, or they can call us. You know, there is a telephone. We have nice, secure lines," Trump told "The Sunday Briefing" on

Fox News.

"They know what has to be in the agreement. It's very simple: They cannot have a nuclear weapon, otherwise there's no reason to meet," Trump said.

In a sign that backchannel efforts were ongoing, the Fars news agency said Iran had passed "written messages" to the Americans via Pakistan spelling out red lines, including nuclear issues and the Strait of Hormuz.

Fars news agency said the messages were not

part of formal negotiations, however.

Trump will hold talks on the Iran war on Monday with his top security advisers, US media reported, as negotiations between the rival parties seemed to reach an impasse.

ABC News quoted two unidentified US officials as saying that Trump would meet with his key security advisers on Iran, adding that a new deal proposed by Tehran to resolve the conflict fell short of Washington's red lines.

Barak Ravid, global affairs correspondent for US media outlet Axios, reported that Trump was expected to hold a meeting with his top national security and foreign policy team on Monday to discuss the next steps.

Global issue

The ceasefire in the US-Israeli war with Iran has so far held, but its economic shock waves have continued to reverberate globally.

Iran has blockaded the strait, cutting off flows of

oil, gas and fertilizer and sending prices soaring, raising fears of food insecurity in developing countries.

In response, the US has imposed a blockade of Iranian ports in the waterway and beyond.

Trump faces domestic pressure as fuel prices rise following Iran's closure of Hormuz, with midterm elections due in November. Polls show the war is unpopular among Americans.

The subject of the strait was on the agenda during Araghchi's trip to Oman, which lies on the other side of the waterway from Iran.

"The safe passage through the Strait of Hormuz is an important global issue. Naturally, as the two coastal countries of this strait, we must speak with each other so that our common interests are secured," Araghchi said from Saint Petersburg.

Russian and Iranian state media confirmed Araghchi would speak with Putin, citing officials from their respective governments.

Too early to drop sanctions against Iran: EU

REUTERS

Berlin, Apr 27: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Monday that it was too early to drop sanctions imposed on Iran.

"We think the dropping of sanctions would be too early," she said in Berlin at a meeting of the conservative CDU and its CSU Bavarian sister party, adding that the sanctions were in place due to Iran's suppression of its own population.

"We first have to see a change, a fundamental change in Iran for the dropping of sanctions," von der Leyen added.

Musk, OpenAI CEO Altman head to court in high-stakes showdown over AI

AP

Oakland (US), Apr 27: Technology tycoons Elon Musk and Sam Altman are poised to face off in a high-stakes trial revolving around the alleged betrayal, deceit and unbridled ambition that blurred the bickering billionaires' once-shared vision for the development of artificial intelligence.

The trial, which is scheduled to begin Monday with jury selection, centres on the 2015 birth of ChatGPT maker OpenAI as a nonprofit startup primarily funded by Musk before evolving into a capitalistic venture now valued at USD 852 billion.

The trial's outcome could sway the balance of power in AI, a breakthrough technology that is increasingly being feared as a potential job killer and an existential threat to humanity's survival.

Those perceived risks are among the reasons that Musk, the world's richest person, cites for filing an August 2024 lawsuit that will now be decided by a jury and US District Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers in Oakland, California.

The civil lawsuit accuses Altman, OpenAI's CEO, and his top lieutenant, Greg Brockman, of double-crossing Musk by straying from the San Francisco company's founding mission to be an altruistic steward of a revolutionary technology. The lawsuit alleges they shifted into a money-making mode behind his back.

Two booked for allegedly disabling 240 CCTV cameras at Chinnaswamy Stadium before RCB vs GT

PTI

Bengaluru, Apr 27: An FIR has been registered against two persons for allegedly tampering with the CCTV surveillance system at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on the day of the RCB vs GT IPL 2026 match on April 24, police said on Monday.

The accused, identified as Manjunath (37) and Abdul Kalam (19), allegedly entered the stadium without valid authorisation, reportedly by misusing a deactivated access card, and tampered with critical surveillance infrastructure, they said. The complaint was lodged by Aditya Bhat of Staqu Technologies Pvt Ltd, which provides AI-driven surveillance support during match days, police said.

According to the FIR, more than 240 cameras went offline on the morning of the match. The two, said to be associated with subcontractor IVS Digital Solutions, allegedly damaged Network Video Recorder (NVR) systems and optical fibre connections, disrupting surveillance coverage in key security zones, including entry gates and perimeter areas.

The accused allegedly entered the CCTV room without proper access and later moved to a junction box near the parking area, where fibre connections were damaged, the FIR stated.

LSG made a huge mistake of sending Nicholas Pooran in the Super Over: Dasgupta

IANIS

New Delhi, April 27: Former India wicketkeeper-batter Deep Dasgupta has raised questions over Lucknow Super Giants' tactical calls in their Super Over defeat to Kolkata Knight Riders, stating that sending out-of-form Nicholas Pooran to bat in the Super Over ahead of Mitchell Marsh was a "huge mistake."

Analysing LSG's narrow loss in Lucknow, Dasgupta pointed to both execution and decision-making lapses, particularly in the Super Over, where the team faltered under pressure despite having a strong batting line-up.

"LSG had two back-to-back games, one against RR and one against KKR, where they should have won. I understand that against Kolkata, it wasn't an easy pitch to bat on, but you would expect them to chase 155 comfortably. Not being able to chase with that kind of batting order is not good for the morale of their dressing room," Dasgupta told JioStar. "You know quite well that your batters are unable to score runs and on top of that, you made a huge mistake of sending someone like Nicholas Pooran to bat in the Super Over ahead of Mitchell Marsh, who has been their top run-getter this season. Mitchell Marsh, Himmat Singh and Aiden Markram should have been the ideal three batters to play in the Super Over. Instead, they sent an under-confident Pooran. In T20 cricket, losing close games like these back-to-back can break a team's season. LSG need to fix their batting order and decision-making quickly, or the Playoffs will slip away," he added.

Hezbollah leader rejects Lebanon-Israel direct talks

Vows to confront Israel

AFP

Beirut, Apr 27: Hezbollah leader Naim Qassem on Monday rejected Lebanon's planned direct negotiations with Israel, calling them a "grave sin" that will destabilise Lebanon.

Lebanon and Israel's US ambassadors held two meetings in Washington over the past weeks, the first of their kind in decades.

The first meeting led to a truce in the Israel-Hezbollah war, while Beirut has been preparing for direct negotiations with the aim of striking a peace deal with Israel. The two countries have officially



been at war since 1948.

"We categorically reject direct negotiations with Israel, and those in power should know that their actions will not benefit Lebanon or themselves," Qassem said in a statement, aired by the

group's channel Al-Manar.

He called on authorities to "back down from their grave sin that is putting Lebanon in a spiral of instability."

He added that the Lebanese government "cannot continue while it is

neglecting Lebanon's rights, giving up land, and confronting its resistant people."

Lebanese authorities have repeatedly stated that the goal of the US-sponsored negotiations is to stop the war, secure Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon, and return displaced people to their homes after the fighting forced more than a million people to flee.

"These direct negotiations and their outcomes are as if they do not exist for us, and they do not concern us in the slightest," Qassem said. "We will continue our defensive resistance for Lebanon and its people," he added.

"No matter how much the enemy threatens, we will not back down, we will not bow down, and we will not be defeated."

Mandaviya attends NRAI's 75th anniversary, launches Athlete app & grassroots program

ANI

New Delhi, April 27: The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) celebrated a significant milestone by launching its 75th anniversary at a notable event attended by Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, Mansukh Mandaviya, along with senior dignitaries and athletes. The event also helped to boost the momentum for the Shooting League of India (SLI), highlighting India's ambitious plans for the future of shooting sports.

During the celebrations, NRAI revealed its special 75-year commemorative logo, representing seven and a half decades of excellence, discipline, and achievement in Indian shooting.

Furthermore, NRAI launched a large-scale grassroots campaign nationwide to familiarise 750,000 new school and college students with shooting through a practical '10-shot experience' ahead of the 2028 Olympics. This program will be implemented across various states and districts in partnership with organisations, including the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), universities, school boards, and State Associations.

The initiative aims to raise awareness and encourage grassroots-level involvement, with the goal of identifying and inspiring the next generation of Indian shooters.

The event also marked the official launch of the NRAI Athlete



App, a groundbreaking digital platform that makes NRAI India's first fully digital sports federation. The app will act as a comprehensive ecosystem for athlete management, handling everything from onboarding and registering 750,000 youth participants through the federation's grassroots program to issuing certificates, maintaining records, and tracking the performances of India's top shooters and international shooters.

To mark the special occasion, NRAI gifted a 75-year logo memento to the Hon'ble Sports Minister, expressing gratitude and celebrating the twin milestones for Indian shooting.

Speaking on the occasion, Mansukh Mandaviya, Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports, said, "As the NRAI celebrates 75 remarkable years, it is encouraging to see Indian shooting embrace innovation and a long-term vision through initiatives like the Athlete App, grassroots outreach to 7.5 lakh youth, and the upcoming Shooting League

of India. These efforts will help identify talent, strengthen our sporting ecosystem, and create greater opportunities for athletes. Under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, India has shown immense growth in sports, and with the right planning, integration, and commitment, we can emerge as one of the world's leading sporting nations in the years ahead."

Also, NRAI President Kalikesh Singh Deo shared his views and stated, "As we celebrate 75 remarkable years of the NRAI, this milestone is not only about reflecting on our legacy but also about shaping the future of Indian shooting. Our vision is to make the sport more accessible, aspirational, and engaging for the next generation. Through nationwide grassroots initiatives, the launch of the NRAI Athlete App, and the continued momentum of the Shooting League of India, we are laying the foundation for a stronger and more inclusive ecosystem for the sport in India."

Movies Schedule

Tuesday, 28th April

Ginny Weds Sunny 2 (U/A16+)
Hindi - 03:15 PM

Michael (U/A 13+)
English with English Subtitles - 02:00 PM, 05:00 PM

Lee Cronin's The Mummy (A)
English with English Subtitles - 11:00 AM

Dhurandhar: The Revenge (A)
Hindi - 10:45 AM, 06:05 PM

BHOOTH BANGLA (U/A16+)
Hindi Atmos - 11:15 AM, 02:30 PM

INOX Srinagar official
Call: 95416 13868 For assistance with tickets