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LG terms drug abuse among UT's gravest challenges

of drug abuse," Sinha said. "Drug abuse is among the J&K's gravest challenges and we stand firm in our commitment to confront drug abuse and emerge victorious," he added.

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

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

"Those who destroy society will face the full and uncompromising weight of the law. Our neighbor is using cross-border smuggling to poison our communities and undermine our nation's future. Every officer carries one obligation: this must stop. The full force of the law is now directed at smugglers. Their networks will be dismantled without delay," the LG said.

In a stern warning, he said that drug smugglers' assets would be seized, ringleaders prosecuted, and punishment will be delivered swiftly. "The administration will confiscate all property, revoke licenses, passports, Aadhaar, and freeze bank accounts of all those involved. This crackdown against drug smugglers will echo through generations," he added.

"We have issued a new SoP against drug traffickers. Under this SOP, we have taken a crucial decision to revoke passports, driving licences, Aadhaar numbers, and arms licenses of smugglers involved in drug trafficking. If they go absconding, a Look Out Circular will be issued immediately. Additionally, their movable and immovable properties will be attached under the NDPS Act, bank accounts frozen, and financial investigation will be launched," he said.

"On April 2, we had notified the Jammu and Kashmir Substance Use Disorder Treatment, Counselling and Rehabilitation Centres Rules, 2026, ensuring that every centre is genuine, dedicated to patients affected by addiction, equipped with all required human resources, and under continuous monitoring. Action will be taken against centres operating without support staff or in violation of the rules," he added.

He directed senior officers for swift action on complaints and strengthening of grassroots intelligence with the help of panchayats, mohalla committees, chowkidars, lambar-dars and ward surveillance committees to identify & punish every culprit.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He later flagged-off a padyatra and joined public representatives, senior officials and thousands of citizens in the walkathon from M A Stadium to Parade Ground, marking the beginning of 100-days of intensive campaign under Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyaan.

The padyatra was warmly received by business organisations, civil society members, and various stakeholders along the route.

India not 'dharamshala', infiltrators will be thrown out: Amit Shah

gal that their produce will be sent across India, so that they get remunerative prices".

The West Bengal government had earlier imposed restrictions on selling potatoes to other states.

Now, the farmers alleged that they are facing a crisis of a price crash due to a bumper crop this year.

Asserting that the Election Commission has made adequate arrangements with paramilitary forces for ensuring free and fair polls, the union home minister said that action would be taken against those trying to indulge in any kind of mischief during the polling process.

"We will ensure that no TMC goon engages in mischief during the assembly polls," he said.

Elections to the 294-member West Bengal assembly will be held in two phases - on April 23 and April 29.

Votes will be counted on May 4.

Ladakh gets Aadhaar identity, J&K tag removed

flect the erstwhile state name of J&K, instead of Ladakh, causing widespread concerns and hassles.

The LG, taking a serious note of prolonged pendency in this important matter, directed the UT administration to resolve the issue at the earliest.

Subsequently, the administration took up the matter with the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI), at higher levels. This long-awaited correction has now been successfully implemented, ensuring that Ladakh's distinct regional identity is accurately represented in Aadhaar.

The continued reflection of "Jammu & Kashmir" in Aadhaar records of Ladakh residents had been causing considerable inconvenience to the people. Residents were facing difficulty in using Aadhaar as a valid document for identity and address, while availing various services, as the "State" field in Aadhaar, did not correspond to the post-reorganisation status of Ladakh. The issue not only created hardship for citizens but also affected the proper representation of the Union Territory in Aadhaar-linked records and progress reports.

The LG said that the development would greatly benefit the residents of Ladakh by removing procedural hurdles and enabling seamless access to services. "Ensuring that

the identity of Ladakh is accurately reflected in official records, is not only an administrative necessity, but also a matter of the identity and convenience for our people. The successful resolution of this long-pending issue, reflects the UT Administration's commitment to responsive governance, ease of living, and ensuring that the unique identity of Ladakh is properly represented across all official platforms," Shri Saxena said.

To resolve the issue, the UT Administration, in coordination with UIDAI, devised an innovative mechanism to update the State field centrally. Instead of requiring each resident to individually visit Aadhaar centres for correction, the updation of records was carried out on the basis of PIN codes specific to Ladakh. These PIN codes were verified in coordination with the Department of Posts and shared with UIDAI.

This development has brought significant relief to the people of Ladakh, as they no longer need to visit Aadhaar centres individually for updating their records. Residents can now easily download their updated e-Aadhaar from the official UIDAI portal, and those wishing to obtain a PVC Aadhaar card may order it online by paying a nominal fee.

DCCC at Kathua GMC to be upgraded: Jitendra

Tata Memorial Centre, Mumbai, would be upgraded.

He said the initiative will include the installation of state-of-the-art radiotherapy equipment to provide advanced radiation treatment to cancer patients locally. He said this would reduce the need for patients to travel to distant metropolitan centres.

He was speaking after presiding over a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony at GMC, Kathua between the two institutions, marking a significant step towards strengthening healthcare infrastructure and research capabilities in the region.

Addressing the gathering, Dr Singh highlighted the government's commitment to improving access to advanced healthcare services in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

He stated that capacity building will be a key component of the partnership, with surgeons and medical professionals from GMC, Kathua, receiving specialised training in cancer surgery and oncology care from experts at Tata Memorial Centre.

Dr Singh emphasized that the initiative will not only improve patient care but also contribute to early diagnosis and timely treatment of cancer cases in the region.

In another important development, an MoU was signed between GMC, Kathua and CSIR Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine (IIIM). The Minister noted that CSIR-IIIM, Jammu is engaged in advanced research in areas such as drug resistance in tuberculosis and development of interventions for boosting immunity.

He stated that the collaboration will pave the way for joint research projects addressing critical public challenges. The partnership will also foster academic cooperation between the two institutions, including joint MD thesis.

Dr Singh informed that the MoU between GMC and CSIR-IIIM will facilitate joint academic programmes, including postgraduate research, and will support MD thesis work in pharmacology and medicine. This will provide medical students and researchers with greater exposure to interdisciplinary research and access to advanced scientific resources.

Highlighting the importance of such collaborations, the Minister said that convergence between medical institutions and premier research organizations is essential for translating scientific research into clinical applications. He expressed confidence that these partnerships will significantly contribute to strengthening the healthcare delivery system and promoting innovation-driven medical research in the Union Territory.

On the occasion, Dr. Jitendra Singh inaugurated a library at GMC, Kathua. Highlighting that all academic journals are now accessible under the "One Nation One Subscription" initiative, the Minister urged students to fully utilise the facility to advance their academic and research pursuits.

The Minister also laid the foundation stone for the 150 KLD Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) in the college campus on a turnkey basis. The project aims to strengthen environmental management and ensure proper treatment of waste generated within the institution.

Govt hikes windfall tax on diesel to Rs 55.5/lt

amid the war in West Asia.

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

On February 28, the United States and Israel launched military strikes against Iran, triggering sweeping retaliation from Tehran. On April 8, Iran, the United States and Israel agreed on a two-week ceasefire in the war that tore across the Middle East and disrupted the global energy market.

Export duty on petrol continues to remain nil.

Govt promoting millet in armed forces: Rajnath

1965 during the Indo-Pak war amid a food crisis with the aim of boosting the morale of soldiers (jawan) and motivate farmers (kisan) to increase production. The slogan soon became a symbol of self-reliance.

Addressing the three-day 'Unnat Krishi Mahotsav' here as chief guest, Singh said, "Flours made from jowar, bajra and ragi have been introduced in the armed forces. By our efforts we are again acting upon the slogan 'Jai Jawan-Jai Kisan'." He said the government has decided to procure fruits and vegetables grown through organic farming from farmers living around cantonment areas, which has resulted in a significant rise in their income in recent months.

"The initiative also encourages organic farming. This means produce grown by you through organic methods, without chemical fertilisers, will directly reach our soldiers' plates. You will benefit as your produce will fetch better prices," Singh said.

He said agriculture holds vast potential and youth participation will increase innovation, raise farmers' income and strengthen the country's economy. "Youth have knowledge, energy and the capacity for innovation, which need to be directed towards agriculture," said Singh, who was Union minister for agriculture in 2003-2004 in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government.

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

"Youth in the country are performing excellently across sectors and their contribution in technology and innovation is commendable. It is a matter of pride that Indian youth are establishing their identity at the global level," the senior BJP leader asserted.

Referring to the journey from farm to market, Singh said a farmer does not just produce food but sustains the entire economy. "He generates employment. He drives industry. He supports services," Singh said.

Will implement UCC, prevent Bengalis from becoming minority in WB: Modi

Manush'. But now it wants to form the government with the votes of infiltrators," he said.

"West Bengal will no longer tolerate this game of appeasement and vote-bank politics. We will not allow Bengalis to become a minority in the state," the prime minister said.

Calling the election a battle to preserve West Bengal's identity, Modi alleged that rapid demographic change was taking place in parts of the state.

"This election is about saving the identity of West Bengal. Demographic change has been taking place very fast in the state," he said.

Attacking the TMC on corruption, he said, "Those protecting the corrupt and looting the people will end up in jail after the BJP comes to power in West Bengal."

He alleged that "goons of the Left" have now joined the TMC and accused the ruling party in the state of emulating the CPI(M)-led previous government's 'cut and commission' politics.

"Bengal's history shows that when it resolves for change, no power in the world can stop it. Whoever challenged Bengal had their arrogance shattered, from the British to the Congress and the Left... now it's the TMC's turn," he said.

Modi also referred to violence during Ram Navami processions in West Bengal this year, contrasting it with celebrations in the rest of the country.

"Ram Navami was celebrated peacefully across India, but in West Bengal, Ram Navami rallies were attacked and violence took place under the protection of the TMC," he said.

The PM also alleged that the TMC, sensing defeat in the polls, was engaging in conspiracy and spreading AI-generated videos, while urging people not to fall into this trap.

He also alleged that the future of Murshidabad's silk farmers was ruined due to the ignorance of the TMC government.

India, US to deepen nuclear ties

US Ambassador to India, Sergei Gor, who was also present at the meeting, said America was ready to cooperate with India on civil nuclear cooperation in addition to other areas, such as coal gasification and US LPG exports.

"Great to spend this morning with Secretary Wright and FS Vikram Misri to discuss the future of US-India energy cooperation. After India's historic passage of the SHANTI bill, we are ready to cooperate on civil nuclear in addition to other areas such as coal gasification and US LPG exports," Gor said in a social media post.

Later, on Friday night, he hosted Misri at US President Donald Trump's Mar-a-Lago resort in Florida.

"It was a pleasure to host Vikram Misri tonight at Mar a Lago! From trade and defence to energy, India and the United States stand ready to work closely together in the months and years ahead," Gor posted on social media.

The Sustainable Harnessing and Advancement of Nuclear Energy Act (SHANTI Act) is considered the most sweeping reform in the civil nuclear sector in India.

The law, which came into force last December, opens up the tightly-controlled civil nuclear space for private participation.

It also repealed the Atomic Energy Act of 1962 and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage (CLND) Act of 2010.

Misri arrived in the US late Tuesday night on a three-day visit. He has held meetings with senior officials from the departments of defence, commerce and state.

He also met Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Thursday. India's Air Chief Marshal A P Singh was also on a visit to the US and visited the Peterson Space Force Base in Colorado Springs on Wednesday.

He interacted with General Gregory M Guillot (Commander US-NORTHCOM/NORAD) for a productive exchange of perspectives on complex operational modalities, reflecting the strength of the growing partnership, the IAF said in a social media post.

In separate meetings, Gor held discussions with Steve Feinberg, the US Deputy Secretary of Defence and Secretary of the Army Dan Driscoll.

In a social media post, Gor said defence cooperation between the US and India is growing and making both countries safer and stronger.

"Discussed with Deputy Secretary Feinberg ways that we can deepen ties, including through defence sales of US equipment, the best in the world, and strengthening interoperability," he said.

The US envoy said he discussed the momentum of the US-India relationship since Driscoll's visit to New Delhi in January.

"Always great to see my friend and Secretary of the Army Dan Driscoll @SecArmy where we discussed the momentum in the US-India relationship following his January visit. The US Army and the Indian Army will play an important role in bolstering defence ties," Gor said.

He also met Dylan Johnson, the Assistant Secretary of State for Global Public Affairs, and Michael Needham, Counsellor in the Department of State.

"Couldn't wrap my visit to DC without seeing my friends AS Dylan Johnson and Mike Needham. Both are working tirelessly to make America stronger, safer and more prosperous! Looking forward to having both visit India very soon," Gor said.

Ease of understanding law essential for ease of justice: Meghwal

grade the digitisation of lower judiciary, is under implementation.

Taking the gains of Phase-I and Phase-II to the next level, e-Courts Phase-III aims to usher in a regime of maximum ease of justice by moving towards digital, online and paperless courts through digitisation of the entire court records.

US, Iran begin direct talks, seeking end to 6-week war

to a ceasefire in Lebanon and the lifting of sanctions on Iran.

Iran is calling for a ceasefire in Lebanon, where Israeli strikes on Iran-backed Hezbollah militants have killed nearly 2,000 people since the fighting began in March. Israel and the United States say the Lebanon campaign is separate from the Iran-US ceasefire, but Tehran insists it is directly linked.

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has said

there is "no ceasefire" when it comes to Hezbollah. However, Israel's repeated warnings urging residents of Beirut's southern suburbs to evacuate have not yet been followed by further military action.

A US official said that several US Navy ships on Saturday had crossed the Strait of Hormuz, whose blockade by Iran had caused the biggest-ever disruption to global energy supplies. But Iranian state TV denied that any US vessel had passed through the waterway.

"We're now starting the process of clearing out the Strait of Hormuz," Trump wrote in a social media post, adding that all 28 of Iran's mine-dropping ships had been sunk.

Earlier, a senior Iranian source said the US had agreed to release frozen assets held in Qatar and other foreign banks, an assertion swiftly denied by a US official.

Iran's delegation in Islamabad is made up of 71 people, including negotiators, experts, media representatives and security, according to a state-affiliated outlet.

The US has also brought "a full suite of US experts on relevant subject areas" to Islamabad, a White House official said, along with "additional experts" supporting the talks from Washington.

Meanwhile, President Donald Trump said the US is starting the process of "clearing out" the Strait of Hormuz, the vital waterway that has been central to negotiations. It was not initially clear what that would entail.

Another key issue that could complicate the talks from the outset is the Strait of Hormuz, a vital global oil shipping route.

Iran is seeking acknowledgment of its authority over the strait, where it aims to collect transit fees and control access, a move that would mark a major shift in regional power. The United States, however, insists the waterway must remain open to oil tankers and other vessels without restrictions, including tolls.

CJI calls for legal overhaul, says system will shape India's \$10 trillion economy

ply chain, these are not short-term bets, they are commitments that unfold over time," the CJI said.

Investors, he noted, look at consistency over the full duration of their investments.

"At its core, the question is one of trust; It is not merely about enforcement at the stage of breach of a contract, but about the continued integrity of obligations for performance. Such confidence among the investors enables commerce and commercial relationships to create the value they are intended to generate," the CJI said.

He also pointed to the shift in commercial disputes over the years. Earlier disputes were mostly about payments or supply contracts. Now they arise from longer and more complex business arrangements.

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

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

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

He listed three priorities: predictability, dispute prevention and specialisation.

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

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

"In fact, there is a lot of requirement for our judges also to require a periodic orientation. And for that, I will sincerely make some efforts where some domain experts can have an informal interaction with judges to understand the different nuances of the economic system, so that they have a fair idea beyond the law books," the CJI said.

He also stressed the role of technology in the legal system. "I believe technology must be treated as part of the legal systems, as part of its core infrastructure, not as an optional upgrade. Digital case management, AI-assisted research tools and electronic postings directly affect the speed, accessibility and cost of justice," the CJI said, adding, "But of course, human judgment must remain at its core. The objective is to remove every avoidable obstacle between a legitimate claim and its fair resolution."

He ended with a message for the legal community.

"It depends equally on whether the bar chooses to see itself as a worthy stakeholder in India's economic future, or a mere service provider. That shift cannot be mandated by legislation or a court order. It must come as a matter of professional commitment," he said.

He said the generation that shapes India's commercial law for a \$10 trillion economy will be remembered in the same way as those who shaped its constitutional law.

Goyal holds talks with Saudi minister on stronger supply chains

talks with his counterparts from the UAE, Bahrain and Kuwait.

All these countries are members of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) with which India is negotiating a free trade agreement.

The commerce ministry, in a statement, said that Goyal had a virtual call with Qassabi.

"The Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral trade and expressed optimism for early progress in the India-GCC FTA negotiations," it said.

Both sides noted the strain conflict has put on regional supply chains and stressed the need for an early recovery through coordinated efforts to ensure smooth trade flows, it said.

Goyal highlighted India's steps to support exports to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf region.

The joint attack launched by the US and Israel on Iran had led to severe disruptions in the movement of ships in international waters, particularly to the West Asian nations.

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