



Administration backbone of nation, must become fully citizen-centric: LG Sinha

Says it must realise India's dream of becoming greatest nation

Urges J&K industrialists to invest in new skills to enhance productivity

KNO Desk

Jammu, Mar 25: Describing administration as the backbone of any nation, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha, on Wednesday said that administrative machinery must evolve with time and become fully citizen-centric.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of Indian Society for Training & Development's (ISTD) Jammu Chapter here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "Citizens expect transparency, accountability, and efficiency from the administration. The administrative machinery must also evolve with time and should become completely citizen-centric." "We must empower



individuals and institutions to confront emerging challenges head-on, so that India's dream of becoming the world's greatest nation is realised. Universities and institutions

must join hands with the ISTD to give concrete shape to this resolve," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He directed the stakeholders to prioritise collaboration and

create an environment where a strong professional community is built through networking, best practices, national and international exposure, and joint training programmes.

"Today's challenges are complex and multi-dimensional. Their solution is possible only through collective effort and we must focus on this to actively drive Jammu Kashmir's rapid growth," the Lieutenant Governor said.

LG Sinha emphasised that people from different sectors must come together to deliberate, share experiences, and jointly find solutions. "Through cooperation and dialogue we can forge a strong, inclusive model of development for the Union Territory," he added.

The Lieutenant Governor extended his | [More on P6](#)

Div Com denies lockdown rumours in Kashmir, says stocks adequate

Urges public to rely on official information

Warns action against misinformation

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Mar 25: Dismissing rumours about a possible lockdown, Divisional Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir Anshul Garg on Wednesday said there is no such proposal under consideration. He urged people not to panic and assured that stocks of essential commodities are sufficient and being closely monitored.

Speaking to reporters in Srinagar, the Div Com said that misinformation was being spread regarding a lockdown. He clarified that no such decision has been taken by the government.

"Many rumours are being circulated, but there is no update regarding any lockdown. If any such decision is taken, it will be

officially communicated by the Government of India or the Prime Minister. People should not panic," he said, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

He said the administration is closely monitoring the availability and distribution of essential supplies and ensuring that there is no shortage in the Valley. "Stocks of essential commodities are sufficient, and their supply is being continuously monitored," he said.

Warning against rumour-mongering, Garg said strict directions have been issued to deal with those spreading misinformation. "Action will be taken against anyone found indulging in spreading rumours. People should rely only on official government sources for authentic information," he said.

On the prevailing security situation, he said it remains stable and under constant review. "There is no change in the security scenario. Regular joint reviews are being conducted | [More on P6](#)

LG, CM greet people on Ram Navami

KT News Desk

Jammu, Mar 25: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah have extended heartiest greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami, which will be celebrated tomorrow.

In a message, the Lieutenant Governor has said: "On the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami, I extend my heartiest greetings and best wishes to all. The festival commemorates the sacred birth anniversary of Maryada Purushottam Bhagwan Shri Ram, the epitome of virtue and righteousness. His exemplary life stands as a timeless testament to the enduring principles of compassion, humility, unwavering commitment to truth, selfless dedication to duty and the discipline. The sacred occasion of Ram Navami inspires us to follow Prabhur Shri Ram's timeless ideals and life values in our daily lives and selflessly serve the humanity. I pray that Prabhur Shri Ram shower his divine blessings upon us in the years ahead, and may this auspicious Ram Navami | [More on P6](#)

Additional 300 MW power anticipated for J&K

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Mar 25: Jammu and Kashmir is likely to require additional 300 Megawatts (MWs) of power during the peak hours over the coming three years.

According to the official documents available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), from the upcoming financial year 2026-27, Jammu and Kashmir will likely require 3813 MWs of power during the peak demand.

The authorities have further projected that in the financial year 2027-28 Jammu and Kashmir will require 3964 MWs of electricity during the peak hours followed by 4117 MWs of energy in the financial year 2028-29.

Apart from peak demand, the authorities have projected that there will be an electrical energy requirement of 23,372 Million Units (MU) in the financial year 2026-2027.

It also said that in the year 2027-28, Jammu and Kashmir will likely | [More on P6](#)



A vibrant mustard field blooming in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district, painted in the colours of spring under a bright blue sky
Pic: Jahangir Shah (KNO/KT)

Rain, snow likely in J&K from today, predicts MeT

Farmers advised to suspend operations

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Mar 25: The Meteorological Centre Srinagar on Wednesday predicted fresh spells of rain and snowfall across Jammu and Kashmir from March 26 onwards.

An official of the MeT Centre told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that the weather is expected to remain

largely dry till the evening of March 26, after which light rain, snow, thunder and gusty winds are likely at many places.

"A more active weather phase is predicted between March 29 and 30, with generally cloudy conditions and the possibility of light to moderate rain in plains and snowfall over higher reaches at several locations. Thunder and gusty winds | [More on P6](#)

Over 4,400 kg of narcotics seized in J&K in 2025: MHA

Says efforts intensified against drug trafficking

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Mar 25: The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Wednesday said that 4,491 kilograms of narcotic substances were seized in Jammu and Kashmir during 2025

Replying to an unstarred question raised by Shyamkumar Daulat Barve in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that drug seizures in Jammu and Kashmir stood at 11,066 kg in 2023, 5,708 kg

in 2024, and 4,491 kg in 2025, as per data compiled by the Narcotics Control Bureau

The government informed the House that foreign-based elements are involved in facilitating narco-terrorism by pushing narcotics across borders to | [More on P6](#)

What Centre's proposal to increase seats, implement women's reservation means for J&K?



Assembly strength to go up to 135

Lok Sabha seat share to increase to 7 or 8

45 seats to be reserved for women

in Assembly – 2 or 3 in Lok Sabha

Umer Maqbool

Srinagar, Mar 25: As the Union Government is contemplating an increase in the strength of Lok Sabha and Assembly seats across states

and Union Territories to implement political reservation for women ahead of the 2029 Lok Sabha polls, the plan, if implemented, will significantly overhaul politics in the Union Territory.

The Centre is toying with the idea of increasing the strength of the Lok Sabha and the Assemblies of States and Union Territories by 50 percent.

Applying this formula, the strength of Assembly seats in Jammu & Kashmir would rise from 90 to 135, while the Lok Sabha seats would increase from five to seven or eight.

Out of the total seats, the Centre plans | [More on P6](#)

Cabinet to meet today evening

KNO Correspondent

Srinagar, Mar 25: The J&K cabinet is scheduled to meet on Thursday evening in Jammu to take up several matters. Sources told news agency—Kashmir News Observer

(KNO) that a number of proposals are on the agenda for meeting.

"There is a possibility the cabinet will also give its go-ahead for introducing a few government bills," they said. (KNO)

Rising complaints against e-commerce platforms in J&K in past 5 years: Centre

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Mar 25: The Centre on Wednesday said that complaints against e-commerce platforms have shown a rising trend in Jammu and Kashmir over the past five years, while Ladakh has reported minimal cases.

Replying to an unstarred question in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Consumer Affairs B.L. Verma, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that Jammu and Kashmir recorded 15 complaints in 2021, which increased to 42 in 2022 and



further to 73 in 2023.

The number of complaints in the Union Territory stood at 51 in 2024 before rising sharply to 120 in 2025. All complaints

were disposed of through the National Consumer Helpline (NCH) mechanism.

In Ladakh, no complaints were reported in 2021, 2022

and 2023. However, 1 complaint was recorded in 2024 and 8 complaints in 2025, all of which were also disposed of.

The complaints relate to issues such as misleading advertisements, sale of counterfeit or sub-standard products and consumer deception through discount practices on e-commerce platforms.

The government said the National Consumer Helpline serves as a single-point platform for grievance redressal, allowing consumers to register complaints through phone, web portal, mobile applications, WhatsApp and SMS.

It said | [More on P6](#)

Almost universal mobile coverage achieved in J&K, Ladakh: Centre

'Most villages now connected with 4G, 5G'

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Mar 25: The Centre on Wednesday informed the Lok Sabha that Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh have achieved near-universal mobile connectivity, though a small number of villages in both Union Territories remain without coverage.

Replying to a starred question by MP Gurmeet Singh Meht Hayer, Union Minister for Communications Jyotiraditya M. Scindia, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said Jammu



and Kashmir has a total of 6,474 villages, of which 6,226 are connected with mobile networks, leaving 248 villages still

uncovered.

In terms of technology, 6,208 villages in J&K have 4G connectivity, while 3,704 villages have been covered under 5G services. Additionally, 530 villages have access to 3G and 6,030 villages are covered by 2G networks.

For Ladakh, out of 243 total villages, 233 have mobile connectivity, while 10 villages remain without coverage. The data shows that 229 villages in Ladakh have 4G services, 22 villages are covered by 5G, 78 villages have | [More on P6](#)

Sakeena Itoo extends Rama Navami greetings

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, MARCH 25: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo Wednesday extended warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Rama Navami.

In her message, the Minister, as per an official statement, highlighted that Ram Navami symbolizes the principles of righteousness, compassion, truth, and devotion, that continue to inspire generations. She noted that such sacred occasions reinforce the spirit of harmony, mutual respect and cultural unity that has long defined the social fabric of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister also prayed for peace, progress and prosperity of entire Jammu and Kashmir.

Delegations raise development issues with Javed Rana

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, MARCH 25: Several public delegations from different parts of Jammu Wednesday called on Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana and apprised him of a range of developmental concerns and local demands. A delegation, as per an official statement, from R.S. Pura, led by Naresh Choudhary, raised issues related to basic infrastructure and the delivery of essential public services in the area.

Another delegation from Udhampur, led by Abdul Ghani Teli and Shamim Begum also met the Minister and highlighted several local issues with particular focus on inadequate water supply in Qasim Nagar, Rajiv Nagar and adjoining localities. In addition, they brought attention to certain forest-related matters and concerns regarding road connectivity in the region.

Mission SKILL to reshape J&K's skilling landscape: Deputy CM



KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, MARCH 25: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary spearheaded a crucial stakeholders' workshop, "Mission SKILL - Transforming the Skilling Ecosystem," at Jammu's Convention Centre, marking a significant stride towards revolutionizing J&K's skill development landscape.

The high-level event, as per an official statement, organized by the Directorate of Skill Development, was aimed to chart a transformative roadmap for the region's skilling ecosystem.

The Deputy Chief Minister, who was the chief guest on the occasion, described Mission SKILL as a transformative and future-oriented initiative aimed at building a unified, demand-driven skilling ecosystem in J&K.

Addressing a gathering of senior officials, industry leaders, academicians and trainees, he highlighted the importance of the mission and emphasized that J&K possesses a significant demographic advantage with over 70 percent of its population in the working-age group.

"Our efforts are to harness this potential effectively through a structured,

inclusive and outcome-oriented skilling framework," he said.

He further underlined that Mission SKILL adopts a lifecycle approach to skilling, beginning from school-level exposure to vocational education and extending to technical training, career guidance and lifelong learning opportunities.

"It will help bridge the gap between education and employment by aligning training programmes closely with industry demands," he added.

Speaking in detail about the initiative, the Deputy Chief Minister noted that Mission SKILL aims to benefit lakhs of youth across J&K, including students, job seekers and the existing workforce.

"Focused attention is being given to integration of vocational education in schools, strengthening career guidance systems, modernization of it and Polytechnics and promotion of future-ready skills in sectors such as IT, renewable energy, tourism, and modern services," he said.

Emphasizing inclusivity, he reiterated the government's commitment to ensure equal access to opportunities for women, rural youth and marginalized

communities, thereby fostering broad-based economic participation.

The Deputy Chief Minister also stressed the adoption of a digital-first approach with an integrated platform for skill mapping, monitoring, certification and placement, ensuring transparency and real-time tracking of outcomes.

Expressing confidence in the initiative, the Deputy Chief Minister said that Mission SKILL will serve as a cornerstone for youth empowerment and inclusive economic growth in Jammu and Kashmir. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to build a skilled, capable and future-ready workforce.

Calling for collective action, he urged strong collaboration between the government, industry and educational institutions, stating that such partnerships are essential for building a robust and sustainable skilling ecosystem.

Earlier, Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, Secretary, Skill Development Department, highlighted the need for convergence across the departments to ensure optimal utilization of resources.

Among others Owais Ahmed, Director, Skill Development Department; Arun Manhas, Director, Industries and Commerce, Jammu; Arun Gupta, President, Chamber of Commerce & Industry; Rahul Sahai, Chairman, Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) J&K; Harvinder Singh, Director Employment & MD YUVA and Leena Padha, Mission Director, J&K Skill Development Mission besides other industry representatives and academic leaders also shared their perspectives.

The workshop witnessed participation from over 200 stakeholders and 250 trainees, who contributed valuable insights on bridging skill gaps and improving training outcomes.



IS AVAILABLE AT ALL LEADING STALLS

NOTICE

I intend to change the name of my ward in the school records from Ahmad Ibn Tanveer to Ahmadullah Baba. If anyone has any objection, he/she may contact the Principal of RP School Zakura, Srinagar within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which no claim or objection shall be entertained.

Tanveer Ahmad Baba
Father of Ahmadullah Baba
Class: UKG
Roll No. 11

R/o Shalimar, Merak Abad, Brein, Srinagar

J&K Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament 2026

Rana advocates bold youth engagement in democratic processes

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, MARCH 25: The JK-Round of the Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament (VBYP) 2026, a flagship initiative of the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, was held at the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Wednesday with participation of young leaders to shape the nation's future.

Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, as per an official statement, attended the programme as the chief guest and underscored the importance of youth engagement in democratic processes.

He said Youth Parliament programme will inculcate and nurture leadership, enhance civic awareness and promote informed policy engagement among the youth. It provides a structured platform for individual



deliberate on pressing national issues, articulate their perspectives and contribute meaningfully to the nation's development journey, he added.

The VBYP 2026 is being conducted in a three-tier format, District, State/UT and National level, allowing the participants

the Indian Youth's Path Towards Viksit Bharat 2047," guided brainstorming discussions and presentations.

At the Youth Parliament, the participants engaged in a thought provoking discussion on the Union Budget 2026, weighing its potential to fuel youth empowerment, innovation and inclusive growth. The exchange of ideas highlighted the budget's impact on shaping a sustainable future for the nation.

It was informed that the top three winners from this round will advance to represent J&K at the National Level Viksit Bharat Youth Parliament Programme.

Among those present were MLA Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal, Director Nisar Bhat and jury members Sunaina Mehta, Prof. Mushtaq Wani and Sirmajeet Singh besides other senior officers and dignitaries.

Community Radio Station 88.8 FM "Suno Dil Se" inaugurated in Doda

KT NEWS DESK

DODA, MARCH 25: Community Radio Station 88.8 FM "Suno Dil Se" has started broadcasting at Doda, after it was inaugurated the other day by District Development Commissioner (DDC) Krishan Lal in the presence of officers from 10 Rashtriya Rifles (RR), Radio Station staff and civil society representatives.

The DDC, as per an official statement, conducted a detailed inspection of the radio station facilities and reviewed its operational setup.

He also interacted with the station team, appreciating their efforts in establishing a platform dedicated to community service and local outreach.

The DDC highlighted the significance of community radio in promoting education, cultural preservation, community engagement and entertainment. He emphasized that the station will serve as an effective medium for spreading awareness about government schemes, sharing local stories and providing a voice to the people of the region.



GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD(R&B) DIVISION ANANTNAG

NIT NO 175 OF R&B/Anantnag/2025-26 /E-TENDERING/ 14246-55, DATED 23-03-2026

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory of J&K e-tenders are invited on %age basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (in Rs)	Earnest Money (In Rs)	Time of Completion	Major Head of Account	Class of Contractor
1.	CO Drain FHO Haji AB Rashid Gattoo to Masjid Owas E Karni at Heaven Colony Mir Danter Anantnag	1.23 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 1.04 + (18% GST Amount 0.19)	200	2460/-	15 Days	District Capex Budget (CDF) 2025-26	DEE Class & MSME's Only
2.	Development of link road upto metallic level from land of Mohd Hussain Bhat upto Ab Salam Bhat (Ganie) At Chinar Colony Muslimabad Anantnag.	1.24 Lacs Contract Price exclusive of GST: 1.05 + (18% GST Amount 0.19)	200	2480/-	15 Days	District Capex Budget (CDF) 2025-26	DEE Class & MSME's Only

Project Authority : District Development Commissioner Anantnag.
Position of AAA : Accorded vide Order No. 132 - DDCA of 2026, Dated 16.03.2026.
Position of TS : Accorded.

1. The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms-and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per schedule of dates given below:

S. No.	Particulars	Dated
1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	From 23-03-2026 To 24-03-2026 (05:00 PM)
2	Period of Downloading of bidder documents	From 28-03-2026 To 28-03-2026 (04:00 PM)
3	Bid submission Start Date	From 24-03-2026 To 24-03-2026 (05:00 PM)
4	Bid Submission End Date	To 30-03-2026 (04:00 PM)
5	Date and time of opening of bid(online)	31-03-2026 (11:00 AM)

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of tender document in shape of Treasury Challan / receipt (Under MH- 0059 PWD) in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Anantnag [Tender Inviting Authority] (NIT No. Name of Work/Item No. to be mentioned on the Treasury Challan / Receipt) (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date) and EMD (2% of advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag (Tender receiving authority). (The Date of EMD(CDR/FDR/BG) should be after the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date and validity of EMD at the time of opening of Bids shall be a period of 45 Days beyond Bid Validity of 120 Days). The same EMD should not be used in more than one Tender/Bid.

2. All the Bidders have to submit Earnest Money/Bid Security (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG. Non submission of Earnest Money/Bid Security shall render the bidder as No-responsive.

3. The 1st lowest responsive (Successful) Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 5% of contract as Performance Security in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG in favour of Executive Engineer R&B Division Anantnag (Tender receiving authority) within 03 Days before fixation of Contract and shall be released 60 days after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work. The date of Performance Security (CDR/FDR/BG) should be after the date of issuance of letter/LOI to deposit the performance security. Failure to produce Performance Security shall render the L1 as non-responsive and case for debarment of the Contractor be forwarded to Higher Authorities for a period of 01 Year.

4. The Earnest Money Deposit (EMD@2% of Advertised Cost) in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG of the successful Bidder shall be released after receiving Performance security @5% of the allotted cost in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG and same shall be released 60 Days after successful completion of Defect Liability Period (DLP) of the work.

5. The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message through their e-mail address. The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site in the Office of Executive Engineer R&B Division Anantnag

1. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical Bid

2. Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process.

a. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.in to acquaint bid submission process.

b. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any approved vendors.

c. The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No Financial bid will be accepted in physical form.

d. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

e. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with bid.

f. Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents including tender document fee in terms of soft copies with technical bid.

Note: - Scan all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

6. The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.

7. Scanned copy of cost of tender document in the shape of Treasury Challan / Receipt in favour of Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag (The Date of Treasury Challan should be between the date of Start of Bid and Bid Submission End Date) and EMD in the shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Executive Engineer PWD(R&B) Division Anantnag must be uploaded with the documents of the bid. The Original Treasury Challan (Cost of Tender Document), EMD and other relevant bid documents shall be obtained from the lowest bidder before the fixation of the Contract.

8. Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually.

9. Price escalation and taxes: The %age quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees, shall be deemed to include price escalation upto completion of the work. Deduction on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates prevailing at the time of recovery.

10. Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on R&B e-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.

11. All other terms and conditions are as same as laid in PWD Form 25.

DIPK-12123/25
DATED: 25-03-2026

(Er. Mohammad Waseem)
Executive Engineer,
R&B Division Anantnag

Panic buying grips Srinagar fuel stations

■ No fuel shortage: Div Com

REHAN QAYOUM MIR

Srinagar, Mar 25: Despite authorities reiterating that fuel stocks are adequate and there is no cause for alarm, panic buying of fuel gripped several parts of Srinagar on Wednesday, as people were seen carrying cans and containers to petrol pumps amid rumours of a possible short-age.

Visuals showed commuters filling petrol in plastic cans and bottles at fuel stations, reflecting anxiety triggered by unverified information circulating on social media.

"Heavy rush was witnessed at Karan Nagar, M A Road, Solina, Batmaloo, Ali Jan road, Zakoora and Munawara-bad, where long queues of vehicles formed since morning. They said every petrol pump in Batmaloo witnessed heavy rush, with people waiting for hours to get petrol," a witness said.

"There was an unusual rush. People were not just filling vehicles but also stocking fuel in containers, fearing shortages," he said.

Another commuter said panic spread quickly across areas. "As soon



as rumours spread, people rushed to pumps. Within hours, queues became very long," he said. Meanwhile, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg later in the day dismissed the rumours and assured that there is 'no shortage of fuel or essential commodities.'

"Stocks are adequate and are being continuously monitored. There is no need to panic. People should not believe in rumours," Garg said.

Officials also said that the rush was triggered purely by panic behaviour and not

by any disruption in supply, adding that normal supply chains remain intact.

It is important to mention, the panic buying comes a day after rumours of a possible lockdown spread widely across social media platforms, prompting concerns among residents.

Despite repeated assurances from the administration denying any such move, the rumours led to sudden crowding at fuel stations and selective shortages caused by increased demand rather than actual supply constraints—(KNO)

Large-scale ration card deletion in J&K: GoI

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Mar 25: The Government of India (GoI) on Wednesday said that Jammu & Kashmir has witnessed large-scale deletion of ration cards since 2014 as part of a nationwide drive to streamline the Public Distribution System (PDS) and ensure benefits reach genuine beneficiaries.

Replying to a query in the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Consumer Affairs, Nimuben Jayantibhai Bambhaniya said deletions were carried out due to duplication, Aadhaar seeding, migration, deaths and identification of ineligible households.

As per official data, Jammu & Kashmir recorded the following year-wise deletion of ration cards: 2014: 64,079; 2015: 22,903; 2016: 50,709; 2017: 18,965; 2018: 82,394; 2019: 60,333; 2020: 61,265; 2021: 1,04,511; 2022: 75,137; 2023: 64,122; 2024: 73,875; and 2025: 69,102.

A total of 7,47,395 ration cards were deleted in Jammu & Kashmir between 2014 and 2025 as part of the PDS clean-up drive.

The data indicates that over 7 lakh ration cards have been deleted in J&K during the period, with major clean-up drives undertaken, particularly after digitisation and Aadhaar-based verification of beneficiaries.

The minister said that under the National Food Security Act (NFSA), identification of beneficiaries is the responsibility of the J&K administration, which frames its own eligibility criteria.

To safeguard genuine beneficiaries, the government has strengthened grievance redressal mechanisms through toll-free helplines and digital platforms such as the Mera Ration App, enabling users to check entitlements and lodge complaints.

Authorities have also been directed to ensure the timely disposal of grievances to avoid exclusion of deserving households—(KNO)

Dr Veeri's reservation bill likely to be taken in Assembly session

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Mar 25: The much-hyped bill on reservation rationalization introduced by Dr Bashir Ahmad Shah Veeri is likely to be taken up in the forthcoming part of session of the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly, raising fresh hopes among general category students.

Dr Veeri said that he had introduced the bill during the first Assembly session held after the elections and re-mains optimistic that it will be tabled for discussion in the upcoming session.

"My only demand is justice, which in this case means rationalization of the reservation system," he said.

The legislator emphasized that reservation should function as a tool for social equity rather than a mechanism that fosters division. "Reservation must be an instrument of equity, not exclusion. What exists today is perceived as unscientific and politically motivated.



It betrays merit, divides society, and dilutes the efficiency of professional and public institutions," he added.

Dr Veeri further underlined that the concept of "open merit" must be safeguarded, asserting that it is not a privilege reserved for a select few but a constitutional necessity. "It is a constitutional requirement. Reform is no longer just a demand; it has become an imperative," he said.

The MLA said he would continue to advocate for fairness and justice irrespective of personal or political

considerations. "I will continue to fight for the people of Kashmir and against injustices, even if it means standing against my own family members, including my father, brother, or relatives," he asserted.

Pertinently, the reservation policy in Jammu & Kashmir has remained a subject of intense debate in recent years, with various sections of society calling for a review and rationalization to ensure a balance between social justice and meritocracy—(KNO)

'Ladakh to get Gamma Irradiation facilities for food preservation'



RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Mar 25: The Government of India (GoI) on Wednesday informed the Lok Sabha that the establishment of Gamma Irradiation facilities in Ladakh for extending the shelf life of fruits and vegetables is currently an ongoing process.

Replying to an unstarred question by MP Mohamad Haneefa, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Dr Jitendra Singh said that the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) is actively engaged in research and development related to food irradiation

technologies.

He stated that BARC is working on developing standard operating procedures (SOPs), guidelines, and improved radiation facility designs to promote wider adoption of the technology.

The minister said that irradiation technology significantly enhances shelf life and reduces post-harvest losses. Notably, the shelf life of onions and potatoes has been extended up to 7.5 months and 8 months, respectively, without compromising quality.

He added that the technology has also facilitated the

export of agricultural produce such as mangoes and pomegranates to countries including the United States, Australia, South Africa, and Malaysia by meeting international quarantine requirements.

According to the government, SOPs have been developed for a range of commodities, including cereals, wheat, spices, mushrooms, green tomatoes, broccoli, cherries, and apricots, benefiting farmers, traders, and consumers alike.

The minister further informed that radiation-based food preservation ensures chemical-free storage by eliminating insects and microbes, and the technology has been transferred to private entrepreneurs for commercialisation.

"At present, 32 commercial food irradiation facilities are operational across the country, including seven in the government sector and 25 by private firms," he said, adding that efforts are underway to promote local participation and skill development in Ladakh—(KNO)

Naib Tehsildar arrested in bribery case

KNO

Srinagar, Mar 25: The Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Wednesday said it has trapped and arrested a Naib Tehsildar posted in the Arwani area of Anantnag district for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe in connection with a land inheritance mutation case.

In a statement, the Anti-Corrupting Bureau received a written complaint to the effect that Naib Tehsildar Arwani namely

Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat is demanding a bribe of Rs 1,00,000 from the complainant's in-laws for inheritance mutation of land measuring 18 Kanals in the name of his wife, 03 sisters-in-law and one brother-in-law.

He said, the complainant chose not to pay bribe and in-stead approached Anti Corruption Bureau for taking legal action against the said Naib Tehsildar as envisaged under law.

"On receipt of the complaint, a discreet verification was

conducted which confirmed the demand by the said Govt. employee and accordingly Case FIR No. 01/2026 u/s 7 of P/C Act 1988 read with amendment Act-2018 was registered in P/S ACB Anantnag and investigation was taken up," said the spokesperson.

He said during the course of investigation a trap team was constituted. The team laid a successful trap and caught Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat S/o Wali Mohd Bhat R/o Dangipora Sozeith Budgam posted as Naib Tehsildar Arwani

Bijbehara Anantnag red handed while demanding and accepting bribe. "He was arrested on spot and bribe amount was also recovered from his possession in presence of independent witnesses associated with the trap team."

"Subsequently, search of residential house of the accused Govt. employee was carried out in presence of Executive Magistrates and independent witnesses. Further investigation of the instant case is going on," said the spokesperson—(KNO)

Anxiety mounts as students remain stranded in Iran



JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Mar 25: Anxiety continues to mount among families as a significant number of Indian students remain stranded in Iran due to slow issuance of exit codes, mounting financial hardships, and growing uncertainty over their return.

According to details available, the evacuation process is going on at a slow pace, with only 6 to 10 students receiving exit clearance per day.

This delay has left many students in a precarious situation, with several already missing scheduled flights and incurring financial losses, including

the Rs 10,000 visa fee.

The situation has become more distressing as desperate students are now attempting alternative routes, travelling from the Azerbaijan-Iran border towards the Armenia-Iran border in hope of securing quicker exit approvals.

Officials said that at least 52 students have expressed their inability to leave immediately due to acute financial constraints. Many of them had their flight tickets cancelled after failing to receive exit codes on time, resulting in heavy monetary losses and leaving them with no immediate means to arrange fresh travel.

"These students are facing serious financial distress and have requested the Indian Embassy to allow them to continue staying in the accommodations that were provided earlier," they said.

However, the embassy has informed them that the rooms are now required for other Indian nationals awaiting evacuation, and the students have been asked to vacate, further compounding their difficulties.

Despite daily evacuations, an estimated 150 to 200 students are still believed to be stranded across different parts of Iran. Adding to the concerns, some students from Golestan University of Medical Sciences have reported discrepancies related to visa status in their passports, which could further delay their exit.

Parents in Jammu and Kashmir, have voiced deep concern over the situation and are urging authorities to expedite the evacuation process. "Every passing day is increasing our anxiety. The government must ensure all students are brought back safely and at the earliest," said a worried parent.

Officials have indicated that all stranded students are expected to return by March 31, subject to the timely issuance of exit codes. However, given the current pace, families remain apprehensive.

Meanwhile, the All India Medical Students Association, represented by Dr. Momin Khan, has expressed gratitude to the Ministry of External Affairs, Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, and the Divisional Commissioner Kashmir's office for their continued support and intervention in the matter—(KNO)

BRO clears Gurez-Bandipora road

SAJID RAINA

Srinagar, Mar 25: After remaining closed for several days due to snow avalanches, the Gurez-Bandipora road was reopened for traffic on Wednesday.

An official said the strategic route has been made safe for vehicular movement following extensive snow clearance operations.

Pertinently, the 85-km road had been blocked earlier this week after two consecutive snow avalanches hit the stretch, severely disrupting connectivity to the Gurez sector.

"One major avalanche, nearly 200 metres long and about 10 feet high, struck near KM 60, while another hit near Korkbal village, forcing a complete shutdown of the route," an official said.

No casualties were reported as there was no traffic movement at the time of the incidents, they added.

Following the avalanches, the Border Roads Organisation launched a large-scale operation, deploying men and machinery to clear the snow and restore the road.

Meanwhile, the Traffic Police Headquarters, J&K said that vehicular movement on

the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway (NH-44) will be allowed from both sides on March 26, subject to fair weather and improved road conditions.

Security forces' convoy movement will also be permitted from both Jammu and Srinagar sides after confirmation of road status from traffic control units.

An official bulletin said slow movement was recorded on the highway between Marog and Kishtwari Pather over the past 24 hours due to single-lane traffic and breakdown of three heavy motor vehicles. Passengers and

light motor vehicle operators have been advised to avoid night journeys in view of possible shooting stones, landslides, and ongoing construction work between Ramban and Banihal.

The advisory also urged commuters to maintain lane discipline, warning that overtaking and wrong-lane driving could lead to congestion. Meanwhile, the Kishtwar-Sinthan-Anantnag road (NH-244) remained closed for vehicular movement as per orders issued by the district administrations.

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Police arrest drug peddler in Baramulla

KNO

Srinagar, Mar 25: Continuing its sustained drive against drug trafficking, J&K Police in Baramulla arrested a drug peddler and recovered Contraband substances.

According to a statement, a police party of Police Station Kunzer, during routine patrolling at Chichilora Kunzer, intercepted a suspicious vehicle (HR55AD2930). During checking, one individual fled from the spot, while the driver namely Waheed Sultan son of Mohammad Sultan Ganie resident of Sheerpora Bangil, Pattan, was apprehended. During his search, 27 grams of charas was recovered. On his disclosure, a search was conducted at the residence of the absconding accused Ziaakat Ahmad Dar son of Mohammad Ramzan Dar resident of Chichilora, Kunzer under the supervision of SHO PS Kunzer, in the presence of a Ga-zetted Officer deputed by the Magistrate and the concerned Numberdar. During the search, approximately 1 Kg 690 grams of charas powder was recovered. In this regard, a case vide FIR No. 35/2026 U/S 8/20-29 NDPS Act stands registered at PS Kunzer. Investigation is in progress and efforts are underway to apprehend the absconding accused.

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information of the general public that Mr. Zubair Ahmad Itoo, S/o Bashir Ahmad Itoo, R/o Drinen Drobbara, Qazigund, Anantnag, intends to apply for the grant of licence for dealing in fertilizers and pesticides under the name and style of "Itoo Agro-chemicals."

The proposed place of business is located at Drinen Drobbara, Qazigund, near Markazi Jamia Masjid Drinen, Qazigund.

Any person having any objection regarding the establishment of the said business may file their objection, if any, before the concerned authority within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. No objection shall be entertained thereafter.

Sd/-
Zubair Ahmad Itoo
Applicant

EDITORIAL

Make TB Elimination A People's Movement

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha's call to transform the "TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan" into a people's movement across Jammu and Kashmir is a timely and urgent reminder that public health triumphs are not achieved by governments alone. With the launch of the 100-day intensified campaign, the Union Territory has an opportunity not merely to participate in the national drive but to emerge as a leader—demonstrating that even the most challenging public health goals can be achieved through collective resolve. Tuberculosis remains one of India's most persistent public health challenges, claiming lives that

could be saved and disproportionately affecting the most vulnerable. The Lieutenant Governor's emphasis that "no patient should be left behind" strikes at the heart of the matter. Detecting TB is only half the battle. The true measure of success lies in walking beside every patient through the entire course of treatment, ensuring adherence, providing nutritional support, and guaranteeing full recovery. The 100-day campaign, with its technology-driven interventions, offers a powerful toolkit. AI-enabled portable X-ray tools bringing testing to tribal hamlets and urban slums, mobile Ni-Kshay vans delivering on-the-go care, and

Ayushman health camps offering comprehensive screenings—these are lifelines for populations that have historically fallen through the cracks. The TB testing van flagged off in Srinagar, equipped with CBNAAT facilities delivering results within two hours, exemplifies how technology can democratise diagnosis. The most significant contribution lies in framing elimination as a collective responsibility. Public health cannot be confined to health department circulars. Self-help groups, students, schools, industries, NGOs, and public enterprises must all be roped in. The challenge ahead is formidable. Vulnerable populations—tribal

communities, migrant workers, urban slum dwellers—require sustained outreach. Stigma still prevents many from seeking care. Treatment adherence demands continuous support. But the tools are now available, the political will is evident, and the framework for collective action is being built. As the 100-day campaign begins across J&K, the message must be unambiguous: testing is free, treatment is free, and full recovery is possible. Every family must know this. Every patient must feel supported. Every life lost to TB is a failure of our collective responsibility. Let this campaign mark the beginning of the end for TB in Jammu and Kashmir.

Khelo India Tribal Games: A Stepping Stone For India's Olympic Dreams

We move towards becoming a global sporting powerhouse and realizing the Prime Minister's vision of becoming a top ten sporting nation by 2036 and top five by 2047

Dr Mansukh Mandaviya

India's sporting story is one of extraordinary diversity. From the mountains of the North-East to the forests of central India, talent exists in every corner of our nation. It has been eight years since the launch of the Khelo India programme, and in this relatively short span, it has rapidly evolved into a nationwide movement. Through multiple verticals like the Youth Games, University Games, Beach Games, and Winter Games, among others, Khelo India has successfully tapped into a diverse pool of young athletes across the country.

The addition of the Khelo India Tribal Games (KITG) marks another important step in this journey. The first edition will be held in Chhattisgarh from March 25 to April 3, bringing together nearly 3,000 athletes from 31 States and Union Territories. Competitions will be held across seven medal sports - athletics, football, hockey, weightlifting, archery, swimming, and wrestling.

The Games will be hosted across the tribal-majority districts of the Bastar region, part of the ancient Dandakaranya belt, as well as the Sarguja region and areas such as Raigarh and Manpur. This is not merely the introduction of another sporting event. It represents a conscious and systemic effort of our Honorable Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi to expand the scope of India's sporting ecosystem, ensuring that opportunities reach every athlete irrespective of geography or background. Simply put, it is about bringing the margins to the mainstream.

Athletes from tribal regions have long brought pride to the nation. From legendary archer Limba Ram of Rajasthan to archery icon Deepika Kumari of Jharkhand, and from numerous hockey stars to Olympic

medallists like Mirabai Chanu, their achievements continue to inspire millions. These role models demonstrate the immense potential that exists in these regions.

Many tribal regions overlap with areas that have historically faced socio-economic challenges. For young people in these regions, opportunities for recognition and growth have often been limited. By bringing structured sporting competitions to these areas, we are channelising the energy of youth towards positive and nation-building pursuits. It is about replacing uncertainty with opportunity and isolation with inclusion.

Indeed, the vision of our Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi - "Khelega Bharat toh Khilega Bharat" - has become a reality. Sport today acts as a powerful catalyst and equaliser, enabling athletes from marginalised backgrounds to find their place in the national and international sporting arena. Expanding the Khelo India platform into tribal regions is a natural extension of this vision and reinforces the belief that sport is an integral pillar of nation-building.

Hosting the Khelo India Tribal Games will also have a lasting impact on the local sporting ecosystem. The Games will lead to the development and upgradation of sports infrastructure in tribal regions, while creating opportunities for local coaches, trainers and support staff. Schools and community institutions will be encouraged to integrate sport into everyday life, helping nurture a sustainable and inclusive sporting culture at the grassroots level.

The Khelo India Tribal Games are not a one-time event, they are here to stay. The KITG will be institutionalised as a permanent fixture in the Khelo India annual calendar, ensuring that tribal athletes across the country have a sustained, recurring platform to compete and grow. This continuity is fundamental to long-term athlete

development. With each successive edition, the Games will serve as a feeder into the broader Khelo India ecosystem. The Tribal Games are, in this sense, not just a platform unto themselves but an entry point into a thriving sporting universe.

Through the Khelo India Tribal Games, we aim to identify and nurture that potential. Talent identification teams comprising national coaches, high-performance directors and technical officials from the Sports Authority of India will be present at the Games. Selected athletes will receive advanced training at SAI centres to help them progress further in their sporting journeys.

As India prepares to host the 2030 Commonwealth Games and pursues its bid for the 2036 Olympic Games, expanding our talent pool becomes even more critical. This means reaching every corner of the country and ensuring that opportunities are accessible to all, including young athletes from tribal communities. The introduction of the Tribal Games is a direct outcome of this approach and reflects the strength of India's evolving sporting ecosystem.

The journey to sporting excellence often begins in villages and communities where dreams exist but opportunities are limited. With the Khelo India Tribal Games, Modi Government is taking sport to these very spaces. In doing so, we are not only discovering future champions but also strengthening India's talent pipeline, as we move towards becoming a global sporting powerhouse and realizing the Prime Minister's vision of becoming a top ten sporting nation by 2036 and top five by 2047.

The author is Union Minister of Youth Affairs & Sports and Labour & Employment, Government of India



This Energy Shock Demands A Green Industrial Strategy

Immediate measures to protect households and businesses should be designed to advance larger economic goals

Mariana Mazzucato

The US-Israeli war on Iran has destabilized the entire Middle East, inflicted a massive human and environmental toll and caused one of the biggest oil price swings ever recorded. With the fallout reverberating through global stock markets and pushing up government borrowing, policymakers must recognize that this type of energy shock is not an isolated, short-term crisis. It represents our new reality.

In an era of geopolitical turmoil, economic resilience requires changing not only the kinds of energy we consume, but also how, where and by whom things are produced. Through a mission-oriented green industrial strategy and a macroeconomic framework that supports strategic public investment, governments can help secure living standards and build economic resilience simultaneously.

Immediate measures to protect households and businesses from the squeeze should be designed to advance larger economic goals. If a policy serves merely to prop up fossil fuel profits, it should be considered a failure.

This is the moment for a new approach. Inflationary energy shocks driven by geopolitical conflict are becoming more common. Iran threatened to close the Strait of Hormuz during the 12-day war last June and it has now followed through with this threat, sending crude oil prices above \$100 per barrel for the first time since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022.

The UK, which was hit harder than any other country in Western Europe four years



ago owing to its heavy reliance on natural gas and woeful lack of storage, is a cautionary tale for any country that is still willing to risk high exposure to sudden supply shocks. Despite the progress UK Energy Secretary Ed Miliband has made in advancing his "clean power" mission to decarbonize the power grid, the link between gas and electricity prices has not been severed. UK wholesale energy prices have shot up by about 50 percent since the start of the Iran war.

It would be a mistake for developed economies to follow US President Donald Trump's example and double down on the fossil fuels that are driving energy price volatility and serving as military bargaining chips. The UK — and all other economies — will be more secure if the supply of electricity comes from clean, homegrown sources and, beyond the grid, transforms how we move, build and live. But achieving this objective requires

coordinated action across the government departments that oversee housing, transport, science and technology, and finance. Government missions should set a clear "moonshot" goal for all relevant ministries to pursue, because that is how the necessary cross-sectoral investments are mobilized.

The prospect of a renewed cost-of-living crisis looms large as a result of the current shock. In the UK, for example, the Office for Budget Responsibility's projected decline in inflation from 3.4 percent to 2.3 percent this year has already been derailed and Chancellor of the Exchequer Rachel Reeves is under growing pressure to protect households from further pain. Food and energy accounted for about half of the 9 percent increase in UK consumer prices in 2022. A similar, even more potent dynamic may well now take hold as geopolitical threats and climate change intensify and disrupt agricultural yields and transport routes around the world.

Moreover, there is ample evidence to show that corporate profits were a major source of the 2022-23 inflation. The energy shock allowed firms to extract rents — excess profits — simply because they owned scarce assets, not because they had suddenly generated productive gains. The proper role of government is to ensure that crises do not benefit a small group of shareholders at the expense of everyone else. With the right response, crises become opportunities to drive real economic activity and broader economic transformations.

UK Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Reeves have, for example, proclaimed a "zero-tolerance" policy toward price

gouging, much to the chagrin of leading gasoline retailers. But the details of such a policy matter immensely. The UK's 2022-23 Energy Price Guarantee capped how much households paid by effectively subsidizing suppliers and then trying to tax windfall profits. Spain and Portugal found a better way to contain inflation by capping the cost of the gas used in electricity generation, thus reducing windfall margins at their source.

This second approach, combined with an ambitious renewable energy buildout, proved superior. Spanish electricity prices were 57 percent lower than the European average in the second half of 2022. Expensive gas now sets the electricity price only 15 percent of the time in Spain, compared to 89 percent in Italy. If the goal is to promote sustainable growth, it is better to establish equitable economic relationships from the start than to allow monopolistic profits to accrue and then attempt to tax them back.

Energy shocks reverberate through the entire economy because oil and petroleum products remain key inputs in manufacturing, transport and agriculture. Complicating matters further, higher central bank interest rates — currently the main tool used to tackle inflation — would only exacerbate the problem. Rate hikes make investment — including financing for renewables, which entail high up-front costs — more expensive, without doing anything to tackle supply-side sources of inflation.

Worse, sovereign borrowing rates will be pushed higher as investors price in these trends, further choking off much-needed

public investment in schools, healthcare systems and infrastructure. To prevent this downward spiral, governments must stop relying so heavily on central banks and start addressing inflation at source.

Fortunately, green investment is a win-win. In addition to mitigating climate change, its spillover effects lead to higher productivity, good jobs and higher living standards. Once these are counted, it pays for itself. Just last week, the UK's independent climate watchdog confirmed that every £1 (\$1.34) spent on getting closer to net-zero emissions generates about £2.20 to £4.10 of value, along with wider benefits such as cleaner air, warmer homes and healthier diets.

This energy crisis is a moment for entrepreneurial states to develop the capacities, tools and institutions needed to secure affordable essentials, prevent opportunistic profiteering and catalyze an industrial transformation. As John Maynard Keynes pointed out nearly a century ago, the state must provide direction and investment when private sector and consumer confidence stalls. Governments must not let this latest shock paralyze them. It should spur decisive action to minimize human suffering and invest in long-term economic resilience.

Mariana Mazzucato is Professor in the Economics of Innovation and Public Value at University College London and the author, most recently, of "The Big Con: How the Consulting Industry Weakens Our Businesses, Infantilizes Our Governments and Warps Our Economies" (Penguin Press, 2023).

Source: Project Syndicate

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

Govt committed to advanced animal healthcare services: Javid Dar Inaugurates Small Ruminant Hospital at Lal Mandi

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MARCH 25: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Javid Ahmad Dar, Wednesday inaugurated the state-of-the-art Small Ruminant Hospital Complex at Lal Mandi, Srinagar, marking a significant milestone in strengthening veterinary infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister, as per an official statement, described the facility as a major step towards modernizing the livestock sector, particularly benefiting the sheep and goat rearers across the Kashmir Valley. He emphasized that the government is committed to ensure access to advanced animal healthcare services, which are crucial for enhancing productivity, improving livelihoods and boosting the rural economy.

"The establishment of this modern hospital complex reflects our focused efforts to build robust veterinary infrastructure and provide



specialized healthcare services for the small ruminant sector. This facility will not only improve disease diagnosis and treatment but also support farmers in achieving better returns from their livestock," the Minister said.

The Minister highlighted that the hospital, equipped with a modern Operation Theatre and

Digital X-ray unit, will function as a referral centre offering advanced clinical and surgical care that was previously not readily accessible within the region.

He extolled that this is the second such advanced facility established by the Sheep Husbandry Department Kashmir following the

successful operationalization of a similar hospital at Chijhama, Baramulla. He reiterated the government's vision to expand such facilities across all districts to ensure equitable access to quality veterinary care.

Referring to the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), the Minister underscored the

importance of innovation and scientific interventions in the livestock sector. He said that under Project-24 of HADP, the introduction of Embryo Transfer Technology (ETT) is a transformative step towards genetic upgradation of livestock, which will significantly enhance the productivity and breed quality in the coming years.

The Minister also appreciated the efforts of the Sheep Husbandry Department and its officers for their dedication in implementing progressive schemes and strengthening the livestock ecosystem in the Union Territory.

On the occasion, a Sheep Calendar was also released as part of the department's awareness and outreach initiatives aimed at educating the farmers and stakeholders.

Among others, MLA Lal Chowk Constituency, Financial Commissioner, Agriculture Production Department, Director Sheep Husbandry Department Kashmir, senior officers and stakeholders from the livestock sector were present during the inaugural ceremony.

Dr. Farooq, Omar Abdullah greet people on Ram Navami



KT News Desk

Srinagar, 25 Mar: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference President Dr. Farooq Abdullah and Vice President and Hon'ble Chief Minister Omar Abdullah Wednesday extended warm greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami.

In their message, the duo, as per a party statement, highlighted the timeless values and virtues associated with Shri Ram Ji, including righteousness, compassion, humility and the triumph of good over evil. They emphasized that these ideals continue to inspire generations and serve as a moral compass in Wednesday's world.

They further underscored the importance of imbuing these teachings in daily life to foster harmony, mutual respect, and understanding among diverse communities. Stressing the need for unity, they expressed hope that the festival would strengthen the bonds of brotherhood and promote social cohesiveness across Jammu and Kashmir and the country at large.

The duo prayed for peace, prosperity, and well-being of all, urging people to celebrate the occasion with the traditional spirit of togetherness and shared humanity.

Party's rank and file has also extended warm greetings to the people on the auspicious eve.

Deputy Chief Minister extends Ram Navami greetings

KT News Desk

JAMMU, MARCH 25: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, Wednesday extended his warm greetings to the people on the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami.

He said that the festival holds immense religious and cultural significance and is celebrated with great fervour and devotion across Jammu and Kashmir.

Deputy Chief Minister expressed hope that the sacred occasion would usher in the blessings of Lord Rama, bringing peace, prosperity, and well-being to all.



He further stated that Ram Navami serves as a reminder of the timeless values of righteousness, compassion, and truth, and hoped that the festival would strengthen the spirit of love, harmony, and brotherhood among the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

DC Srinagar reviews progress of agricultural projects



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR MARCH 25: To review the progress achieved under key Agriculture and allied sector schemes including HADP, JKIP, and KKGs in the district, a meeting of line Department Officers was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex, here Wednesday.

Besides, Additional District Development Commissioner, Rifat Aftab Qureshi and Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, the meeting was attended by Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, Assistant Director Fisheries, District Sheep Husbandry Officer, District Sericulture Officer, District Programme Officer NRLM and other concerned.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner conducted a comprehensive sector-wise review of achievements and ongoing interventions under Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) and Jammu and Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement in Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project (JKIP) aimed at enhancing productivity, strengthening value chains, and improving income of the farmers.

He also reviewed Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and functioning of Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs) aimed to ensure that the

intended benefits reach farmers at the grassroots level.

On the occasion, the DC stressed that all eligible farmers in the District must be covered under these schemes and instructed officers to further intensify outreach efforts to leave out beneficiaries of district in a time bound manner. He also emphasized on increasing farmer enrolment under PMFBY to provide insurance coverage against crop losses.

Reviewing the functioning of KKGs, the DC called for further strengthening of these centers to ensure efficient and seamless delivery of services to the farming community.

The Officers of Agriculture and allied departments were also directed to fast-track pending cases, ensure timely disbursement of benefits and facilitate improved access to institutional credit.

The DC underscored the importance of coordinated efforts among departments to clear pendency, if any and enhance overall implementation efficiency. He further instructed officers to expedite the processing of cases in accordance with the laid-down guidelines to ensure that benefits are extended to farmers within the stipulated timelines.

During the meeting, the DC acknowledged the line departments for their continued progress and urged them to sustain and further intensify their efforts to ensure comprehensive coverage, so that no eligible farmer in the district is deprived of the benefits.

Well-structured recruitment rules vital for transparent hiring: CS Atal Dulloo

Pushes for time-bound overhaul of Recruitment Rules in J&K

KT News Desk

JAMMU, MARCH 25: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo Wednesday chaired a high-level meeting to assess the current status and expedite the updation of Recruitment Rules (RRs) across various departments of the Union Territory, with a strong emphasis on ensuring transparency, efficiency and employee welfare in public administration.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the Commissioner Secretary, ARI & Trainings Department, along with Administrative Secretaries of other departments.

While underscoring the importance of timely finalization of Recruitment Rules, the Chief Secretary directed all Administrative Secretaries to work in close coordination with the ARI & Trainings Department to complete the process within a defined timeframe.

He stressed that updated and well-structured Recruitment Rules are crucial for ensuring a transparent, merit-based and efficient recruitment framework, besides facilitating the prompt filling of vacancies across departments.

Reiterating the Government's commitment towards employee welfare and administrative efficiency, the Chief Secretary issued clear instructions that the entire exercise must be pursued in a mission mode, eliminating delays and ensuring uniformity in

recruitment processes across departments.

During the meeting, Commissioner Secretary, ARI & Trainings, Shabnam Shah Kamili, informed that the initiative marks a significant shift towards digital governance. She apprised that a dedicated online portal has been developed in collaboration with BISAG-N for updating Recruitment Rules in a streamlined and efficient manner.

She further informed that, with effect from April 1, 2026, all offline submissions of proposals for Recruitment Rules will be discontinued, and departments will be required to mandatorily route their proposals through the online portal. The portal has already been made fully operational after successful security audits and integration of SMS-based communication features. To ensure a smooth transition, four high-level training sessions have also been conducted for departmental Nodal Officers, she added.

Highlighting the progress achieved so far, it was informed that the Standing Committee constituted for the purpose has maintained a consistent pace of work, having convened 53 meetings since early 2024. Through these deliberations, Recruitment Rules for 33 services have been finalized, while preliminary drafts for 81 additional services have been prepared. Moreover, 12 services have been cleared through Executive Orders to address urgent administrative

requirements.

The meeting was also apprised that these concerted efforts are aimed at clearing the existing backlog and aligning departmental structures with contemporary governance requirements and best practices.

Addressing structural gaps and pending issues, it was noted that internal audits have identified key areas requiring immediate attention, including the presence of outdated pay scales linked to the 5th and 6th Pay Commissions, as well as stagnation in "Schedule-I" post allocations.

The departments were advised to adopt uniform model Recruitment Rules for ministerial staff to bring consistency across the system. They were also instructed to clearly define parameters such as "experience" in Recruitment Rules to remove ambiguity and ensure fairness in the selection process.

The Chief Secretary issued specific directions to major departments including Health, Education, Revenue and Agriculture to resolve pending mapping issues on priority and finalize their Recruitment Rules without any further delay.

The meeting concluded with a reiteration of the Government's resolve to modernize administrative processes, enhance transparency, and ensure timely recruitment through a robust, technology-driven framework in the best interest of government employees here.

DIPR Shopian conducts Photo Exhibition

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, MARCH 25: Department of Information & Public Relations (DIPR) Shopian Wednesday conducted a photo exhibition here at Mini-Secretariat Shopian highlighting the developmental achievements of departments of the district during the year 2025-26.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Shopian, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz inaugurated the Exhibition in presence of Assistant Commissioner, Revenue, Shakoor Ahmed Dar, CEO, Bashir Ahmad Shah, CAO, Mohd Rafiq, DIO Shopian,

Showkat Hussain and other officers, officials and public.

The exhibition displayed a wide range of photographs depicting development achievements of the departments under various schemes, government welfare programmes and employment interventions, artistic and cultural traditions, conduct of festivals, events and other important public awareness campaigns and initiatives organised during the year 2025-26.

Officials and public visited the exhibition with keen interest and termed the exhibition informative and inspiring.

Secretary Transport inspects ICC Samba, pushes for infrastructure upgrade

KT News Desk

SAMBA, MARCH 25: Secretary Transport, Avny Lavasa, Wednesday conducted an extensive inspection of the Inspection and Certification Centre (ICC), Samba, to review its functioning, infrastructure and availability of basic facilities at the centre.

Deputy Commissioner Samba Ayushi Sudan and Transport Commissioner Vishesh Pal Mahajan accompanied her during the visit.

The Secretary, as per an official statement, conducted a thorough examination of the building structure and machinery installed at the centre. She assessed the status of equipment to verify its operational status and compliance with the prescribed technical standards, ensuring that the vehicle fitness testing process is carried out efficiently and in a transparent manner.

Emphasising the importance

of adequate public amenities, she directed the concerned officials to ensure that properly functional washrooms and drinking water facilities are made available for the visiting drivers and vehicle owners. She also instructed the concerned officials to install separate and clearly visible boards for Light Motor Vehicles (LMV) and Heavy Motor Vehicles (HMV) to facilitate smooth functioning and avoid inconvenience to the public.

The Secretary highlighted that the establishment and proper functioning of Inspection & Certification Centres will significantly enhance transparency in the vehicle fitness certification process, thereby increasing public trust and ensuring satisfaction among the vehicle owners.

The visit concluded with firm directions to all the concerned departments to ensure timely redress of the identified issues and maintain high standards of service delivery at the centre.

Director Agriculture Kashmir inaugurates vegetable seedling distribution drive

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MARCH 25: Director Agriculture Kashmir, Sartaj Ahmad Shah, Wednesday inaugurated the fifth phase of the Vegetable Seedling Distribution Drive at the Kitchen Garden Premises, Lalmandi, Srinagar.

Speaking on the occasion, Director Agriculture Kashmir appreciated the dedicated efforts of the officers and officials of the Kitchen Garden and Hi-Tech Poly House sections for ensuring the availability of quality vegetable seedlings to the farming community round the year. He stated that the department has been largely successful in achieving this objective and affirmed that this endeavour will continue with full momentum until all set targets are met. 8.5 lakh seedlings are expected to be distributed on 5th cycle across division.

Highlighting the immense potential and importance of vegetable cultivation in the



Kashmir region, Sartaj Ahmad Shah urged educated youth to come forward and adopt vegetable cultivation as a viable and promising career option.

He emphasized that in the present scenario of climate change and global economic challenges, strengthening vegetable cultivation can play a major role in ensuring economic security for the farming community. "Our climatic conditions are among the best in

the country for the cultivation of both traditional and exotic vegetables. To fully channelize this potential, a collaborative approach is needed where both the farming community and the Agriculture Department work hand in hand," he added. Seed production Officer Kashmir, Mir Ajaz Hassan, a large number of farmers, kitchen garden enthusiasts, and backyard growers from across the Kashmir Valley were present on the occasion.

Imported elite high merit breeds to power J&K's dairy transformation: Minister Dar

KT News Desk

Ganderbal, Mar 25: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Departments, Javid Ahmad Dar, on Wednesday visited the Animal Husbandry facility at Ranbirbagh, Ganderbal and reviewed the ongoing initiatives at the station.

Interacting with the officers and field functionaries, the Minister highlighted a dual strategy for dairy growth: boosting milk productivity via genetic upgradation and strengthening dairy infrastructure, processing.

He underscored that dairying has emerged as a high-impact sector with strong potential to uplift small, marginal and landless farmers.

Referring to the Dairy Development Project under HADP, the Minister said that efforts are being undertaken in mission mode to improve the



breed quality, expand artificial insemination coverage and strengthen value chains. He observed that Jammu & Kashmir currently produces nearly 30 lakh metric tonnes of milk annually, with a target of 43 lakh metric tonnes by 2030 to bridge the demand-supply gap and position the Union Territory as a net exporter of dairy products.

In a significant step towards genetic improvement, he highlighted that elite high-merit

breeding bulls have been imported from the United States under HADP, which will be used for artificial insemination and systematic breed improvement of local livestock.

The Minister also reviewed the upgradation of the Frozen Semen Station at Ranbirbagh, being undertaken with support from NABARD, to develop it into a state-of-the-art facility. He emphasized that strengthening semen production and

distribution infrastructure is critical to scale up the artificial insemination programme across the Union Territory.

He further stated that over their productive lifespan of around eight years, these bulls are expected to produce approximately 1.2 crore semen doses, resulting in the birth of nearly 15 lakh high-yielding dairy cows across Jammu & Kashmir.

Termining the initiative a transformational intervention, the Minister said it will significantly enhance the milk yields, boost farmers' incomes, generate employment in dairy farming and processing and accelerate J&K's transition towards becoming a net exporter in the dairy sector.

Among those present during the visit were Director Animal Husbandry Kashmir Mohd Yunus, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer Ganderbal and other senior officers of the department.

Trump will travel to rescheduled China trip in May, after delay due to Iran war

AP

Washington, Mar 25: President Donald Trump will travel to Beijing for a rescheduled summit with Chinese President Xi Jinping on May 14 and 15, the White House announced on Wednesday.

Trump had been scheduled to travel to China later this month but previously announced he was delaying the trip so he could be in Washington to help steward the US and Israeli war against Iran.

The Republican president announced the rescheduled trip even though the war in Iran continues and the US is pressing Tehran to accept a ceasefire proposal.

The China trip had been planned for months but began to unravel as Trump pressured Beijing and other world powers to use their military might to protect the Strait of



Hormuz, a critical waterway for the flow of oil.

Trump said last week while meeting with Irish Prime Minister Micheál Martin in the Oval Office that he would be going to China in five or six weeks' time instead of at the end of the month. He said he would be "re-setting" his visit with Xi.

"We're working with China — they were fine with it," Trump said. "I look forward to seeing President Xi. He looks forward to seeing me, I think." Trump's visit to China is

seen as an opportunity to build on a fragile trade truce between the two superpowers, but it has become tangled in his effort to find an endgame to the war in Iran.

Soon after pressing China and other nations to send warships to secure access to Middle Eastern oil, Trump indicated last week that his travel plans depended on Beijing's response, though he added then that the US didn't need help from the allies who rebuffed his request.

Rajnath chairs key meeting of parliamentary consultative committee for defence ministry on BRO

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 25: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday chaired a meeting of a parliamentary consultative committee for the ministry on Border Roads Organisation (BRO), with deliberations held on issues pertaining to ongoing strategic initiatives aimed at strengthening national security and operational preparedness.

Underscoring the need for robust infrastructure along the borders, Singh said the BRO is fostering an ecosystem in encompassing national security, development, and connectivity, the ministry said.

Singh chaired this meeting of Parliamentary Consultative Committee for the Ministry of Defence on Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in New Delhi.

"Insightful deliberations were held on issues pertaining to defence, infrastructure development and ongoing strategic initiatives aimed at



strengthening national security and operational preparedness," the ministry said in a statement.

Singh acknowledged the BRO's efforts towards enhancing connectivity in the northeastern region and in areas affected by Left-wing extremism, thereby contributing to security and regional development.

"The BRO has facilitated the mobility of defence forces, and worked towards bringing

a positive transformation in the lives of the residents," he said.

The defence minister said the organisation has been entrusted with the task of developing infrastructure along the Indo-Myanmar border, spanning approximately 1,600 km, an initiative that will further bolster the border management capabilities.

The progress under the Border Roads Development Programme 2023-28, under

which over 1,000 road and infrastructure projects are being executed including new construction, upgrade and maintenance works to further strengthen border connectivity, was also discussed during the meeting.

Singh asserted that through this network, all-weather connectivity is being ensured even in remote and high-altitude regions, thereby strengthening the operational mobility and defence preparedness.

Drawing the attention of the members to the crucial aspect of technology utilisation, he said the BRO is rapidly adopting modern construction techniques by making best use of technologies such as high altitude equipment, modular bridges, and precast technologies.

"The BRO has enhanced both the quality and the pace of its work. This demonstrates that we are building future-ready infrastructure," he said.

Singh reiterated the government's commitment to strengthen the BRO in terms of budgetary support, modern equipment, and initiatives aimed at the welfare of their personnel.

A comprehensive overview of the BRO including its role, key achievements, challenges faced in difficult terrain and extreme climatic conditions and its contribution in disaster management was provided to the members by Director General Border Roads (DGBR), Lt Gen Harpal Singh.

The BRO, established in 1960, has constructed over 64,000 km of roads, 1,179 bridges, 22 airfields and seven tunnels, significantly enhancing operational readiness and socio-economic development in border areas, the ministry said.

Key infrastructure projects executed by the BRO and its critical role in developing roads along the northern border were also highlighted.

The committee was informed how border infrastructure development improved operational preparedness and accelerated socio-economic growth of border areas contributing towards the national vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047.

The BRO's role in executing projects in friendly foreign countries such as Afghanistan, Bhutan, Myanmar and Tajikistan was also brought out in the meeting.

Highlighting the challenges of limited working seasons, land acquisition issues and environmental clearances,

Harpal Singh emphasised the BRO's focus on capacity enhancement and adoption of modern construction technologies to deliver faster and more sustainable infrastructure.

He underscored the welfare measures for the BRO personnel, especially casual labour, as part of human resource initiatives.

The DGBR reiterated the BRO's unique capability as a specialised organisation combining military ethos with engineering excellence enabling rapid mobilisation and execution of works in high-altitude and remote areas.

Minister of State for Defence Sanjay Seth, Chief of Defence Staff Gen Anil Chauhan, Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh, Secretary, Department of Defence R&D and Chairman, DRDO, Samir V Kamat, Secretary (Defence Production) Sanjeev Kumar, among other senior officials, were also present during the meeting.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Administration backbone

felicitations to the entire team of Indian Society for Training & Development (ISTD) for the new beginning. "The ISTD's Jammu Chapter will play a crucial role in strengthening the learning and development ecosystem and it will position Jammu as a regional hub for training and professional development," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor asked the ISTD's Jammu Chapter to focus on job creation and entrepreneurship, and make local talents more globally competitive.

"The future is full of challenges but it is also brimming with opportunities. We must ensure we are ready to seize the new opportunities," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor observed that the purpose of education is not merely to impart knowledge, but to prepare students for life's challenges and opportunities.

"We should focus on soft skills, research, entrepreneurship, and a startup culture. The education sector must bring about broad transformation through mentoring and academia-industry collaboration," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor called upon the ISTD members to put special focus on training, research, collaboration in Industries, Startups and Agriculture sector of Jammu Kashmir to sharpen both productivity and market linkage.

"The entire industrial ecosystem is changing. Therefore, keeping in view the shifts underway Jammu Kashmir's industrial landscape must continually invest in new skills to enhance productivity.

"We must train our farmers in modern technology, scientific methods, and resource management to understand climate change, water crisis, and soil quality. At the same time, we must train them to produce more crops with fewer resources and to market their products more effectively," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He observed that amid all transformation, one truth holds firm: the most powerful instrument of change available to any state, nation, or institution is not technology alone, nor capital alone, nor natural resources alone but trained, developed, and also awakened mind.

"The real instrument of change is a trained, developed professional mind. Trained human resources will become the foundation of our progress, the energy behind our inclusive growth, and a real vehicle for shaping the future," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Atul Shah, National President, Indian Society for Training & Development; Prof. K.S. Chandrasekar, Vice Chancellor, Cluster University of Jammu and Mentor, ISTD Jammu Chapter; Prof. Ashok Aima, Chairman, ISTD Jammu Chapter; Ankita Sharma, Regional Vice-President (North), ISTD; Prof. Hardeep Chahal, Vice Chairperson, Dr Shahid Mushtaq, General Secretary and other members of ISTD Jammu Chapter; senior officials, heads of educational institutions and students in large number attended the inaugural ceremony. (KNO)

Div Com denies

by the district administration and police to ensure normalcy," he said.

Highlighting the ongoing tourist season, the Divisional Commissioner said that tourist destinations are open and are witnessing a steady inflow of visitors.

Referring to the recent opening of the Tulip Garden, he said the administration is closely monitoring tourist footfall throughout the day. "We appeal to tourists to visit Kashmir in large numbers during the spring and summer season," he added.

The clarification by Div Com comes amid a surge in rumours about a possible lockdown in Kashmir, which had triggered concern among residents and led to panic buying in some areas. (KNO)

LG, CM greet

fill every home with enduring peace, boundless joy, and abundant prosperity."

CM Omar Abdullah has conveyed his heartfelt greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on the auspicious occasion of Ram Navami. In his message, the Chief Minister described Shri Ram as the embodiment of righteousness, virtue and exemplary conduct.

Underscoring the timeless relevance of Shri Ram's life and teachings, the Chief Minister remarked that his ideals serve as a guiding light, encouraging people to walk the path of righteousness and selfless service.

He further noted that Ram Navami is not merely a religious celebration, but also an occasion to reaffirm our shared commitment to the service of humanity with sincerity and dedication.

The Chief Minister prayed for peace, prosperity and well-being of all the people of Jammu and Kashmir and extended his warm wishes to

those celebrating the sacred festival. (KNO)

What Centre's proposal

to reserve 33 percent for women. This would mean 45 seats reserved for women in the J&K Assembly, and two seats in the Lok Sabha if the number of seats is increased to seven, or three seats if it goes up to eight.

The Centre is already trying to build consensus across the political spectrum for making legal changes to ensure political reservation for women becomes applicable before the 2029 Lok Sabha polls.

It is holding consultations with different parties, including opposition parties in the Lok Sabha.

The National Conference, the only regional party with representation in Parliament, says it has not been consulted by the Union Government on the matter.

"No such consultation has been held with us," NC's Rajya Sabha MP Choudhary Muhammad Ramzan told news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO).

He said he participated in a meeting of the opposition INDIA bloc over the issue.

"It was decided in the meeting that the Centre should convene an all-party meeting on the proposed move to explain the contours of the proposed legislations and provide clarity on it," he said.

The proposal, if implemented through legal changes, would also apply to the J&K Assembly polls in 2029. The current term of the Assembly is set to expire on November 3, 2029.

If the Centre is able to pass the proposed legislations, it would immediately constitute a delimitation commission for redrawing the boundaries of Lok Sabha and Assembly seats.

As per the proposal, the 2011 Census would be the basis for the delimitation exercise.

The existing legal framework provides that women's reservation will only apply after the 2027 Census is completed and constituencies are redrawn through delimitation based on that data. (KNO)

Additional 300 MW

require 24,559 MU of energy followed by 25,780 MU in the year 2028-29.

Earlier in March, KNO reported that Jammu and Kashmir is likely to face a four percent Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) increase in electricity requirement and six

percent increase in peak electricity demand for the period of 2025-26 to 2035-36.

The official documents in this regard reveal that it has considered electrical energy requirement projections as per J&K State Load Despatch Center (SLDC).

The documents further reveal that the SLDC has projected that the annual electrical energy requirement of the UT is likely to grow at a CAGR of 4 percent while the peak electricity demand for the utility is likely to grow at a CAGR of 6 percent for the period of 2025-26 to 2035-36.

About the day-wise surplus coal capacity, the documents said that the surplus capacity is available with the Union Territory due to RE availability, demand variation etcetera.

"The UT has likely surplus capacity of around 700-900 MW during May to June months and 500 MW from July to September in 2028-29 which can be shared with other states and Discoms," it reads.

As already reported by this news agency, Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh are likely to depend on nearly 30 percent of coal based energy by the year 2030.

The official documents in this regard reveal that the likely total projected contracted capacity for the year 2035-36 is around 11,001 Megawatts (MW).

"The projected contracted capacity consists of 3239 MW from coal, 129 MW from gas, 68 MW from nuclear, 3666 MW from hydro, 2040 MW from solar, 598 MW from Distributed Renewable Energy (DRE) and 1261 MW from MTOA or STOA," it reads. (KNO)

Rain, snow likely

with speeds of 40-50 kmph may continue till the forenoon of March 31," the official added.

"On March 31, the region is likely to witness generally cloudy skies with brief spells of light rain or snow at scattered places, while partly to generally cloudy conditions are expected from April 1 to 4," he said.

The MeT office has also issued an advisory warning of moderate snowfall over a few higher reaches accompanied by thunder, lightning and gusty winds between the night of March 28 and March 30.

Farmers have been advised to suspend agricultural operations on March 26 and from March 29 to 31, while travellers have been asked to follow traffic advisories and plan their

movement accordingly during the same period. (KNO)

Over 4,400 kg of

generate funds for terror activities in Jammu and Kashmir

It further said that 292 drones/unmanned aerial vehicles were seized or recovered along the Indo-Pakistan border in 2025, indicating the growing use of drones for cross-border smuggling.

The minister also stated that 66 fugitives wanted in drug-related cases have been identified. A total of 24 Red Notices and 25 Blue Notices have been issued against them, while five fugitives were deported from various countries during 2025. (KNO)

Almost universal

3G connectivity, and 179 villages are under 2G coverage.

On the wired broadband front, 1,130 Gram Panchayats in Jammu and Kashmir and 193 in Ladakh have been made service-ready under the BharatNet programme aimed at expanding rural broadband access.

The minister said the government is implementing projects such as BharatNet and the 4G saturation programme to extend connectivity to remote areas. Across the country, 24,263 mobile towers have been commissioned under these initiatives.

The Centre said challenges such as difficult terrain, sparse population and weather conditions continue to affect connectivity expansion in remote regions like Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, but efforts are ongoing to achieve universal coverage. (KNO)

Rising complaints

the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 mandate e-commerce entities to appoint grievance officers and resolve complaints within a stipulated timeframe.

The Centre added that the Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) is empowered to act against unfair trade practices, misleading advertisements, and the sale of substandard products, including issuing notices, imposing penalties, and ordering recalls.

Officials said steps are being taken to strengthen consumer protection mechanisms and ensure transparency in online marketplaces in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. (KNO)

Union Cabinet extends IVFRT Scheme for 5 years to modernise immigration, visa services

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 25: The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a five-year extension of the Immigration, Visa, Foreigners Registration and Tracking (IVFRT) Scheme, committing Rs 1,800 crore to modernise and secure the country's immigration system through March 2031.

The Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved the continuation of the scheme from April 1, 2026, to March 31, 2031, a government statement said.

The continuation of the scheme is not just a "technical upgrade, but a strategic transformation" aligned with the vision of the government to promote international mobility through a world-class immigration and visa issuance system, it said.

In January 2022, the Cabinet extended the scheme through March 31, 2026, with an allocation of Rs 1,365 crore. The latest extension follows the enactment of the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, which has heightened the need for a stronger, more adaptable IVFRT system to address evolving travel demands and future challenges in immigration control and foreigner management, including illegal migration. The next phase will focus on three areas—emerging technology innovations, transformation of core infrastructure, and technology and service



optimisation. Planned measures include mobile-based services, self-service kiosks and unified digital platforms to improve efficiency and user experience while maintaining robust security.

The government wants to expand and strengthen the scope and capacity of the existing IVFRT Scheme "not only by reimagining and revamping the existing structure, but also by introducing state-of-the-art technological solutions to enhance user experience without compromising the security architecture", the statement said.

The scheme will implement infrastructure upgrades at immigration posts, Foreigners Regional Registration Offices (FRROs), and data centres to create a resilient and scalable nationwide system. The IVFRT platform will connect and streamline immigration, visa issuance, and foreigner registration in India by modernising and upgrading immigration and visa services within a secure, integrated service-delivery framework. The scheme is also expected to support growth in tourism, medical travel and business activity. Currently, the IVFRT system covers 117 immigration posts, 15 FRROs and 854 Foreigners Registration Offices and police units across India. The system has significantly improved service delivery and operational efficiency by enabling a fully online, contactless visa process with appointment scheduling and digital payments. Over the past five years, 91.24 per cent of e-visa applications were processed within 72 hours. Average passenger clearance time at immigration checkpoints has been reduced to about 2.5 to 3 minutes from 5 to 6 minutes earlier. The Fast Track Immigration- Trusted Traveller Programme, using automated e-gates at 13 major airports, has further reduced clearance time to about 30 seconds for enrolled users, including Indian nationals and Overseas Citizen of India cardholders, the statement said.

September, 2014. It was extended in 2015, 2017 and 2021. In January 2022, the Cabinet extended the scheme through March 31, 2026, with an allocation of Rs 1,365 crore. The latest extension follows the enactment of the Immigration and Foreigners Act, 2025, which has heightened the need for a stronger, more adaptable IVFRT system to address evolving travel demands and future challenges in immigration control and foreigner management, including illegal migration. The next phase will focus on three areas—emerging technology innovations, transformation of core infrastructure, and technology and service

optimisation. Planned measures include mobile-based services, self-service kiosks and unified digital platforms to improve efficiency and user experience while maintaining robust security.

The government wants to expand and strengthen the scope and capacity of the existing IVFRT Scheme "not only by reimagining and revamping the existing structure, but also by introducing state-of-the-art technological solutions to enhance user experience without compromising the security architecture", the statement said.

The scheme will implement infrastructure upgrades at immigration posts, Foreigners Regional Registration Offices (FRROs), and data centres to create a resilient and scalable nationwide system. The IVFRT platform will connect and streamline immigration, visa issuance, and foreigner registration in India by modernising and upgrading immigration and visa services within a secure, integrated service-delivery framework. The scheme is also expected to support growth in tourism, medical travel and business activity. Currently, the IVFRT system covers 117 immigration posts, 15 FRROs and 854 Foreigners Registration Offices and police units across India. The system has significantly improved service delivery and operational efficiency by enabling a fully online, contactless visa process with appointment scheduling and digital payments. Over the past five years, 91.24 per cent of e-visa applications were processed within 72 hours. Average passenger clearance time at immigration checkpoints has been reduced to about 2.5 to 3 minutes from 5 to 6 minutes earlier. The Fast Track Immigration- Trusted Traveller Programme, using automated e-gates at 13 major airports, has further reduced clearance time to about 30 seconds for enrolled users, including Indian nationals and Overseas Citizen of India cardholders, the statement said.

No fuel shortage, say oil firms; urge public to avoid panic buying



PTI

New Delhi, Mar 25: State-owned oil companies on Wednesday said there is no shortage of petrol, diesel or LPG in the country, urging citizens not to believe rumours circulating on social media or resort to panic buying. Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), the nation's largest oil firm, said "there is no shortage of petrol or diesel", adding that its outlets are "well-stocked and fully operational".

It cautioned that rumours "can create unnecessary concern and disrupt normal supply patterns" and urged citizens to "avoid panic buying and rely only on verified information". Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) termed reports of fuel shortages in certain areas "completely unfounded", asserting that "there is no shortage of fuel across the nation". The company said India is a net exporter of petrol and diesel and has "adequate stocks of crude oil, petrol, diesel and ATF", with supply chains operating "smoothly without any disruption".

It added that it remains "fully operational and committed to ensuring uninterrupted fuel supply". Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) also said there is "no shortage of petrol, diesel or LPG across the country", with supplies remaining stable and stocks adequate. It advised customers not to be misled by rumours or engage in panic buying, and to "continue with normal consumption patterns", adding that it is committed to ensuring "an uninterrupted and seamless fuel supply" across its network. While the war in West Asia has disrupted crude oil, LNG and LPG supply chains, India with its diversified sourcing has been able to secure enough supplies of crude oil (the raw material used to make fuels like petrol and diesel) from West Africa, Latin America and the US. The disruption in liquefied natural gas (LNG) due to India's largest supplier's facilities in Qatar being hit in the war, has led to prioritisation of the fuel to domestic users and CNG while some curtailment has been done for industrial users like fertilizer plants. LPG is the most impacted by the war as the country relied on imports to meet 60 per cent of its demand. A majority of it came from the Gulf countries, from where supplies have been hit. This has led to government prioritising supplies to domestic household kitchens and curtailing usage by commercial establishments such as hotels and restaurants by at least half.

or LPG across the country", with supplies remaining stable and stocks adequate. It advised customers not to be misled by rumours or engage in panic buying, and to "continue with normal consumption patterns", adding that it is committed to ensuring "an uninterrupted and seamless fuel supply" across its network. While the war in West Asia has disrupted crude oil, LNG and LPG supply chains, India with its diversified sourcing has been able to secure enough supplies of crude oil (the raw material used to make fuels like petrol and diesel) from West Africa, Latin America and the US. The disruption in liquefied natural gas (LNG) due to India's largest supplier's facilities in Qatar being hit in the war, has led to prioritisation of the fuel to domestic users and CNG while some curtailment has been done for industrial users like fertilizer plants. LPG is the most impacted by the war as the country relied on imports to meet 60 per cent of its demand. A majority of it came from the Gulf countries, from where supplies have been hit. This has led to government prioritising supplies to domestic household kitchens and curtailing usage by commercial establishments such as hotels and restaurants by at least half.

It cautioned that rumours "can create unnecessary concern and disrupt normal supply patterns" and urged citizens to "avoid panic buying and rely only on verified information". Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) termed reports of fuel shortages in certain areas "completely unfounded", asserting that "there is no shortage of fuel across the nation". The company said India is a net exporter of petrol and diesel and has "adequate stocks of crude oil, petrol, diesel and ATF", with supply chains operating "smoothly without any disruption".

It added that it remains "fully operational and committed to ensuring uninterrupted fuel supply". Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) also said there is "no shortage of petrol, diesel or LPG across the country", with supplies remaining stable and stocks adequate. It advised customers not to be misled by rumours or engage in panic buying, and to "continue with normal consumption patterns", adding that it is committed to ensuring "an uninterrupted and seamless fuel supply" across its network. While the war in West Asia has disrupted crude oil, LNG and LPG supply chains, India with its diversified sourcing has been able to secure enough supplies of crude oil (the raw material used to make fuels like petrol and diesel) from West Africa, Latin America and the US. The disruption in liquefied natural gas (LNG) due to India's largest supplier's facilities in Qatar being hit in the war, has led to prioritisation of the fuel to domestic users and CNG while some curtailment has been done for industrial users like fertilizer plants. LPG is the most impacted by the war as the country relied on imports to meet 60 per cent of its demand. A majority of it came from the Gulf countries, from where supplies have been hit. This has led to government prioritising supplies to domestic household kitchens and curtailing usage by commercial establishments such as hotels and restaurants by at least half.

Law must not become tool to harass husband's kin: SC quashes dowry case

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 25: The Supreme Court on Wednesday quashed a dowry harassment case against a woman's parents-in-law and sister-in-law in Uttar Pradesh, saying that the vague allegations in matrimonial disputes should not be allowed to trigger criminal prosecution against a husband's relatives.

A bench of Justices BV Nagarathna and Ujjal Bhuyan was hearing a petition filed to challenge the Allahabad High Court order, which refused to quash an FIR lodged against the complainant's sister-in-law and parents-in-law under IPC Sections 498A (Matrimonial Cruelty), 323 (Voluntarily Causing Hurt) and provisions of the Dowry Prohibition Act.

In an order, the court said, "Time and again, this court has observed that merely stating certain vague and omnibus allegations without any cogent material evidence to support the same should not become a fillip to jump-start the criminal machinery of the State."

The court said that the criminal law should not become a means of "unleashing personal vendetta" against family members of the husband, and courts must be cautious where sweeping accusations are made without concrete evidence.

"A mere statement stating that the accused herein frequently demanded dowry and harassed the complainant for the same is not sufficient to initiate criminal proceedings against them when the same are not corroborated or bolstered by other materials placed on record," the bench said.

The complainant had alleged that after her marriage in April 2017, her husband and in-laws demanded Rs 8.5 lakh and a car as dowry and subjected her to cruelty. She had also accused them of assaulting her during pregnancy in 2017, leading to a miscarriage, and levelled allegations of molestation against her father-in-law.

In December 2023, the Allahabad High Court refused to quash the FIR lodged in November 2023 against the complainant's sister-in-law and parents-in-law. It noted that the Investigating Officer (IO) had dropped the charge of causing miscarriage and that the medical records did not support the allegation.

The court also noted the delay of more than six years in lodging the FIR, saying the prosecution had failed to provide a satisfactory explanation. "We find that the citizens who allege commission of an offence should not dawdle on their rights but should rather pursue them in real time in order to achieve the ends of justice," the bench said, adding that such delays can be fatal in cases involving personal disputes where evidence is already limited. It further observed that the allegations against the in-laws were largely general and lacked specific details about their role.

Allowing the appeals, the court quashed the FIR, chargesheet and the pending criminal case against the complainant's sister-in-law and parents-in-law, while clarifying that its observations would not affect any other matrimonial proceedings between the parties.

As many as 1,300 posts of IAS; 505 of IPS vacant: Govt in Lok Sabha

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 25: As many as 1,300 posts of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and 505 belonging to the Indian Police Service (IPS) are lying vacant, the Lok Sabha was informed on Wednesday.

Of the total of 6,877 sanctioned posts of the IAS, there are 5,577 officers in position, Union Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh said in a written reply.

There are 4,594 IPS officers in position, as against their sanctioned strength of 5,099, he said.

Singh explained that IAS posts are filled according to the reservation guidelines issued by the government.

"Since 2012, a total of 180 candidates have been recruited to the IAS through the civil services examination each year, with 4 per cent of these seats reserved for candidates with benchmark disabilities (PwBD)," he said.

He added that the process of allocating candidates through the civil services examination (CSE), conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), is ongoing and continuous.

Vacancies are regularly assessed, and all advertised IAS vacancies are filled while considering the reservation norms, Singh added.

Currently, there are no backlog vacancies in the Indian Administrative Service. Additionally, there are no backlog reserved posts in the



Indian Police Service as of January 1, 2025, Singh added.

The minister noted that over the past five years, 245 candidates from the Other Backward Classes (OBC), 135 from Scheduled Castes (SC), and 67 from Scheduled Tribes (ST) have been appointed to the IAS.

Similarly, 255 individuals from the OBC, 141 from SC, and 71 from ST have been appointed to the IPS during the same period (CSE 2020 to CSE 2024).

In a separate reply, the minister said that there are currently 1,029 vacant posts for Indian Forest Service (IFoS) officers, with a sanctioned strength of 3,193.

"Recruitment is a continuous process, and vacancies in these services are filled on a year-to-year basis considering the administrative

requirements across the states as well as promotion prospects and career growth available to the officers," the minister added.

Singh also mentioned that detailed information regarding sanctioned posts, personnel in position, and vacancies in various ministries and departments of the Union government is available in the annual reports of the Pay Research Unit, Department of Expenditure, which are publicly accessible.

"Maintenance of detailed information regarding vacancies is the responsibility of the respective cadre controlling authorities/ ministries/departments," he said in a separate response.

Singh was asked whether the government has conducted any preliminary study regarding estimated positions sanctioned, in position and vacancies across all central government ministries and departments.

The occurrence and filling-up of vacant posts in various ministries/ departments is a continuous process, he said, adding that instructions have been issued from time to time to ministries/departments for the filling of vacant posts in a time-bound manner.

Vacancies in the Union government have been addressed in a mission-mode approach, with several lakh appointment letters distributed to recommended or selected candidates during the national Rozgar Mela events held since October 2022.

'Antibiotic resistance fuels 87% of India's typhoid economic burden'

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 25: Antibiotic-resistant typhoid infections accounted for at least 87 per cent of India's disease-related economic burden in 2023, according to a study in The Lancet Regional Health Southeast Asia. The total economic burden due to typhoid fever was estimated at Rs 123 billion.

Children under the age of 10 incurred the highest economic burden, contributing to over half of the costs, researchers, including those from London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Christian Medical College in Vellore, found. They also estimated that households bore 91 per cent of expenses, and 70,000 families faced "catastrophic" health expenditure.

Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh (including Telangana), Tamil Nadu, and West Bengal were estimated to account for 51 per



cent of the national costs.

Typhoid fever is an infectious disease commonly transmitted through contaminated food or water. Symptoms can include high fever, fatigue, headache and stomach pain.

The authors said the findings provide key evidence to support

the introduction of the typhoid conjugate vaccine in the national immunisation schedule, which is under consideration, the authors said. Evidence from the study also supports enhancing antibiotic resistance control and guiding national health financing policies, they said.

The researchers analysed empirical data from India on typhoid epidemiology, care-seeking, clinical outcomes, and estimated direct and indirect costs for hospitalised and non-hospitalised typhoid fever patients. "Typhoid fever imposes a significant economic burden in India, shaped by fluoroquinolone resistance, children less than ten years of age, and high-burden provincial states of the country, resulting in considerable household financial strain," the authors wrote.

"Fluoroquinolone-resistant infections accounted for 87 per cent of total costs," they said.

'Will he dictate to me?': CJJ Kant fumes over litigant's father calling his brother



PTI

New Delhi, Mar 25: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant on Wednesday took umbrage at the conduct of a litigant whose father made a phone call to the CJJ's brother objecting to a judicial order regarding minority reservation for a medical post-graduate course.

The matter pertains to one Nikhil Kumar Punia, born into Haryana's Jaat Punia community, seeking a minority reservation after converting to Buddhism in Uttar Pradesh's Subharti Medical College.

On January 28, the Supreme Court, while observing that the plea was a "new type of fraud", had directed an inquiry into the petitioner's minority certificates.

On Wednesday, the CJJ was infuriated while referring to the "shocking" incident and said, "Nobody dares to do this. And you think I will transfer the case because of this? I have dealt with such elements for the last 23 years." He went on

and said, "Now you tell us why we should not initiate criminal contempt against the father of your client. What he (father) has done, should I disclose in open court?"

"He calls up my brother and asks him how the Chief Justice of India has passed this order. Will he dictate to me?"

Slamming the conduct, he told the advocate, "You verify it (the conduct). As counsel, you should first consider withdrawing. This is sheer misconduct. Even if he is outside India, I know how to deal with such people."

To this, the advocate apologised.

"I am very sorry, Sir, but I am not aware of all this," he said.

The court adjourned the matter to next week after noting that Haryana had not filed a compliance report regarding the guidelines for issuing minority certificates, including whether general category candidates could get a minority certificate after claiming to convert to Buddhism.

Bangladesh PM calls March 25, 1971 genocide as 'pre-planned massacre'

PTI

Dhaka, Mar 25: Bangladesh Prime Minister Tarique Rahman has termed the genocide of March 25, 1971 as a "pre-planned" massacre and appealed to build a state and society of "equality, human dignity and social justice," in the spirit of the Liberation War.

Calling it as "one of the most disgraceful and brutal days" in the history of Bangladesh, Rahman, in a message on X, also said it is essential to know about the genocide of March 25 to convey the value and significance of independence to the present and future generations.

The Pakistani army launched 'Operation Searchlight' on March 25, 1971 to suppress the Bengali people's calls for self-determination in erstwhile East Pakistan, killing over 20,000 people in Dhaka alone.

Officially, three million people were killed in the subsequent nine-month Liberation War.

Bangladesh observes Genocide Day to pay homage to the victims.

Rahman's message on Tuesday, on the eve of the Genocide Remembrance Day, said: "The genocide of 25 March was a pre-planned massacre. Why this organised killing spree could not be resisted remains a matter of historical research regarding the visible role of the political leadership of that time."

"Let us all strive to honour the sacrifices of the martyrs by establishing



in the state and society the spirit of the great Liberation War - equality, human dignity and social justice," he added.

Recalling the events of "that dark night," Rahman said the Pakistani occupation forces carried out one of the most heinous genocides in history against the unarmed people of Bangladesh in the name of 'Operation Searchlight'.

"They indiscriminately opened fire on teachers, intellectuals and innocent civilians at various places, including Dhaka University, Pilkhana and Rajarbari Police Lines, killing many people," the prime minister described.

Calling it as a "pre-planned massacre," and raising questions as to why the organised killing spree could not be resisted at that time, Rahman

further said, "On the night of 25 March, the 8th East Bengal Regiment in Chattogram formally initiated armed resistance against the genocide by declaring 'We Revolt'. Through this resistance to genocide, the long nine-month armed Liberation War began."

"To convey the value and significance of independence to the present and future generations, it is essential to know about the genocide of 25 March as well," he said.

"Let us all strive to honour the sacrifices of the martyrs by establishing in the state and society the spirit of the great Liberation War - equality, human dignity and social justice. Let us work together to build a just, developed, prosperous, self-reliant and democratic Bangladesh," he added.

Iran receives US ceasefire plan, officials say as strikes batter Middle East

AP

Dubai, Mar 25: Iran has received an American plan to pause the war in the Middle East, officials said Wednesday, a proposal sent even as Washington deploys paratroopers and more Marines to the region.

Tehran did not confirm receiving the plan and publicly dismissed the diplomatic effort while launching more attacks on Israel and Gulf Arab countries, including an assault that sparked a huge fire at Kuwait International Airport. Iran also continued to come under attack.

Two officials from Pakistan, which delivered the 15-point proposal broadly, saying it addressed sanctions relief, a rollback of Iran's nuclear program, limits on missiles and reopening the Strait of Hormuz, a crucial waterway through which a fifth of the world's oil is shipped.

An Egyptian official involved in the mediation efforts added that the proposal includes restrictions on Iran's support for armed groups. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss details not yet released.

Some of those points were nonstarters in negotiations before the war: Iran has



insisted it won't discuss its ballistic missile program or its support of regional militias, which it views as key to its security. And its ability to control passage through the Strait of Hormuz represents one of its biggest strategic advantages.

Iran's attacks on regional energy infrastructure along with its restrictions on the strait have sent oil prices skyrocketing and rocked world markets over fears of a global energy crisis, in turn putting pressure on the US to find a way to end the chokehold and calm markets.

More US troops are on way to region

At least 1,000 troops from the 82nd Airborne Division will be sent to the Mideast in the coming days, three people with knowledge of the plans told The Associated Press. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss sensitive military plans. The paratroopers are

trained to jump into hostile or contested areas to secure key territory and airfields.

The Pentagon is also in the process of sending about 5,000 more Marines, trained in amphibious assaults, and thousands of sailors to the region.

Diplomatic efforts face major challenges. The 15-point plan now in Iranian hands is "a comprehensive deal" to reach a ceasefire, according to the Egyptian official.

Mediators are pushing for possible in-person talks between the Iranians and the Americans, perhaps as soon as Friday in Pakistan, the Egyptian and Pakistani officials said.

Speaking Tuesday at the White House, Trump said the US is "in negotiations right now" and that the participants included special envoy Steve Witkoff, his son-in-law Jared Kushner, Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Vice

President JD Vance. He has not said who from Iran they are in contact with.

"We have a number of people doing it," Trump said. "And the other side, I can tell you, they'd like to make a deal."

Iran's Khatam Al-Anbiya Central Headquarters, which commands both the regular military and the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, dismissed the idea of talks.

Iranian leaders have repeatedly denied they are happening, while acknowledging that the foreign minister is in contact with various countries but not the US or Israel.

"Our first and last word has been the same from day one, and it will stay that way: Someone like us will never come to terms with someone like you," Lt. Col. Ebrahim Zolfaghari, a spokesman for the headquarters, said in the video statement aired on state television. "Not now, not ever."

Israeli officials, who have been advocating for Trump to continue the war against Iran, were surprised by the submission of a ceasefire plan, according to a person who was briefed on the contours of the proposal and also confirmed it had been submitted. They spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak publicly.

Namdhari SC overcome Real Kashmir for first win of season

PTI

Srinagar, Mar 25: A second-half strike by Seilenthang Lotjem helped Namdhari Sports Club edge past Real Kashmir FC 1-0 for their first win of the season in the Indian Football League here on Wednesday.

The victory lifted Namdhari SC to sixth in the table with six points from five matches while Real Kashmir remain in ninth in the table with two points from as many games.

Both sides struggled to assert control in midfield during the early exchanges, resulting in frequent turnovers.

The only real moments of concern for either goalkeeper in the half came from isolated efforts. Najib Ibrahim tested Real Kashmir goalkeeper Furkan



Ahmad Dar with a low strike from the edge of the box, while at the other end, Niraj Kumar was called into action after Karan Kumar Sharma's miscued clearance looped goalwards, forcing the goalkeeper into an acrobatic save.

Namdhari took the lead just after the hour mark through Lotjem. Substitute Manbir Singh

delivered a cross to the far post, and Lotjem timed his late run into the six-yard box to perfection, slipping in unnoticed before calmly slotting the ball past the goalkeeper.

Real Kashmir stepped up the pressure in search of an equaliser but the visitors held on to their slender lead until the final whistle.

Ex-Google chief Matt Brittin appointed new BBC director-general

AFP

London, Mar 25: The BBC on Wednesday named Matt Brittin, a former Google executive with no television or journalism experience, as its next director-general.

The appointment to the high-profile role comes as the under-fire British broadcaster faces drastic shifts in the media landscape and a \$10-billion lawsuit brought by US President Donald Trump.

"The BBC Board has today appointed Matt Brittin as the

18th Director-General of the BBC. Matt, former President Google EMEA, will take over the role on 18 May," the BBC said in a statement.

Chairman of the BBC board, Samir Shah said: "Matt brings to the BBC deep experience of leading a high-profile and highly-complex organization through transformation."

Brittin's name has been circulating in the UK media for weeks, after the current director-general, Tim Davie resigned in November over



the editing of a documentary about Trump.

The Times daily wrote ahead of Brittin's appointment that

appointing a tech executive with no direct experience of television or journalism would be a "significant shift" and "raised some eyebrows."

The Daily Telegraph quoted an unnamed senior media figure calling this a "huge, huge risk."

Davie, who has held the post since 2020, is due to step down on April 2, and Brittin will be taking on a challenging post. The job specification posted on the BBC website in November described the role as one of "the most important, high-profile public posts in the UK."

Mandaviya lauds Indian lacrosse teams for winning Asian gold

■ Urges LA 2028 qualification



PTI

New Delhi, Mar 25: Set for an Olympic return after 100 years, the lesser known sport of lacrosse got acknowledgement from Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Wednesday as he felicitated the Indian men's and women's teams for their gold-winning show at a recent Asian meet and urged them to eye 2028 Los Angeles Games qualification.

Lacrosse is a native American team sport in which a long-handled stick with a netted head is used to catch, pass and throw a rubber ball into the rival goal.

It made its Olympic debut as a medal event in

1904 and featured again four years later before becoming a demonstration discipline in 1928, 1932 and 1948. Eventually dropped from the roster, the sport will return to the Games in the upcoming Los Angeles edition. "Lacrosse is an upcoming big sport for India. This was your first major international exposure and you have already brought home medals. Now the focus should be on working harder, gaining more exposure and making the country proud by aiming for qualification at LA 2028," Mandaviya told the two teams.

India delivered a dominant performance at the Asian Lacrosse Games held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia in February, securing gold

medals in both the men's and women's events in the six-a-side format, which will be used in Los Angeles as well.

Indian men and women defeated Iraq and Pakistan respectively in their final matches.

The Indian women's Lacrosse team made its international debut only in 2024, while the men's team followed them last year 2025.

The two teams feature athletes from all part of the country, including Rajasthan, Maharashtra, Haryana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Odisha, Assam, Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Uttar Pradesh. The Asian Lacrosse Games, organised under the Asia-Pacific Lacrosse Union, are part of a broader effort to develop competitive pathways in the region.

India's next major assignments include the third Asian Lacrosse Games in Chengdu, China, in April, and the Asia-Pacific Sixes Lacrosse Championships in Australia this October, which will serve as a qualification pathway for LA 2028.

Movies SCHEDULE

THURSDAY, 26 MARCH

DHURANDHAR THE REVENGE (A)
HINDI - 12:30 PM, 01:30 PM, 05:00 PM, 06:00 PM
HINDI ATMOS - 10:00 AM, 02:30 PM, 07:00 PM

PROJECT HAIL MARY (U/A)
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
10:25 AM

CALL 95416 13868 FOR ASSISTANCE WITH TICKETS

TICKETS AT: www.bookmyshow.com | www.inoxmovies.com
Paytm, Inox App, or directly from the booking counter at the cinema.