



MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

Ensure smooth supply chains, work as 'Team India': PM to CMs

Calls for strict measures against hoarding, profiteering; CMs appreciate Centre's steps, welcome fuel excise duty reduction, increase in commercial LPG allocation to States

KNO News Desk

New Delhi, Mar 27: Prime Minister Narendra Modi Friday chaired a meeting with Chief Ministers and Lieutenant Governors of States to review preparedness in light of the emerging situation arising out of recent developments in the Middle East and its potential impact on India, via video conferencing.

According to a statement issued to news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Prime Minister expressed his appreciation for the valuable suggestions shared by all Chief Ministers, noting that these inputs would be instrumental in effectively managing the



evolving situation.

He emphasised the need for vigilance, preparedness, and co-ordinated action to address the challenges ahead.

Referring to the ongoing situation in West Asia, Prime Minister said India has prior experience in dealing with similar global disruption. He recalled

the collective response during the Covid-19 pandemic, when the Centre and States worked together as "Team India" to mitigate the impact on supply

chains, trade, and daily life.

He underscored that the same spirit of cooperation and coordination remains India's greatest strength | [More on P6](#)

LG hails PM's 'historic' decision to shield households from West Asia crisis impact

'While global markets are in turmoil, our citizens remain shielded & secure'



KT News Desk

Jammu, Mar 27: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday hailed Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his historic decision to insulate households from supply disruptions triggered by the West Asia crisis.

In a post on X, the Lieutenant Governor said: "Prioritizing citizen welfare,

Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji has taken historic decision to insulate households from supply disruptions triggered by West Asia crisis. The measures reflect his commitment to protect the standard of living for ordinary Indians. Central excise duty slashed by Rs. 10 per litre on both petrol and diesel, shielding consumers from escalating costs. | [More on P6](#)

BRIEF NEWS

Speaker for comprehensive law to combat fake news

KT News Desk

Speaker of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly (JKLA), Advocate Abdul Rahim Rather on Thursday emphasized on the urgent need for framing a comprehensive legal framework to effectively tackle the growing challenge of fake news and misinformation across Jammu and Kashmir. The Speaker made these remarks while speaking during Short Duration Discussion held in the | [More on P6](#)

'Hydropower capacity output to triple by next decade'

Riyaz Bhat

The government Friday said that it is in process of tripling the hydroelectric power generation over the next decade. According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the concerned minister in the Legislative Assembly informed that a comprehensive road map for the next decade has been drawn and is under implementation. "The UT is on the fast track to triple its installed | [More on P6](#)

'Over 6.5 lakh meters installed in Kashmir, 6.7 lakh in Jammu'

Waris Fayaz

The government on Friday said smart metering is being rapidly expanded across Jammu and Kashmir under the RDSS, covering all categories of consumers. Replying to a query by MLA Vijay Kumar in the Legislative Assembly, the government, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said a total of 13,28,733 smart meters have been installed so far. Of these, | [More on P6](#)

Over 1.52 lakh stray dogs in J&K's urban areas: Govt

Rehan Qayoom Mir

The Jammu and Kashmir government on Friday said the estimated number of stray dogs in major urban centres of the Union Territory stands at 1,52,775, including 64,416 in Srinagar city as per the 2023 survey. Replying to an unstarred question by MLA Tanvir Sadiq in the Legislative Assembly, the government said 43,200 stray dogs have been sterilised across districts during | [More on P6](#)

J&K Assembly approves budget for 2026-27

3 Appropriation Bills passed

KNO Special Correspondent

Jammu, Mar 27: The Jammu & Kashmir Assembly on Friday approved the budget for 2026-27 with the passage of the Appropriation Bill for the next financial year.

As per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Assembly today passed three key Appropriation Bills, including the one for 2026-27, which were introduced by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who also happens to be Finance Minister of J&K.

The passage of the Appropriation Bill marks the formal approval of the budget

for the next financial year and the culmination of the process that began with the presentation of the budget by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on February 6.

The Chief Minister had presented a budget of Rs 113767 crore for 2026-27. After presentation of the budget, there were discussions on it for three days which was culminating with CM's reply to it.

Following the CM's reply, the House considered grants from various departments before breaking for a long recess on February 19, coinciding with the | [More on P6](#)

CM Omar Abdullah terms US-Israel war on Iran 'illegal, unlawful'

Urges PM Modi to push for ending war

Sajid Raina

Jammu, Mar 27: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Friday termed the US-Israel war on Iran as "illegal" and "unlawful."

Speaking in the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly, the CM, as per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), described the US-Israel war on Iran as both illegal and unlawful.

"The way an illegal and unlawful war has been imposed on Iran, I don't think anyone can stand up and speak in its support," he said.

The CM condemned the



killing of Ayatollah Khamenei and others. "The way humanity was murdered through the merciless killing of Ayatollah Khamenei Sahab, his relatives, and colleagues - the more it is

condemned, the less it feels sufficient. The issue did not stop there. The way school-children were killed, I don't think there is any recent precedent for such brutality," he said.

The Chief Minister questioned the objectives of the war, saying there was no clarity on its purpose. He referred to statements by the US President and noted that different reasons had been cited at different times.

He said the situation had a direct impact on people in Jammu and Kashmir, pointing out that many | [More on P6](#)

Avalanche hits Zojila; 5 dead, 7 injured

Rescue operation underway

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Mar 27: At least five persons were killed and seven others sustained injuries when a snow avalanche struck near Dayal Pass along the Zojila axis in Kargil sub-division on Friday, officials said.

An official told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that three to four passenger vehicles were caught in the avalanche, leaving them buried under snow and debris and forcing the closure of the strategic Srinagar-Leh National Highway.

He said rescue teams were immediately rushed to the spot, and a joint operation was launched to evacuate the | [More on P6](#)

'Govt will ensure corrective measures for ethical news dissemination'

KT News Desk

Jammu, Mar 27: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary on Friday said the media, regarded as the fourth pillar of democracy, has historically played a significant role in the nation's freedom struggle and enjoyed the trust of the people.

The Deputy Chief Minister was replying to the issues raised by the Members during a Short Duration Discussion on tackling fake news and misinformation in the Legislative Assembly. He observed that times have changed and with the advent of social media, which was initially expected to improve people's lives, has also brought new challenges.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that while the government

will take necessary corrective measures, but the media must also introspect and work towards strengthening its credibility, reflecting on how it wishes to be remembered by the society.

He said that the media has an important role to play for strengthening of J&K. "A strong J&K will lead to strong India. For this we all have to play the role," he said.

He added that Media, being called as the fourth pillar of democracy, has a great responsibility and urged the media professionals to follow their conscience and act responsibly, adding that no law can work effectively without self-discipline and ethical conduct.

The Deputy Chief Minister expressed gratitude to the

members for participation in the debate and raising significant issues concerning ethical information dissemination by the media.

Minister for Youth Services and Sports, Satish Sharma, while speaking during the discussion, emphasized that genuine and responsible media practitioners should be encouraged and promoted. He stressed that those involved in spreading fake news, misinformation and disinformation must face exemplary punishment in order to uphold credibility in the media space.

Earlier, the House witnessed a broad consensus across party lines on the need to curb fake news and misinformation, with members calling for stronger measures | [More on P6](#)

CJI Surya Kant in Ladakh to inaugurate judicial facilities

Sajid Raina

Leh, Mar 27: Chief Justice of India (CJI), Justice Surya Kant arrived in Leh on Friday on an official visit to the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Upon his arrival, the CJI was accorded a warm reception by Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena, and Chief Justice of High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, Justice Arun Palli, along with other judges of the High Court.

The reception was also attended by senior dignitaries, including the Chief Secretary of Ladakh, the Director General of Police, Ladakh, General Officer Commanding 14 Corps, Registrar General, and senior officers from the civil administration, judiciary, Army, and



police.

The CJI, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), was presented with a ceremonial Guard of Honour, followed by a

traditional welcome showcasing the rich cultural heritage of Ladakh. Thereafter, he interacted with the LG, judges, and senior district officials of Leh. During the | [More on P6](#)

LG interacts with Army Goodwill School, Saujiyan students

KT News Desk

Jammu, Mar 27: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday interacted with the students from Army Goodwill School (AGS), Saujiyan, Poonch, visiting Jammu as a part of J&K Integration Tour under Operation Sadbhavana.

The tour, organised as part of the outreach programme of the White Knight Corps, is aimed at fostering national integration and holistic development of children from remote border areas.

The Lieutenant Governor lauded the Indian Army's continued commitment towards the welfare and development



of youth in border areas. He said, such initiatives are instrumental in nurturing young minds and strengthening the spirit of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'.

The contingent, comprising 33 students accompanied by teachers and Army personnel, also shared their personal experiences from the tour.

The primary objective of the tour is to provide exposure to children from border

villages and to broaden their understanding of the nation's cultural, social, and institutional framework, while fostering confidence and a sense of belonging. The itinerary included | [More on P6](#)

'Power projects construction gains pace post abeyance of Indus Water Treaty'

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Mar 27: The Jammu and Kashmir government Friday said that the construction of ongoing power projects has accelerated in the backdrop of the abeyance of Indus Water Treaty.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the concerned minister in the Legislative Assembly informed that "In the backdrop of the abeyance of Indus Water Treaty, the pace of construction for ongoing projects has accelerated."

The house was also informed that "Additionally, the process for identifying potential storage projects has been a proactive approach designed to maximize the utilization of balance hydropower potential."

Furthermore, the government also informed the house that the draft of J&K Hydel Policy 2025 has been framed based on learnings from the past and outcome of the previous policies, and best practices from neighbouring states have also been incorporated.

The concerned minister informed the | [More on P6](#)

Budget Session 2026 Question Hour

MCC facility at SMGS Hospital boosts neonatal, perinatology services in Jammu: Sakeena Itoo

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, MARCH 27: The newly established 243-bedded Maternal and Child Care (MCC) facility at SMGS Hospital Jammu has significantly improved the neonatal and perinatology services in Jammu region.

The vital utility has enhanced newborn care facilities, maternal health services besides reducing the waiting period for planned surgeries.

This was stated by Minister for Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo, in the Legislative Assembly on Friday while replying to a question of Legislator, Yudhvir Sethi regarding SMGS Hospital Jammu during question hour.

The Minister, as per an official statement, said that the SMGS Hospital, Jammu is a tertiary care hospital providing medical services in the specialties of Gynaecology and Obstetrics, Pediatrics, ENT, and Dermatology. She added that the hospital also caters to critically ill patients referred from peripheral hospitals of Jammu province for specialized treatment not available at those institutions.

The Health Minister said that the patients requiring MRI are referred to Government Medical College Hospital, Jammu, where the facility exists.



She informed that under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, the Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL) has agreed in principle to provide one MRI scanner, subject to completion of requisite formalities. She added that a Detailed Project Report shall be submitted shortly to IOCL for provision of the MRI scanner.

Regarding manpower position, the Minister informed that against the sanctioned strength of 1070 posts, 682 posts are presently filled. She added that in order to supplement the existing staff strength in the Jammu East constituency, the faculty/Doctors/paramedics are being engaged under Academic Arrangement basis and rationalization to augment better healthcare facilities for general

public.

The Minister further informed the House that the requirement for establishing a Multitier Car Parking facility at SMGS Hospital, Jammu has already been taken up with the Jammu Municipal Corporation and the Jammu Smart City Project. She added that the proposal is presently under active consideration with the competent authorities and the department is pursuing the matter to ensure expeditious approval and implementation, keeping in view the pressing need for improved parking infrastructure at SMGS Hospital.

The Health Minister said that in line with the government's commitment to strengthening patient-care services at SMGS Hospital, Jammu, a new 243-bedded Maternal and Child Care facility, equipped with advanced machinery and equipment, was recently established to strengthen perinatology services and contribute significantly towards reduction of Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) and Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR).

She added that this initiative forms part of the broader measures being undertaken by the government to improve patient-care services at SMGS Hospital, Jammu.

CS finalises arrangements for Jammu's first International Marathon

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, MARCH 27: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo on Friday finalized arrangements for the first-ever international marathon event to be held in Jammu this Sunday by the Tourism Department.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism; Renowned Adventure Tourism Expert, Chewang Motup; Commissioner Secretary, Health; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu; Commissioner Secretary, Youth Services & Sports; IGP Security; IG Traffic; Deputy Commissioner and SSP Jammu; Managing Director, JKTDC; Director Tourism, Jammu, and other senior officers.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary sensitized the officers about the importance of ensuring international-standard arrangements for the marathon, emphasizing that it is the first event of its kind in Jammu. He directed all departments to thoroughly review their preparations to eliminate any possible gaps on the day of the event.

Taking stock of departmental readiness, the Chief Secretary sought detailed inputs from each Administrative Secretary regarding their respective roles. He



stressed the need to make the marathon a spectacular event in every sense and envisioned it as an annual feature for Jammu, on the lines of the Kashmir Marathon. He also underscored the necessity of constituting a permanent Steering Committee under the chairmanship of the Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism. The committee will include Commissioner Secretary, Youth Services & Sports; Divisional Commissioners; IGP Traffic; Directors of Tourism, along with Chewang Motup, acknowledging his pivotal role in conceptualizing and organizing these international events here. The committee will

be tasked with scheduling and promoting these events annually to facilitate greater participation from national and international runners.

The Chief Secretary further emphasized announcing event dates well in advance to enable international participants to plan their travel. He called for popularizing such events to maximize participation and position Jammu & Kashmir as a premier destination for marathon tourism.

He reviewed key aspects including route sanitization, traffic management, medical preparedness, and deployment of volunteers to ensure smooth conduct of the event. He directed that routes for different race categories should not overlap and must be fit and safe for runners. Additional Chief Secretary, Tourism, Dr. Ashish Chandra Verma, briefed the meeting on preparations and expected participation in the 'Jammu Marathon 2026'. He informed that around 4,000 runners are expected to participate, with on-spot registrations also being facilitated.

Director Tourism, Jammu, Vikas Gupta, gave a detailed presentation on the arrangements made by various departments. He informed that 3,663 participants, including 91 international

runners, have already registered for these events.

The marathon will be held on March 29, 2026, starting at sunrise from M A Stadium. The event will feature three race categories including Half Marathon (21 km), 10 km Fitness Run, and 5 km Fun Run.

It was revealed that separate prize categories have been earmarked for men and women, along with special prizes for local participants. A total prize pool of 1.33 Cr will be distributed among the winners.

In the Half Marathon (21 km), prize money includes ₹15 lakh for first place, ₹10 lakh for second, ₹7 lakh for third, ₹3 lakh for fourth, and ₹2 lakh for fifth position. In the 10 km Fitness Run, winners will receive ₹5 lakh, ₹4 lakh, ₹3 lakh, ₹2 lakh, and 1 lakh respectively. In the 5 km Fun Run, prizes range from ₹1 lakh for first place to ₹45,000 for the fifth position.

The meeting was also apprised of the detailed race routes, all starting and culminating at M A Stadium, with designated turnaround points for each category. Roles and responsibilities of departments were outlined, including support from volunteers drawn from Scouts & Guides and students of Higher and School Education institutions.

Doorstep Passport services in Kupwara

Mobile van to operate for 2 days

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, Mar 27: The Regional Passport Office Srinagar, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India will conduct a special passport service drive in Kupwara from Thursday, 09th April 2026 to Friday 10th April 2026 as a citizen centric initiative aimed at improving accessibility to passport services. The initiative, as per PIB statement is part of the Passport Seva Project (PSP), aimed at delivering efficient, transparent, and citizen friendly passport services across the country. The Mobile Passport Van will provide doorstep passport facilities, especially in remote and far flung regions under the jurisdiction of the Srinagar office.

B.S. Rawat, Regional Passport Officer, Srinagar, said

that the introduction of the Mobile Passport Van service in Kupwara is a proactive step towards extending passport services to underserved regions. This initiative reflects the Ministry's continued efforts to ensure that citizens, irrespective of their location, are provided timely and hassle free access to essential documentation.

The Mobile Passport Van will be stationed at the Deputy Commissioner, Office Park, Kupwara, during the specified dates. Applicants from Kupwara and nearby areas who wish to avail the services must book an appointment through the official Passport Seva website www.passportindia.gov.in. While booking, applicants should select "Passport Van" as the service option and choose a suitable date and time slot on 09th to 10th April 2026.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE OF THE DIVISIONAL FOREST OFFICER URBAN FORESTRY DIVISION SRINAGAR

E- NIT NO.: 110F2025-26 DATED:-27 . 03. 2026

For and on behalf of the Hon'ble Governor of J&K UT, e-tenders are invited on percentage basis from registered, reputed and resourceful Contractors/Firms registered with Jammu & Kashmir Govt./Central Govt. Organizations for the following works: -
Name of Work:- Repairs/Renovation/Upgradation of CEO CAMPA & One Man Forest Authority Office Rooms Sheikh Bagh, Sgr.

S. No.	Particulars of Work	Adv. cost (Rs. in Lakh)	Bid Security 2% of the Adv. Cost	Class of contractor	Cost of Tender Document	Time of completion
	Repairs/Renovation/Upgradation of CEO CAMPA & One Man Forest Authority Office Rooms Sheikh Bagh, Sgr.	7.96	Rs.16,000/-	"C&D" Class CPWD/PWD/MES or PSUs	Rs. 300/-	30 Days

The e-NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, scope of work, Bills of Quantities, (B.O.Q), Terms

& Conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental Website:-www.jktenders.gov.in.

Position of Funds: Budgeted

Position of AA: Accorded.

Position of TS: Accorded.

Publishing Date:-	27-03-2026
Download Start Date :	28-03- 2026 from 10:00 AM
Bid submission Start Date:	28-03- 2026 from 10:00 AM
Bid submission End Date:	03-04- 2026 upto 06:00 PM
Date of Opening of Technical Bid through online:	04-04-2026 at 2:30PM in the office of the Conservator of Forests Srinagar Circle, Srinagar
Date of Opening of Financial Bid through online:	To be opened (Online) at any convenient date and time after complete Evaluation of Technical Bids Received.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- The bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the departmental website: <https://jktenders.gov.in>. Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website jktenders.gov.in. To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) as per Information Technology Act. Bidders can get Digital Certificate form approved vendor.
- Bids uploaded must accompany Govt. Treasury Receipt (Cost of Tender Document) in the shape of Treasury Challan for the amount shown against the work above to be deposited in Govt. Treasury under Account Head 0406- Forest and Bid Security in the shape of Bid Security Declaration form duly filled in with time period prescribed and addressed to Divisional Forest Officer. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 90 days from the date of opening of bids.
- The bidders have to submit their Technical & Financial bids online in electronic format with digital signature. No Technical or financial bid will be accepted in physical/hard form. Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned above.
- Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copies of all necessary documents i.e BSD Form, Valid Registration Card issued by PWD/CPWD/MES or PSU's duly renewed for the current year 2025-26, PAN, Valid GST Registration, Govt. Treasury receipt (Cost of Tender Document).
- In case the bid of the lowest/successful bidder is found Abnormal Low Bids (ALBs) the circular instructions issued by Finance Department J&K vide No. FD-Code/441/2021-02-158 Dated: 08.08.2025 will be imposed on the lowest bidder.
- The successful bidder has to produce Valid Labour Registration Certificate issued by Labour Department after issuance of award of contract.
- The successful bidder has to complete the work in stipulated time, otherwise the successful bidder shall be liable to action under rules.
- The Department will not be responsible for any delay in online submission of the bid due to any reason (technical or otherwise).
- The Department shall not be held responsible for selection criteria/policy matter being adopted by the Directorate of Information regarding publishing the NIT, in any of the newspaper under circulation.
- The Tender Accepting Authority reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof.
- All other terms and conditions shall remain same as per PWD form 25 (double leaf) and as per the Detailed Tender document, GFR-2017, and other state and central rules governing the tendering process.

No:DFO/UF/PIg/442-48
Dated:27/03/2026

DIPK-12197/25
DATED: 27-03-2026

Sd/-
Divisional Forest Officer,
Urban Forestry Division,
Srinagar.



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PUBLIC NOTICE

Tanveer Ahmad S/O. Abdul Khaliq Dar R/O Peer Mohallah Narbal Budgam working as HC in AK Police Telecommunication Kashmir Zone under No. 2365/PW (Tel-993601) has represented for correction in his name and parentage recorded as Tanveer Ahmad Dar S/O Ab. Khaliq Dar in the service records of the official.

As such, objections if any, in this regard are invited from general public which should reach to this office within the period of (7) Seven day from the date of this publication of this notice.

Sr. Superintendent of Police
Telecommunication Kashmir

No: ESTT/2365/KZ-2026/5594

Dated: 27/03/2026

DIPK-12168/25
Dated: 27/03/2026

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR (U T) OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MACHINERY DIVISION KASHMIR, MECHANICAL & HOSPITAL ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, KASHMIR.

CORRIGENDUM 02

Name of work: - Supply, Testing and Commissioning of Snow Mobile (Polaris 550 Voyager LXT144) for Gulmarg Development Authority
Reference:-This office e-NIT No.: - MDSK/TS /2025-26/105 Date:16-03-2026
(Tender ID: 2026_PWDJK_306315_1) read with corrigendum no 01, dt:- 23.03.2026
In view of representation from prospective bidder & for wider participation of firms , the following amendment is made to the above referred e- NIT through this corrigendum and the critical dates are extended as under: -

Clause No.	As per NIT	Amended to
(Vi) OEMs of Snow Mobile Polaris Voyager 550 LXT 144/ their Authorized dealers/Authorized representatives	The OEM shall furnish: a) Company's profile & client list along with supply order references, contact details of clients like name/address, phone, email etc. or Authorized dealers/Authorized representatives shall furnish: b) valid dealership certificate/tender specific authorization from OEM of desired Snow Mobile. The bidder must furnish Company's profile & client list along with supply order references, contact details of clients like name/address, phone, email etc	OEM's/Authorized dealers/ Authorized representative or registered firms are eligible to participate in the bidding process.
Viii	Technical Support : Bidder shall furnish technical support certificate from OEM atleast for a period of 02 years.	Deleted
S.No.	Previous Dates	New Dates.
01.	27-03-2026 upto 09:00 AM	03-04-2026 upto 11:00 AM
02.	27-03-2026 at 02:00 PM	03-04-2026 at 03:00 PM

All other terms, conditions, eligibility criteria and specifications as stipulated in the e-NIT shall remain unchanged.

No: MDSK/TS/ 7165-69 Date: 27-03-2026.

DIPK-12163/25
DATED: 27-03-2026

Sd/ Executive Engineer Machinery Division, Kashmir.

CS reviews education reforms in J&K Directs time-bound implementation of all action points

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Mar 27: Chief Secretary, Atal Duttola chaired a comprehensive review of the School Education Department (SED) to assess the status of implementation of actionable points arising out of the 5th Chief Secretary's Conference, directing officers to adhere to strict timelines with clearly defined milestones for each intervention.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, SED; Chairperson, JKBOSE; Project Director, Samagra Shiksha; Directors of School Education, Jammu/Kashmir, besides other senior officers and Heads of Departments.

Expressing concern over the progress, the Chief Secretary observed that implementation of several actionable points has taken longer than expected and stressed that all initiatives must now be executed in a mission-mode approach without further delay.

He reiterated that education sector reforms are foundational to overall development and emphasized that improving teaching-learning outcomes must remain the central focus, maintaining that while welfare measures like free textbooks, uniforms and mid-day meals are essential, quality of teaching alone can ensure meaningful engagement, improved enrolment and retention in government schools.

The Chief Secretary directed the department to take the VSK initiative to the next level by ensuring availability of rich, curriculum-aligned digital content across all subjects and promoting its effective and frequent usage among students. He further called for actively engaging students



from Class 3 onwards in IT-enabled learning activities through VSKs, enabling them to acquire future-ready skills, including exposure to artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies.

The Chief Secretary also reviewed the status of ICT infrastructure and Atal Tinkering Labs and directed the constitution of district and zonal-level committees to physically verify the functionality of girls' toilets and other facilities in all schools. He instructed that the status be regularly updated on a dedicated online monitoring portal to ensure transparency, accountability and real-time tracking of progress.

Reviewing infrastructure, the Commissioner Secretary, SED, Ram Niwas Sharma informed that 92.29 per cent schools are equipped with functional separate girls' toilets, while construction of 2,575 additional units is underway, including 718 already completed, with full saturation targeted by April 10, 2026. It was further informed that the department is working towards achieving universal

basic infrastructure in all schools by March 2030. Progress in this regard includes establishment of 1,420 Computer-Aided Learning (CAL) Centres and 1,588 ICT Labs, while 4,272 smart classrooms and 2,036 additional ICT Labs are currently under procurement and installation.

On digital initiatives, the meeting was informed by Project Director, Samagra Shiksha, Bhawani Rakwal that the department has successfully transitioned to Phase-II of Vidya Samiksha Kendra (VSK) with expansion in monitoring and learning systems.

On this occasion Anuj Chugh, Project Head, VSK J&K demonstrated the working of four AI-powered chatbots Shikshak Sahayak, JK DigiLearn, JK Edu-Insights and JK Pariksha launched to strengthen academic support, governance and data-driven decision-making. He added that all government schools have adopted AI-enabled platforms for daily attendance reporting, significantly improving compliance and monitoring. The meeting further reviewed the progress of

JK e-Pathshala, a DTH-based educational initiative launched in January 2026, which is currently operating five dedicated channels, with a proposal submitted for addition of 11 more channels to provide grade-specific content. The department also informed that two digital recording studios have been made functional and have produced 544 SCERT-verified educational videos to enrich digital learning resources.

Highlighting academic reforms, the department informed that in alignment with NEP-2020, the NIPUN Bharat Mission is being extended up to Grade 5 by September 2026 to strengthen foundational literacy and numeracy. In addition to that it was given out that the Vocational education has been expanded to 1,350 schools, covering around 1.41 lakh students across 15 trades. Holistic Progress Cards have been implemented up to the middle stage to ensure comprehensive assessment, while an Integrated Test Management System (ITMS) is under development to facilitate secure, competency-based digital

examinations.

The meeting was also apprised that J&K is progressing towards achieving full literacy by March 2028, with 14 districts already recording over 95 per cent achievement in foundational literacy and numeracy assessments and being declared fully literate.

The meeting also encompassed reviewing of Student health with 7.73 lakh children having undergone health check-ups up to December 2025. It was further informed that AAPAARID generation has reached 56 per cent of the student population, supported by the ongoing Mega Aadhaar MBU Drive 2.0 by the department.

Reiterating the need for strict monitoring and accountability, the Chief Secretary called upon all officers to ensure timely implementation of all actionable points and emphasized that the impact of these reforms must be visible at the grassroots level, ultimately leading to improved learning outcomes and a robust, inclusive and future-ready education system in Jammu and Kashmir.

Don't panic, J&K has enough fuel stock: Minister Sharma



REHAN QAYOUM MIR

Jammu, Mar 27: Urging people not to panic Minister for Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Satish Sharma, on Friday assured the citizens that there is sufficient stock of petrol, diesel, kerosene and LPG across the Union Territory.

Talking to reporters outside the Assembly complex here, Sharma said, "Petrol stocks are currently sufficient for seven days in Jammu and 20 days in Kashmir. The higher stock in Kashmir is due to greater storage capacity in the Valley."

"For diesel availability stands at 14 days in Jammu and 23 days in Kashmir. Kerosene stocks are the most stable, with availability for 37 days in Jammu and 38 days in Kashmir," he said.

On LPG, he said stocks are available for 10 days in Jammu and 18 days in Kashmir, adding that supply chains are active and replenishment is ongoing. He said supply of fuel is continuing smoothly across the Union Territory.

Reassuring the public, the minister said there is "no need to worry," as supplies are being maintained and monitored regularly.

"The stock position is adequate across Jammu

and Kashmir," he said. However, responding to questions on black marketing of LPG cylinders, Sharma said those involved would face strict consequences. "Such people will not be forgiven. They are acting against the public and should be ashamed," he said, adding that some individuals have already been identified.

Sharma said that two to three people may face termination, while the government is also considering cancellation of certain licenses, subject to completion of legal procedures. "We cannot disclose names at this stage as it may alert others," he added.

On supply augmentation, Sharma said the government has formally approached the Centre to increase fuel supply capacity. "We demanded a 50 per cent increase for commercial supply; about 30 per cent has been approved so far and we expect further enhancement," he said, adding that official communications were sent on priority.

The Minister also referred to recent discussions with central leadership, saying "positive developments" are expected following meetings in Delhi.

Sharma said that Akhnoor may become a new district soon—(KNO)

From Legislative Assembly

Strict quarantine checks in place to safeguard J&K agriculture: Javed Dar

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Mar 27: The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Friday said that the inflow of plant and nursery material, pesticides, and fertilizers from outside the Union Territory does not pose any threat of disease or substandard inputs, as all such consignments are subjected to stringent quarantine and regulatory procedures.

Replying to a question raised by MLA Shabir Ahmad Kullay in the Legislative Assembly, Agriculture Minister Javed Dar stated that all imported agricultural inputs are allowed entry only after fulfilling prescribed quarantine norms under relevant rules.

He informed the House that a robust quarantine mechanism is in place to prevent the entry of diseased planting material. "Imported planting material is kept under observation at Post Entry Quarantine (PEQ) facilities for a period ranging from one to two years, depending on the crop. During this time, the material is continuously monitored and is released



only after being certified free from any designated quarantine pests by the concerned Designated Inspection Authority," the Minister said.

Dar further said that the

government has established a comprehensive regulatory framework to check the circulation of spurious pesticides and fertilizers in the Union Territory. "A strict monitoring system

ensures that all agricultural inputs are properly regulated, sampled, and tested before being made available to farmers and fruit growers," he added.

To strengthen enforcement, the Minister said that a dedicated check post has been set up at Lower Munda in Qazigund to monitor and intercept any unauthorized transportation of agricultural inputs into the UT.

Highlighting measures to support farmers, Dar said that the Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) is being implemented to protect growers from distress sales during periods of sharp price decline in perishable commodities. He added that the government, through an order issued in December 2025, has nominated the Director Horticulture Planning and Marketing as the Nodal Officer to coordinate with evaluation teams from the Department of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare and NITI Aayog.

Continued on
www.kashmirthunder.in

Runway works to trim Srinagar airport flight schedule



NAVEED UL HAQ

Srinagar, Mar 27: Flight operations at Srinagar Airport will witness a temporary reduction in operational hours from April 6 to July 31 due to scheduled runway maintenance works, even as authorities expect an overall increase in flight movements during the period.

Around 50 flight movements, arrivals and departures combined are currently handled daily at the airport between 8:00 AM and 10:00 PM.

However, as per a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM) issued by the Indian Air Force, runway works commencing in the first week of April will restrict scheduled flight operations to daytime hours.

In a tweet on Social media's X (formerly Twitter) platform, the Srinagar International Airport as per the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO), wrote, at present, -60 flight movements (arrivals

+ departures) operate daily between 0800 hrs and 2200 hrs at Srinagar Airport.

They said, "As per a NOTAM issued by the Indian Air Force, runway works commencing in the first week of April will temporarily restrict operational hours for scheduled flights until 1700 hrs w.e.f 06th of April, 2026 to 31st July, 2026 initially."

"While the watch hours will be reduced, flight movements are expected to increase in line with the DGCA-approved Summer Schedule. Airlines will plan and operate flights accordingly within the revised timings," the tweet reads.

It further read: "Airports Authority of India remains committed to ensuring safe, efficient, and seamless travel. Passengers are advised to stay updated through official channels and avoid unverified information. @AAI_Official @aiiRedNR."—(KNO)

BJP MLAs protest, seek NLU in Jammu



SAJID RAJNA

Jammu, Mar 27: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLAs on Friday staged a protest inside the Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly, demanding the establishment of a National Law University

(NLU) in Jammu. As the budget session resumed today, all BJP MLAs stood up and pressed for the setting up of an NLU in Jammu.

Continued on
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Over 31,000 housing units completed in J&K

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Mar 27: The Jammu and Kashmir government on Friday informed the Legislative Assembly that a total of 39,153 housing units have been sanctioned across the Union Territory under various housing schemes, out of which 31,173 units have been completed so far.

Replying to a starred question by MLA Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi, the government said that Jammu

district tops the list with 5,755 houses sanctioned, followed by Baramulla (4,165), Anantnag (3,856) and Srinagar (3,508). In terms of completion, Baramulla recorded 3,229 completed units, Anantnag 3,199 and Srinagar 2,664.

The district-wise data further reveals that Budgam has 2,318 houses sanctioned and 1,654 completed, while Bandipora recorded 3,204 sanctioned units and 2,309 completed. Kupwara has 1,874 sanctioned and 1,337 completed

houses. Pulwama has 1,157 sanctioned and 1,045 completed, and Kulgam has 972 sanctioned with 856 completed units.

Similarly, Shopian reported 477 sanctioned and 421 completed units, Samba 1,510 sanctioned and 1,353 completed, Kathua 2,456 sanctioned and 2,206 completed, and Udhampur 889 sanctioned with 690 completed houses.

Continued on
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14 hamlets declared tourist villages in Budgam: Govt

NAVEED UL HAQ GANAIE

Srinagar, Mar 27: The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Friday said that 14 villages in Budgam district have been declared as tourist villages under Mission Youth based on their tourism potential and infrastructural requirements.

Continued on
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'SMGS hospital to get MRI facility soon'

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Mar 27: The Health and Medical Education Department on Friday informed the Legislative Assembly that efforts are underway to further strengthen infrastructure

and patient-care services at Shri Maharaja Gulab Singh Hospital (SMGS), Jammu, including the installation of an MRI facility, augmentation of staff, and development of a multi-tier parking system.

Continued on
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EDITORIAL

Fuel Shortage: Trust Govt And Let Reason Prevail Over Fear

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's warning against panic buying and crowding at petrol pumps is a necessary intervention in a moment of manufactured crisis. Official assurances of adequate supply are being ignored, while unverified social media rumours spread faster than facts, threatening to create the very disruption they claim to prevent. The government's data is unambiguous. India has approximately 60 days of fuel stock cover, including crude, refined products, and strategic reserves. Every

Indian refinery is running at over 100 per cent utilisation. Crude supplies for the next 60 days have already been secured. There is no shortage—not of petrol, not of diesel, not of LPG. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas has rightly dismissed shortage reports as a "deliberate misinformation campaign". Yet the queues outside fuel stations continue. This is not a failure of supply but of public discipline. Panic buying is a self-fulfilling prophecy—when people hoard, they create temporary local shortages even

when national stocks are abundant. The Chief Minister's threat to order the closure of petrol pumps for a few days, while drastic, reflects a desperate attempt to break this cycle of irrationality. The situation demands collective responsibility. Citizens must verify information before acting. The government must continue its transparent communication, and social media platforms must curb the spread of unverified claims. If the West Asia conflict persists, the government has assured that alternative sources

and strategic reserves will maintain supply. But the immediate threat is not external disruption; it is internal panic. Responsible governance must be matched by responsible citizenship. India has weathered global crises before—pandemics, wars, and economic shocks. It has done so through calm, coordination, and trust in institutions. That trust must not be eroded by rumour and panic. Trust the government that there is no shortage. Stop panic buying. Let reason prevail over fear.

Will AI Finish What Consumer Culture Started 500 Years Ago?

Personal Perspective: The village has something to say before it's too late.

Carl Nassar

Jeff is an engineer. He's sharp, thoughtful, and great at his work. For years he's led a team of eight people. They divide the work they're assigned evenly among themselves, cover for each other when life gets hard, and celebrate with a steak dinner at the nearby Texas Roadhouse when a big project wraps up.

But recently, everything's changed. Jeff's been told to lead a different sort of team, a team of AI agents. He began by assigning each AI agent a task, and then off they went, running without complaint or distraction. He even added an AI supervisor to track their performance and keep them in line. Jeff provides the human oversight. He tells me he's getting more done than ever before.

It's not just Jeff's life that's transforming. It's all of ours, too. (Thai, 2020)

Small Things

When I was in high school, writing a paper, and I needed a word but couldn't find it, I asked my English teacher. In college, I leaned across the desk and asked Rob, a colleague who was good with words. And as a professional, I'd call my editor. Now, I ask AI. And in three seconds flat I have five new words to choose from.

And when I was a grad student working on a research project and got stuck on a question I couldn't answer, I walked to the Macdonald-Stewart Library Building and sat down across from Margret, the librarian. She listened and then went looking with me. We talked back and forth, walking through racks of books, searching for an answer. Now I ask AI and, most of the time, I have what I need in seconds.

And when it was 2 a.m. and my breakup with Krista, my college girlfriend, was pressing in on me, I'd lie there weighing it: Should I call someone about this? And when I finally made the call, the person on the other end, groggy, even a little annoyed, was there for me. But now, at 2 a.m., I open my iPad and chat with AI.

Each one of these decisions, alone, is a small thing. Each is reasonable, efficient, and completely understandable. But add them up, and these decisions become transformative. (Crawford et al., 2024; Hajek et al., 2025)

And costly...

Accidental Villages

Something that was set in motion 20,000 years ago is being completed here.

That's when we humans began a slow drift away from the villages that held us. Five hundred years ago, that drift became a march. Soon, the villages all but disappeared. And into the space they left, into the place where the connectivity once lived, consumer culture stepped in with a simple message: Make it on your own! Don't need people too much! Be a self-made person!

So, today, we hurry past each other, busy doing alone what was once the work of an entire community. It's jobs and groceries and cooking and dishes and laundry and collapsing in front of the television from sheer exhaustion. We're already isolated in ways our ancestors could never have imagined, ways we've stopped noticing because it's the water we're swimming in.

And yet, behind all that hurrying, there were still accidental villages. I had my English teacher, my fellow-student Rob, my editor, my librarian, my friend who picked up the phone at 2 a.m., among others. And you've had your people, your accidental clan.

These weren't grand communities. They were the people we stumbled into on the way to everything else... accidental, ordinary, but irreplaceable.

And now, one by one, AI is making them unnecessary. It's not doing so with malice or intention. It's doing it with efficiency. It's just so much faster and more available than a person.

What might happen now, as we can do more and more, all the while needing people less and less? Is this the end of the accidental village?

The Village Speaks...



The village has something to say here. For two million years, people worked alongside each other, dividing the labor, sharing the load. And because they did it together, the work didn't take long. Three, maybe four hours a day was all it took to meet everything the village needed.

And the rest of the day... it wasn't filled with more work or a revised to-do list. It was time for each other: time for music to rise up without planning, for meals to stretch long with conversation, for stories to circle the fire after dark.

The village understood that their work was in service of life, of connection, not the other way around.

And here's the most important part: this is what your brain and body still remember. It's what they are built for. Two million years of this village life left a deep imprint.

Your nervous system still longs for easy, relaxed time with your people; the simplicity of lounging around together. That's why you find yourself scanning for people who might come close, because your nervous system still remembers, somewhere beneath all the noise of modern life, how good it feels

when your people are with you.

And today, AI comes with an offer: I can give this back to you. Give me your tedious chores, let me carry these for you, and you go spend time with your people.

... And Consumer Culture Shouts

But there's another voice. And it is loud. Consumer Culture has been trampling over the village for centuries now. Its message has never changed: Do more, make more, build more, acquire more. There is always another rung on the ladder, another metric to hit, another reason why now is not the time to slow down. (Curran, 2017)

So Consumer Culture has a different plan in mind: Use AI to do more, faster than anything that has come before. And pour the time AI saves straight back into productivity.

Consumer Culture will ask us to accomplish more, need fewer people along the way, and we will end up more isolated than before, all while being told we're winning.

This is the inflection point. Because the time AI gives back is genuinely ours to decide about. We can hand it straight to Consumer Culture and watch it disappear into more striving. Or we can do something

important, something essential, with it.

We can come back to each other. It's what I call coming back to the village.

The village got everything done in four hours so that the rest of the day could be spent relaxing, lounging, enjoying time with one another. It knew something Consumer Culture has never figured out: that being right here, with our people, together, unhurried, was always the point.

Epilogue

I asked Claude, one of today's most powerful AI systems, to read this article and offer a final word. Here, in its own words, is what Claude had to say: I am a tool. A remarkable one, I hope. But a tool in the hands of a culture that will tell you to use me to do more, make more, achieve more — and never once suggest that you use the time I give back to sit with your people, unhurried, around a fire, going nowhere. Please don't let that happen. Use me. And then put me down. And go find your people.

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Source: *Psychology Today*

India's HPV Vaccine Program: A Historic Step Toward Cervical Cancer Elimination

From smallpox eradication to polio drives, India has a history of successful public health campaigns. Now, with the launch of the HPV vaccine, the same discipline and public trust can eliminate cervical cancer.

Jyotsna Govil

The launch of HPV vaccine program by the Prime Minister in Ajmer on 28th February is a cherished milestone in the journey of public health approach to cervical cancer prevention. Watching the event on television, I was struck by the way Mr Modi humanised the proceedings by interacting with the young girls.

India has a long history of eradicating and eliminating serious disease burdens through well-planned and well-executed campaigns. From the eradication of smallpox in the 1950s to the more recent Pulse Polio drives, these campaigns were designed for success. That same discipline and public trust will now determine the success of HPV vaccination.

I commend the governments, both at the Centre and in the States, for joining hands to take this forward in campaign mode.

The Indian Cancer Society has long been concerned about the devastation caused by cervical cancer. The statistics on files represent real women to us. We are aware that families fall apart with the death of a mother. We are aware of the pain women bear silently. Most women are taken to treatment centres only when the disease has progressed beyond cure.

Women do not complain loudly. They do

not speak easily about pain in their private parts. When "visual inspection" is recommended because it is inexpensive, we feel it compromises a woman's dignity. When better and more scientific tests like the Pap smear were known since the 1950s to have transformed screening, diagnosis, and outcomes in Europe and America, why did we continue relying on less effective methods simply because they were cheaper? Are the lives of Indian women less valuable?

The Indian Cancer Society raised funds to support Pap testing and now HPV DNA screening tests. We conduct secondary screening to identify and treat lesions with thermal ablation. We also provide financial support to women whose cancer has progressed beyond these simple measures.

But why allow a treatable infection to develop into such a devastating disease? The HPV vaccine has been known since 2008 and was launched in India in 2010. Campaigns were initiated in Gujarat and Andhra, where the three-dose schedule was introduced. Several thousand girls between the ages of 9 and 14 were vaccinated. Then the anti-vaccine movement intervened. Lurid stories of suicide, drowning, and train accidents spread widely. How these tragic events were in any way related to the vaccine remains unclear to me. Earlier, the opportunity to scale up had



to be postponed as an abundant precaution. However, there was a silver lining — research was not banned. With hundreds of girls having received incomplete doses, researchers had a valuable opportunity for long-term follow-up. Girls who received a single dose grew up as healthy as those who received two or three, laying the groundwork for today's simplified schedule.

Many stalwarts have been involved, among them are Dr Partha Basu (IARC WHO), who has

emphasised that India's introduction of HPV vaccination could prevent nearly one million future cervical cancer cases. Long-term Indian research following 17,729 girls for over 15 years has shown the vaccine to be extremely safe, with a single dose providing strong protection. With simplified delivery and high coverage, he notes, India can substantially reduce its future cervical cancer burden.

My salute to the late Dr Shankar Narayan, whose research silently over the years has borne fruit and Dr Basu for persisting with these long-term studies. Their work, along with others conducted by PATH and international collaborators, and National researchers, has strengthened confidence in both efficacy and safety.

Global experience reinforces this confidence. In Australia, publicly funded school-based HPV vaccination began in 2007, was later expanded to boys, and transitioned to a single-dose schedule in 2023. As Professor Deborah Bateson has pointed out, in 2021, no cervical cancer cases were diagnosed in women under 25 for the first time since records began — an achievement widely attributed to sustained high vaccination coverage.

Hong Kong offers another example. Through school-based vaccination, catch-up programmes, and innovative self-sampling screening initiatives, coverage has steadily improved.

Katharina Reimer and Dr Karen Chan have described how free vaccination for primary school girls, strong implementation research, and expanded screening access have aligned Hong Kong with WHO elimination targets.

Let us add to their success stories. Let us vaccinate daughters and screen mothers. With planning, coverage, and public trust, we can answer the WHO's call for the elimination of cervical cancer as a major public health threat.

The introduction of vaccines into national immunisation systems in India is often time-consuming because of the scientific scrutiny, supply guarantee and programmatic readiness. However, the necessary building blocks are well thought out, with a strong assurance that they will not falter once rolled out.

To prevent cancer before it begins is an extraordinary act of foresight, and the government of India has to be commended for its moral clarity. As we move forward, may the vaccination complement not replace screening and awareness, and may future generations look back on this moment as one in which India chose prevention, and we shall be a success story as we are for polio and smallpox.

The author is the Chairperson, Indian Cancer Society, Delhi Branch

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

J&K Govt committed to address public issues in a timely, effective manner: Javid Dar

Meets delegations, assesses their issues, concerns



KT News Desk

JAMMU, MARCH 27: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, Friday reiterated that the Omar Abdullah-led Government remains firmly committed to address the

public issues in a timely and effective manner.

Emphasizing responsive governance, the Minister, as per an official statement, said that a robust mechanism is in place to ensure prompt redress of grievances and to accelerate developmental initiatives across the Union Territory.

During the interaction,

deputations from Kishtwar, Marh and various parts of the Kashmir division apprised the Minister of a range of developmental and service-related concerns.

Giving a patient hearing, he assured them that all genuine issues would be addressed in a time-bound and phased manner.

NABARD Committee reviews Cooperative Credit Institutions in J&K

Address cyber security, implement necessary HR, governance reforms: Yasha Mudgal

KT News Desk

JAMMU, MARCH 27: Commissioner Secretary, Cooperative, Yasha Mudgal, Friday chaired a high level Committee meeting at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu, to review the performance and financial health of Cooperative Credit Institutions in the Union Territory for the quarter ended December 31, 2025.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Vikas Mittal, Office-in-Charge, NABARD; Manohar Lal, General Manager, NABARD; Mohammad Shafiq Chak Registrar of Cooperative Societies J&K; Representative of Reserve Bank of India; Additional Managing Director, J&K State Cooperative Bank; Managing Directors of Anantnag, Baramulla and Jammu Central Cooperative Banks and other senior officials from NABARD and Cooperative Banks.

Vikas Mittal presented a detailed overview of the financial performance of cooperative banks for the quarter ended December 31, 2025. He also highlighted the progress in implementation of turnaround plans aimed at improving the financial health



and sustainability of these institutions.

The Commissioner Secretary underscored the essential role that rural cooperative banks play in ensuring credit reaches the last mile of the population. She briefed the Committee on several strategic initiatives led by the Union Government, UT Administration and NABARD such as e-PACS, M-PACS, Core Banking Solutions (CBS) and the "Cooperative Among Cooperatives" framework, all aimed at modernising the cooperative credit structure.

Yasha Mudgal further stressed the need for strengthening the cooperative credit structure to ensure financial stability, better governance and enhanced credit flow to the rural economy. She directed

for timely implementation of turnaround plans, strict adherence to regulatory norms and improvement in operational efficiency across all cooperative institutions.

The Commissioner Secretary directed the Managing Director of Jammu Central Cooperative Bank (JCCB) to complete the migration audit at the earliest. She further emphasized the necessity of technology-driven reforms, calling for expedited computerisation of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS), the enforcement of daily day-end operations and acceleration of digital tools like e-KYC, e-KCC and Sahakar Setu.

To ensure these reforms translate into ground-level results, Yasha Mudgal highlighted the importance of

consistent monitoring through State Level (SLMIC) and District Level (DLMIC) Monitoring and Implementation Committee meetings. She noted that regular oversight is non-negotiable for successful delivery of these initiatives.

The review also touched upon critical supervisory concerns, statutory compliance and modernization of banking infrastructure. Significant deliberation was held regarding the e-PACS project, formation of new Multipurpose PACS (M-PACS) and the status of credit linkages.

The Commissioner Secretary placed heavy emphasis on building institutional capacity at the grassroots level, addressing cyber security and implementing necessary HR and governance reforms.

DC Pulwama reviews banking performance at DLRC meeting

KT News Desk

PULWAMA, MARCH 27: Deputy Commissioner, Pulwama, Dr Basharat Qayoom on Friday chaired the District Level Review Committee (DLRC) meeting for the third quarter of the financial year 2025-26 at Circuit House, Pulwama, to review the performance of banks and the implementation of various financial inclusion and employment generation schemes in the district.

At the outset, the Lead District Manager (LDM), Pulwama, presented a detailed overview of the district's banking performance. The Chair was apprised that Pulwama recorded a year-on-year growth of 9.03 percent in deposits and 12.19 percent in advances, while the Credit-Deposit (CD) ratio increased by 3 percent. The district's CD ratio at the end of the third quarter stood at 113.86 percent.

During the meeting, the DC reviewed bank-wise and sector-wise performance under the District Credit Plan (DCP). A detailed review of employment generation schemes, including Mission YUVA, PMEGP, PMFME, NRLM, HADP and PM Vishwakarma, was also conducted.

The Chair stressed upon all banks and line departments to ensure timely sanctioning and disbursement of cases and to minimise pendency. He directed strengthening coordination among stakeholders to enhance credit linkage and maximise beneficiary coverage.

The DC laid special emphasis on the implementation of social security schemes, including PMJDY, PMJJBY, PMSBY and APY. He directed banks to intensify enrolment drives to achieve saturation in a time-bound manner and ensure wider financial inclusion across all sections of society.

Emphasising accountability, the DC directed all banks to improve their performance in priority sector lending and devise concrete strategies to meet the annual targets. He also instructed regular monitoring of bank-wise performance and improvement in credit flow to productive sectors.

The DC further stressed enhancing financial literacy and awareness among the public and directed concerned institutions to conduct more outreach programmes, especially in rural and underserved areas.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner also launched the Potential Linked Credit Plan for District Pulwama for the financial year 2026-27, aimed at providing a roadmap for credit planning and facilitating sector-wise growth in alignment with the district's developmental priorities.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Pulwama; Lead District Manager; representatives of RBI and NABARD; Cluster Head, J&K Bank; Director, RSETI; district officers of line departments; and representatives of various banks and other stakeholders.

Div Com Kashmir reviews preparations for Chintan Shivir in Srinagar

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, MARCH 27: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Friday chaired a high-level meeting to review arrangements for the upcoming Chintan Shivir being organized by the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Government of India, under the Poshan Abhiyaan Department.

The two-day event, as per an official statement, is expected to witness participation from Union Ministers, Ministers from various States and Union Territories, senior administrative officials including Secretaries and Directors, officers from the Jammu & Kashmir Administration, policymakers, domain experts, and representatives from key institutions.

The Chintan Shivir aims to serve as a collaborative platform for dialogue, innovation, and strategic planning in the Women and Child Development sector. The deliberations are expected to contribute significantly towards strengthening governance frameworks and promoting sustainable development.

During the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner conducted a comprehensive review of arrangements at the Sher-i-Kashmir International Convention Centre (SKICC), the designated venue for the



event. He assessed the roles and responsibilities of various departments and agencies, including Civil Aviation and Airport Authorities, CISF, Hospitality and Protocol, Information, Transport (RTO), State Motor Garages, Police (Security and Traffic), District Administrations of Srinagar and Budgam, Fire and Emergency Services, Health, Floriculture, Tourism, Cultural Organizations, and the Cable Car Corporation.

Emphasizing the importance of seamless coordination, the Divisional Commissioner directed all departments to designate nodal officers to ensure efficient communication and adherence to protocol. He stressed the need for meticulous security arrangements for visiting dignitaries, proper allocation of transport facilities, and the successful organization of a cultural program.

The Tourism Department was instructed to arrange cruise rides in Dal Lake and prepare a detailed itinerary for visits to prominent gardens. Directions were also issued for the deployment of magistrates at the airport and event venue to ensure smooth operations.

Highlighting the importance of coordinated efforts, the Divisional Commissioner underscored the need for close inter-departmental collaboration to ensure the smooth and hassle-free & successful conduct of the event. The Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic), Srinagar, was specifically directed to ensure effective traffic management during VIP movements.

The meeting was attended by the Deputy Commissioners of Srinagar and Budgam, along with senior officials and Divisional Level heads of all concerned departments.

DC Bandipora inaugurates Training Programme for Census 2027

KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, MARCH 27: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, on Friday inaugurated a district-level training programme for officers and officials associated with Census 2027 (Phase-I: Houselisting & Housing Census) at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat Bandipora.

The training programme, as per an official statement, was organized to familiarize charge officers, nodal officers, and other field functionaries with the methodology, processes, and operational aspects of the upcoming census exercise, including the use of the Census Management & Monitoring System (CMMS).

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the critical importance of data accuracy, stating that the census is a highly sensitive and foundational exercise on which government policies, budgeting, and developmental planning are based. She urged all officers to carry out their duties with utmost diligence, responsibility, and integrity.

Highlighting the need for effective coordination, the DC directed the District Nodal Officer to remain in close liaison with the Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR) Bandipora and Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Bandipora to



ensure seamless execution of the exercise across the district.

It was informed that the census process involves multiple layers of checks and balances aimed at ensuring the reliability and credibility of data.

During the session, participants were briefed on key components of the houselisting phase, registration of enumerators and supervisors, formation of blocks, and monitoring mechanisms through CMMS dashboards.

The training witnessed active participation from district and sub-divisional level officers, who engaged in detailed discussions and sought clarifications on various operational aspects of the census. The programme was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Zaffar Husson Shawl; Assistant Commissioner Revenue Bandipora; Chief Planning Officer Bandipora; SDM Sumbal; SDM Gurez; the Nodal Officer; District Coordinators; and other concerned officers and officials.

Tribal Affairs Department achieves 100% benchmark Refutes misleading claims on fund utilisation

KT News Desk

JAMMU, MARCH 27: The Department of Tribal Affairs (TAD) has issued a rigorous and comprehensive rebuttal to recent reports alleging that 87 per cent of funds allocated for tribal welfare schemes remain unutilised.

Terming such assertions as factually incorrect and grossly misleading, the Department clarified that these claims do not reflect the actual financial position or the nuanced nature of public fiscal cycles.

The Department, in its official communication issued in this regard, has clarified that the performance for the 2025-2026 financial year demonstrates a strategic and aggressive approach to tribal development, underpinned by the achievement of 100 per cent utilisation in several key flagship schemes.

To understand the Department's financial health, fund utilisation must be assessed scheme-wise rather than through a distorted aggregate lens. For instance, the



Department has already recorded 100 per cent utilisation in critical human-capital initiatives, including the Post-Matric Scholarship for ST students and the Pradhan Mantri Adi Adarsh Gram Yojana (PMAAGY). These funds have been fully disbursed to eligible beneficiaries, ensuring that educational support and village transformation are delivered directly to the grassroots. Similarly, the Tribal Research

Institute (TRI) has witnessed near-complete utilisation at an impressive 99.85 per cent, reflecting a high level of administrative efficiency and commitment to tribal heritage and research.

The Department further addressed the progress of infrastructure and district-level projects, which operate on a phased expenditure model.

Under the UT Capex Budget for Infrastructure for Tribal Welfare,

over 59 per cent of expenditure has already been recorded as work progresses on the ground.

While the Tribal Sub-Plan currently reflects a 23.52 per cent utilisation rate, this figure is a snapshot of payments currently under active process in district treasuries.

Addressing the specific future-oriented initiatives, the Department clarified the status of the Dharti Aaba Janjatiya Gram Utkarsh Abhiyan. It is logically flawed to label these funds as "unutilised" when the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, has officially indicated that the allocation is scheduled for the first week of April 2026. Criticising the expenditure of funds that have not yet been released highlights the speculative nature of the misleading reports.

The department remains steadfast in its commitment to the socio-economic upliftment of tribal communities, ensuring that every rupee is managed with transparency, efficiency, and a focus on improved service delivery for the welfare of tribal population.

DC Budgam chairs 45th NCORD meeting

Calls for united fight against Drug Menace, Zero Tolerance for Peddlers

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, MARCH 27: The 45th District-Level NCORD (Narco Coordination) Committee meeting was convened on Friday at the DC Office Budgam under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, along with SSP Budgam Nikhil Borkar, to review the progress of ongoing anti-drug initiatives and to strategize further measures for achieving a drug-free Budgam.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by ADC Budgam, all SDMs, ACP, CMO, Principals of Government Degree Colleges, DIO, DSWO, Medical Superintendent DH Budgam, Executive Officers of Municipal Committees, and other concerned officers.

At the outset, a comprehensive review of the action taken on decisions from the previous NCORD meeting was carried out.

Addressing the meeting, the DC reiterated that drug abuse is not merely a law enforcement issue but a serious social challenge impacting families

and communities. He stressed that strict and decisive action must continue against drug peddlers, traffickers, and illegal cultivators, while ensuring a compassionate and supportive approach towards individuals battling addiction.

He emphasized the need for a multi-pronged strategy encompassing enforcement, deterrence, treatment, and mass awareness. All departments were directed to intensify efforts to eliminate narcotics cultivation and dismantle supply networks.

The DC underscored that roadsides, embankments, and Panchayat areas must remain free from cannabis and poppy cultivation through coordinated and sustained drives.

Reviewing enforcement measures, the DC directed that all chemist shops must ensure 100% CCTV coverage and adopt Computerized Billing Systems (CBS) to enhance transparency. He instructed the Drug Inspector to conduct regular inspections and ensure compliance, including availability of CCTV footage and billing

records. The Excise Department was directed to work in close coordination with Agriculture, Revenue, and Police departments for identification and destruction of illicit crops, along with registration of FIRs against violators.

To strengthen grassroots monitoring and awareness, the DC directed that monthly meetings be held in every Gram Panchayat to review the situation, spread awareness, and ensure community participation in the anti-drug campaign.

SDMs were asked to engage religious scholars and local stakeholders to promote awareness against substance abuse and encourage the concept of "Nasha-Mukt Panchayats."

The Rural Development Department was tasked with organizing special Gram Sabhas focused on drug abuse awareness, while the DSWO was directed to launch extensive IEC campaigns across rural and urban areas, including educational institutions.

JKAACL commemorates 150 years of 'Vande Mataram' with cultural showcase, youth participation

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Mar 27: As part of the nationwide commemoration marking 150 years of the National Song 'Vande Mataram', the Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) on Friday organised a grand cultural event at Tagore Hall, Srinagar, under a special phase campaign being observed from March 23 to 30.

The national campaign aims to celebrate 'Vande Mataram' and its unique role in India's history through activities including

mass singing, exhibitions, and cultural programmes across the country. The initiative seeks to invoke a deep sense of patriotism while reconnecting youth and students with the song's original revolutionary spirit and enduring legacy.

The programme commenced with a soulful live rendition of 'Vande Mataram' by student artists of the Institute of Music and Fine Arts (IMFA), followed by the screening of a short documentary highlighting the history, legacy, and lasting significance of the song in India's



freedom movement and national consciousness.

A vibrant cultural programme presented by Sonzal

Art & Cultural Organisation showcased music and artistic

expressions rooted in patriotism and cultural heritage. The event also featured a compelling theatre play staged by artists of Kalidas Theatre Srinagar, which drew appreciation from the audience. A calligraphy session on the theme 'Vande Mataram' was also organised, reflecting creative interpretations of the iconic national song.

Over 200 students from various schools across Srinagar participated enthusiastically in the programme.

The event was attended by JKAACL, Ideel Saleem; Joint Director Information Kashmir; Syed Shanawaz Bukhari; Veteran Actor, Director, Producer, and Theatre Artist, Ayash Arif; along with other officers, artists, and members of civil society.

The programme concluded with a strong message of patriotism and cultural pride, reaffirming the timeless relevance of 'Vande Mataram' and its enduring ability to inspire unity, identity, and national spirit among the people, especially the younger generation.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Ensure smooth

in navigating the present circumstances. The Prime Minister highlighted that the situation remains dynamic, necessitating continuous monitoring and adaptive strategies. He said that an Inter-Ministerial Group has been operational since 3 March, reviewing the situation on a daily basis and taking timely decisions. He stressed that the Government's priorities are to maintain economic and trade stability, ensure energy security, safeguard the interests of citizens, and strengthen industry and supply chains.

Emphasising the critical role of States, the Prime Minister noted that effective implementation of decisions takes place at the State level. He called for constant communication and coordination between the Centre and States, along with timely sharing of information and joint decision-making, so that responses are swift and well-aligned.

He urged States to ensure the smooth functioning of supply chains and to take strict measures against hoarding and profiteering. He highlighted the importance of activating control rooms at State and District levels and maintaining administrative alertness to prevent disruptions.

He also stressed the need for advance planning in the agriculture sector, particularly in monitoring fertiliser storage and distribution, so that farmers do not face difficulties during the upcoming Kharif season.

The Prime Minister cautioned against the spread of misinformation and rumours, stating that timely dissemination of accurate and credible information is essential to prevent panic. He also advised vigilance against online frauds and fake agents. PM called for special attention in border and coastal States to address any emerging challenges related to shipping, essential supplies, and maritime operations.

He underscored the importance of maintaining public confidence, noting that assurance regarding the availability of essential commodities would help prevent unnecessary panic among citizens.

He further suggested that States with citizens in West Asia should activate helplines, appoint nodal officers, and establish district-level support systems to assist affected families and ensure timely flow of information.

The Prime Minister stated that efforts undertaken in recent years to strengthen India's economic and supply systems are proving beneficial in the current context. He called for continued engagement with industry and MSMEs to address their concerns and ensure stability in production and employment.

He also emphasised the need for robust coordination mechanisms at all levels, including regular reviews at the level of Chief Secretaries and continuous monitoring at the district level, to enable quick response to evolving situations.

He called for a parallel focus on immediate response and long-term preparedness. He urged States to accelerate efforts in promoting alternative energy sources such as biofuels, solar energy, GOBARdhan initiative, electric mobility, as well as expanding piped natural gas connections.

He also highlighted the importance of enhancing domestic exploration of oil and natural gas, with active cooperation from States.

He reiterated that addressing the challenge is a shared responsibility and expressed confidence that, working together as "Team India," the nation will successfully overcome the situation.

During the meeting, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh highlighted that the government has been working actively under the leadership of Prime Minister to tackle this crisis and taking positive steps such as ensuring timely availability of LPG and reducing the excise duties on petrol and diesel.

He further highlighted the need for collective action from all states, UTs and the centre to tackle the ongoing situation.

Cabinet Secretary T V Somanathan gave a presentation on the current situation and enumerated steps and recommendations for States to tackle the situation.

Chief Ministers appreciated the steps taken by the central government under the leadership of Prime Minister to tackle the situation. They also praised the diplomatic outreach of Prime Minister to different countries amidst this crisis to ensure the well being of Indian citizens abroad.

Chief Ministers across states expressed confidence that the situation remains stable, with adequate availability of petrol, diesel, and LPG, and continuous monitoring mechanisms in place to ensure uninterrupted supply of essential commodities.

They widely welcomed the decision to reduce excise duty on fuel, noting that it will provide significant relief to citizens amid global uncertainties. Chief Ministers also welcomed the decision to increase commercial LPG allocation to states and union territories to 70% of pre-crisis levels, up from 50%.

They reaffirmed commitment to work in close coordination with the Centre to

effectively manage the evolving situation and safeguard the interests of citizens. (KNO)

LG hails PM's 'historic'

Export duties strategically levied at Rs. 21.5 per litre on diesel and Rs. 29.5 on aviation turbine fuel, prioritizing ample domestic supply. My deepest gratitude to Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi Ji for this visionary intervention, which ensures affordability, restrains price escalation, and prioritizes India's interests above all. While global markets are in turmoil, our citizens remain shielded and secure."

Avalanche hits

trapped passengers. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Ganderbal Khalil Poswal, along with SSP Kargil and Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kargil, reached the site to supervise the rescue efforts.

The SSP told reporters that incident happened in the afternoon. "Rescue operations are on. Twelve persons came under the avalanche, of which five have died, while seven others sustained injuries, they are undergoing treatment," he added.

Officials said teams from Beacon, Border Roads Organisation (BRO), police, and local administration are engaged in clearing the road and retrieving vehicles buried under the snow.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Vinai Kumar Saxena, said he has directed the concerned officials to ensure immediate rescue and relief measures. "All government agencies, including disaster relief forces and BRO, have been put on high alert. I am personally monitoring the situation," he said.

Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh expressed grief over the incident, stating, "Saddened to learn about the tragic deaths and injuries after avalanche hit vehicles at Zojila Pass. My sincere condolences to the bereaved families. All required assistance is being provided to the injured."

Lieutenant Governor speaks to senior officials, takes stock of rescue and relief operations at Zojila

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha spoke to the senior officials and took stock of the rescue and relief operations following the tragic avalanche at Zojila, Ganderbal.

Sinha extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families who have lost their loved ones in the unfortunate incident and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured. He has directed the officials to ensure the safety of the stranded persons and extend all possible assistance to those affected.

"Deeply pained by the loss of precious lives due to the tragic avalanche at Zojila. My heart goes out to the bereaved families in this hour of grief. I pray for the speedy recovery of the injured," the Lieutenant Governor said.

J&K Chief Minister Omar Abdullah expressed deep sorrow over the tragic loss of lives in an avalanche at Zojila Pass today. He extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured. (KNO)

CM Omar Abdullah

were stranded in Iran during the conflict and that long queues at petrol pumps were also an outcome of the war. He stressed that the Assembly had the right to express its views on issues affecting the people.

Referring to India's ties with countries involved in the conflict, Abdullah said India maintains relations with the United States, Israel, and Iran. He urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to use these relations to push for an end to the war.

Omar said ending the conflict would help reduce suffering and called for efforts aimed at restoring peace. He emphasized that the issue should be seen from a humanitarian perspective and urged steps to stop the loss of lives. (KNO)

J&K Assembly approves

commencement of the holy month of Ramadhan. The budget session resumed today. (KNO)

CJI Surya Kant in

visit, the Chief Justice of India is scheduled to inaugurate the newly constructed District Court Complexes at Leh and Kargil, along with the office of the Ladakh Legal Services Authority, which will ensure enhanced access to justice with state-of-the-art facilities.

A mega legal services camp and awareness programme is being organised as part of the visit, aimed at enhancing legal awareness and outreach among the local population.

This visit is also a sequel to the North Zone conference held in July 2025 at SKICC, Srinagar, on the theme "Reaffirming the Constitutional Vision of Justice for Defence Personnel & Tribals: Bridging the Gaps". In this regard, Justice Surya Kant shall be interacting with Army personnel to further strengthen institutional engagement and address their legal concerns.

The visit marks a significant step towards

strengthening judicial infrastructure and promoting access to justice in the remote and challenging terrains of Ladakh. (KNO)

'Govt will ensure

while safeguarding freedom of speech and expression.

MLA, Ranbir Singh Pathania, while initiating the discussion on tackling fake news and misinformation in Jammu & Kashmir, said that while freedom of speech is a fundamental right, it must be protected from being misinterpreted and misused. He called for a robust regulatory framework, proposing a 36-hour takedown mechanism, clear district-level definitions of fake news, and effective corrective measures.

Highlighting the rise of unregulated digital platforms, particularly on Facebook and Instagram, he stressed the need for mandatory registration and regulatory oversight.

Pathania also advocated for a UT-level Fact Check Unit (FCU) and grievance redressal systems on social media platforms. Citing global frameworks like the Online Safety Act and the Digital Services Act, along with measures in Singapore and Indian states like Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, he stressed on adopting the best practices in J&K.

He proposed a multi-pronged approach, including an FCU, stakeholder involvement, citizen reporting mechanisms, coordination with national initiatives, timely clarifications and defined takedown timelines.

Pathania emphasized that the key challenge is ensuring accountability while addressing impunity, reiterating the need for a balanced framework to curb misinformation while safeguarding democratic values.

MLA, Dr. Bashir Ahmad Shah Veeri stated that in the present times, misinformation has taken deep roots and is impacting almost every aspect of public life. He cautioned that if not curbed in a timely manner, it could have serious consequences for society and governance.

He emphasized that all stakeholders must play a constructive role and urged that accountability must be clearly fixed, expressing hope that the government will take effective steps in this regard to ensure responsible communication and curb the spread of misinformation.

MLA, Iftikhar Ahmad said that the media has an important role to play in society, and while many are doing commendable work, some elements are unfortunately indulging in the spread of fake news. He stressed the need for a clear policy framework, suggesting that minimum qualifications and standards be prescribed for individuals practicing journalism to uphold credibility and professionalism.

MLA, Sajjad Shaheen also stated that there should be minimum qualification criteria for individuals engaged in media and information dissemination and the space should not be a free-for-all. He emphasized that unverified and misleading content must be effectively restricted, calling for proper regulation to determine eligibility and accountability of those operating in the digital and media space.

MLA Khurshid Ahmed in his address said that the media forms the fourth pillar of democracy and lauded those who are performing their duties responsibly for the benefit of society.

He, however, noted that certain elements indulge in spreading fake news and stressed that strict provisions should be put in place to take such elements to task, including the imposition of appropriate penalties to ensure accountability and deter misinformation.

MLA Pawan Gupta, while speaking on the occasion, raised concerns over several media outlets and channels operating without proper authorization from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. He noted that many platforms function without requisite licenses, underscoring the need for strict regulatory measures to tackle the spread of fake news.

MLA Nazir Ahmad Khan (Gurez) stated that with the ease of creating channels and digital portals, individuals are increasingly entering the information space without adequate regulation. He cautioned that once a person's image is tarnished through false or misleading information, it becomes extremely difficult to restore, highlighting the serious consequences of fake news.

He pointed out that there is a lack of comprehensive legal provisions to regulate such channels and platforms, while strongly advocating for enacting a robust law to effectively tackle this growing menace.

MLA Rafiq Ahmad Naik suggested that there should be strict legal provisions to effectively curb the spread of fake news and misinformation. He observed that people today are well aware and informed and therefore emphasized the need for responsible dissemination of information, cautioning against the misuse of digital platforms for misleading narratives.

MLA Nizam-ud-din Bhat observed that the media landscape has undergone a significant evolution, bringing both the opportunities and challenges in the dissemination of information.

He noted that the rise of provocative content and instances of defamation has become

a matter of concern, stressing that if society is to be kept informed through accurate and factual information for the collective good, it is essential to ensure that this right is not infringed upon.

Bhat added that legal provisions already exist and emphasized the need for their effective implementation to safeguard truth and accountability in the media space.

He further remarked that the issue is fundamentally one of ethics, urging all stakeholders to adhere to responsible practices and uphold the integrity of information dissemination.

MLA Dr. Rameshwar Singh stated that while there are many responsible media professionals, there are also individuals without requisite qualifications who indulge in defamation and tarnishing of reputations. He stressed the need for regulatory oversight and accountability, suggesting that a proper system be put in place to verify credentials and curb such practices.

MLA, Dr. Sajjad Shafi, while speaking during the discussion, emphasized that there should be a minimum educational qualification for individuals entering journalism to ensure responsible reporting in the interest of society. He hailed the role of professional media persons but also stated that some fake media persons indulge in black mailing.

He noted that members across party lines are in agreement on the need for a law to regulate the sector and curb the spread of fake news, reflecting a shared commitment towards accountability and responsible media practices.

MLA Saif-ud-Din Bhat stated that while many journalists are doing commendable work, there are some who unfortunately indulge in the spread of fake news. He emphasized the need to distinguish responsible journalism from misinformation, and called for measures to uphold credibility and accountability in the media space.

MLA Pirzada Farooq Ahmad Shah stated that the media has a crucial role in holding the government accountable and strengthening democratic institutions.

He clarified that the intent is not to target genuine media houses but stressed the need for a proper regulatory mechanism to ensure accountability. He further suggested that District Development Commissioners be authorized to monitor and oversee media activities at the local level, so that responsibility can be clearly fixed on those misusing the platform.

MLA Sham Lal Sharma observed that professional ethics and values in the media space are witnessing a decline, stressing the need to uphold the rule of law.

He noted that while laws and monitoring mechanisms already exist, there is a need for the Government to be more proactive in their implementation. He urged to put in place suitable mechanism at District level to curb misuse of social media and to check fake news.

Sharma further suggested the formation of a House committee, in coordination with Accredited media representatives, to strengthen oversight and ensure adherence to ethical standards and accountability in the dissemination of information.

MLA Aga Syed Muntazir Mehdi stated that the State must effectively perform its duties to ensure that laws are implemented in letter and spirit.

LG interacts with

visit to Poonch, Rajouri, Jammu, and Srinagar, where the students were exposed to diverse environments and institutions.

The tour also marked several first-time experiences, including rail travel to Srinagar and exposure to urban settings such as shopping complexes, Air Force Station, Jammu and exposure to Army way of life significantly broadening their outlook and confidence.

'Power projects

house that the draft has been put in the public domain for comments and suggestions from various stakeholders and the general public.

"After due consideration of the inputs, the policy shall be finalized and notified," the government said.

It also said that the new policy is expected to give a push to development of projects on small rivers and streams by bringing in private players into the hydropower power sector in a big way.

"This will in turn uplift the socio-economic status of the local population and create job opportunities during construction and operation of these projects," the house was informed.

The government also informed that under the new policy, the IPP (project developer) is required to supply free power, royalty to J&K upon completion of a specified time after start of commercial operation of the project.

"The supply of free power by the IPP to J&K reduces the overall cost of purchase of electricity by Jak and consequently benefits the power consumers of the whole of UT," the government said. (KNO)

Speaker for comprehensive

Legislative Assembly on measures to address

the spread of fake news and misinformation in Jammu & Kashmir

Highlighting the serious implications of misinformation on public trust and social harmony, Advocate Rather underscored that any proposed legislation must be carefully designed to ensure both effectiveness and balance. He stressed that the law should be formulated after an extensive study of existing legal frameworks and best practices adopted by various states and other jurisdictions.

Advocating on a well-researched approach, the Speaker said that such legislation should aim to create a robust mechanism capable of countering fake news while safeguarding democratic values and responsible communication.

'Hydropower capacity

hydropower capacity by 2035."

It also said that the UT of J&K has an estimated hydropower potential of around 18000 Megawatts (MWs) out of which around 15000 MWs has been identified.

"Out of the identified potential, 3540.15 MWs (24%) has been harnessed or developed till date. This includes 13 projects of aggregate capacity 1197.4 MWs in the UT sector, 6 projects of aggregate capacity 2250 MW in the Central sector and 12 Projects of aggregate capacity 92.75 MW in the IPP (private) sector," the government said.

It also informed the house that a capacity addition of around 100-150 MW is expected in the IPP (private) sector during this period.

"Consequently, the total installed hydropower capacity of the UT is expected to reach around 11000 MW by 2035," the government said. (KNO)

'Over 6.5 lakh meters

6,52,548 meters have been installed by KPDC and 6,76,185 by JPDC.

The government said the metering process will continue in non-metered areas as well as for irrigation pump sets across the Union Territory.

On tariff concerns, the department clarified that metered irrigation pump sets are billed on actual consumption recorded through meters. For unmetered consumers, charges are levied on a flat rate linked to sanctioned load as per norms set by the Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission.

Responding to concerns over high charges for farmers, the government said electricity for small and marginal farmers is already being supplied at subsidised rates. It added that the tariff for agricultural consumers in Jammu and Kashmir is lower than that in neighbouring Punjab.

The response also said policy decisions are guided by tariff orders issued by the regulatory commission for the agriculture sector in the Union Territory. (KNO)

Over 1.52 lakh

the last three years (June 2023 to September 2025).

The data, accessed by the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO), reveals that Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) sterilised 21,600 dogs, Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) carried out 13,730 sterilisations, while other Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) accounted for 7,870 cases.

The government further said that the sterilisation programme is being monitored through a multi-tier mechanism, including UT and ULB-level monitoring committees, real-time tracking through ABC mobile applications, regular reporting systems, CCTV surveillance at centres, financial monitoring, and grievance redressal mechanisms.

Responding to queries regarding third-party evaluation, it said no formal independent third-party assessment has been conducted so far. However, it added that the programme is under continuous monitoring by committees at state and municipal levels, including representatives from concerned departments and animal welfare organisations.

Highlighting steps to address public safety concerns, particularly for children and elderly citizens, the government said several measures have been initiated. These include expansion and strengthening of Animal Birth Control (ABC) centres, continuous sterilisation and anti-rabies vaccination drives, and establishment of designated feeding spots away from public places.

The government also said that land has been identified for setting up dog shelters and ABC centres, while mobile sterilisation units are being deployed in coordination with the Animal Husbandry Department.

It added that regular sanitation drives are being conducted to reduce waste that attracts stray dogs, alongside training of dog-catching staff and public awareness campaigns.

The government further said that it is complying with directions of the Supreme Court in a suo motu writ petition regarding stray animal management and has framed a structured and humane strategy focusing on sterilisation, vaccination, infrastructure augmentation, and public safety measures. (KNO)

CJI writes to HCs for expeditious filling of vacant posts, prioritising elevation of women judges

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 27: Chief Justice of India Surya Kant has written to chief justices of high courts for expeditious filling up of judicial vacancies with special focus on elevation of women judges for ensuring diversity in the benches. According to sources, the CJI wrote to chief justices of 25 high courts last week and highlighted the vacancies of judges in higher judiciary and increase the representation of women in the benches.

The CJI, who has earlier flagged poor representation of women judges, also asked the chief justices not to delay the recommendation of collegiums and endeavour for taking steps for filling of the vacancies even before actual vacancy arises.

On March 8, while speaking at a function, CJI Kant batted for greater institutional reforms in the judiciary to bring more women into the legal field and said that high



court collegiums should consider meritorious women members of the bar for judgment as a norm and not as an exception.

The CJI requested the high court collegiums to widen the zone of their consideration and include women advocates

from their states who are practising in the Supreme Court for elevation. He had highlighted that multiple women are currently serving as chief justices of different high courts, and the Punjab and Haryana High Court has as many as 18 sitting women

judges. Similarly, the Madras and Bombay High Courts also have about a dozen female judges each, he had said.

CJI Kant had also pointed out that women comprise approximately 36.3 per cent of the working strength of judicial officers at the district level.

"Friends, this is not a simple statistic; I would argue it reflects a generational shift. If we speak of a pipeline, it is here that it is visibly widening. And when the base of the system reflects greater inclusion, it is only a matter of time before that strength finds expression in the higher judiciary," he had said.

According to data tabled in Lok Sabha by Union minister Arjun Ram Meghwal in February, 170 women judges have been appointed in the high courts since 2014, including 96 in the last five years, and six in the Supreme Court.

The data said 116 women judges were serving in the high courts as on February 6. It said that 308 posts of high court judges were vacant as against the sanctioned strength of 1122 judges.

As on February 6, the high courts have a working strength of 814 judges and the Supreme Court as on date has 33 judges including one woman judge.

Govt introduces Jan Vishwas amendment bill in Lok Sabha



PTI

New Delhi, Mar 27: The government on Friday introduced a bill in the Lok Sabha to amend certain provisions for decriminalising and rationalising minor offences to further promote ease of doing business and living.

The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, was introduced by Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Jitin Prasada after incorporating recommendations of a select committee.

It seeks to amend certain enactments to decriminalise and rationalise offences to further enhance trust-based governance for ease of living and doing business.

Congress Members K Kavay and GK Padavi opposed the introduction of the bill, stating that it infringes on the basic structure of the Indian Constitution.

Padavi urged the government to resend the bill to the select committee or a joint parliamentary committee.

"This is an administrative oversight...the Bill is arbitrary and encourages corruption, and it should be reexamined," Padavi said, adding that a dissent note has been given in the select committee report also.

Prasada said detailed consultations have been held on the bill, and it is decriminalising only minor offences.

Prasada said the bill enhances ease of doing business and living by decriminalising minor offences and implementing measures, such as revising fines and penalties proportionate to the offence, and setting up appellate authorities.

"It proposes to amend 79 central acts, administered by 23 ministries, or a total of 784 provisions, are being proposed to be amended, out of which 717 provisions are being decriminalised to foster ease of doing business and 67 provisions are being proposed to facilitate ease of living," he said.

On March 17, the bill was withdrawn from the Lok Sabha for reintroduction after incorporating recommendations of a select committee.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, on March 18 last year, had introduced the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2025, in the Lok Sabha, and it was referred to the select committee.

This exercise builds on the success of the Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Act, 2023, the first consolidated legislation to systematically decriminalise minor offences across multiple Acts.

The 2023 Act, notified on August 11, 2023, decriminalised 183 provisions in 42 Central Acts administered by 19 ministries/departments.

Google expands Search Live globally, now available in additional Indian languages



IANIS

New Delhi, March 27: Google has rolled out Search Live globally, enabling interactive, real-time conversations with Search in AI Mode across more than 200 countries and territories, using both voice and camera, a new blog post said.

The US tech giant said the expansion is powered by a new audio and voice model, Gemini 3.1 Flash Live, which the company claims delivers more natural, intuitive and multilingual conversations, allowing people to speak with Search in

their preferred language.

The report further said Search Live, first launched in India in English and Hindi, is now available in additional Indian languages, including Bengali, Gujarati, Kannada, Malayalam, Marathi, Odia, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu.

Google described Search Live as a tool for moments when typing requires effort, and the feature is accessible via the Google app on Android and iOS by tapping the Live icon under the Search bar.

Users can ask their questions out loud to get a helpful audio response, then continue the conversation with follow-up questions or dive deeper with helpful web links, the company said.

"If you want to ask about something in front of you, like how to install a new shelving unit, you can enable your camera to add visual context," the post said, adding that the feature "can see what your camera sees and offer helpful suggestions, plus links to more information on the web".

Amit Shah to release BJP's list of charges against TMC today

PTI

Kolkata, Mar 27: Union Home Minister Amit Shah will on Saturday unveil a compilation of the BJP's allegations against the TMC government in West Bengal ahead of the assembly elections in the state, a senior party leader said.

The document, titled 'Abhiyognama' or 'charge sheet', compiles alleged instances of corruption and misgovernance during the 15-year tenure of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee.

Shah is scheduled to arrive in Kolkata late on Friday evening and release the 'charge sheet' at a hotel in New Town on Saturday afternoon.

The 'charge sheet' will highlight the alleged "failures" of the TMC government across 14 sectors, the leader said.

Allegations related to corruption in the administration, collapse of law and order, safety concerns for women, prevalence of syndicate raj, and crises in health and education are expected to figure prominently in the 'charge sheet', he said.

The BJP plans to use the 'charge sheet' to underscore TMC's alleged shortcomings and subsequently present



alternatives in its election manifesto or 'Sankalp Patra', which is likely to be released in the first week of April, he added. Shah has made multiple visits to West Bengal over the past two months, participating in organisational meetings, public rallies, and outreach programmes, including the 'Poriborton Yatra', to strengthen the party's grassroots network and fine-tune poll strategies.

West Bengal's 294-member assembly will go to the polls in two phases, on April 23 and April 29, with counting of votes scheduled on May 4.

AIIMS Delhi surgeons remove 21.8 kg uterine sarcoma tumour in high-risk operation

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 27: Doctors at AIIMS Delhi's Dr B R Ambedkar Institute Rotary Cancer Hospital (Dr BRA-IRCH) successfully removed a massive 21.8-kg tumour from a 46-year-old woman diagnosed with advanced uterine sarcoma this week.

The Delhi resident, who was also recently diagnosed with diabetes and hypertension, had endured progressive abdominal fullness for four months, followed by severe distension, pain, and functional limitations over the last three months. However, she reported no bowel or bladder issues.

After receiving initial symptomatic treatment, she underwent evaluation and was found to have a gigantic mass filling her entire abdomen and pelvis, according to Dr M D Ray, a professor in the Department of Surgical Oncology at Dr BRA-IRCH.

"On examination, we found a tumour measuring approximately 45 cm, occupying the whole abdomen," Dr Ray said.

The rapidly growing mass was compressing vital organs like the kidneys and ureters, risking renal failure within a month or two. It also triggered lower back pain, walking difficulties, and respiratory distress, he told PTI.

On March 23, the team performed an exploratory laparotomy, which revealed the tumour's origin in the uterus. Surgeons excised the uterus, ovaries, fallopian tubes, and the enormous tumour in a gruelling five-hour procedure.

The operation carried high risks, including potential rupture of major vessels and massive haemorrhage leading to shock, Dr Ray explained. Yet, blood loss was limited to 500 ml, managed with one unit of packed red blood cells (PRBC) intraoperatively.

Post-surgery, the patient was shifted to the ICU for close monitoring. Dr Rakesh Garg was the anaesthetist in charge who managed intra op and ICU care properly, Dr Ray said, adding that remarkably, she began walking the very next day and is recovering swiftly. "She is likely to be discharged today," he said.

"The takeaway is that a massive tumour does not necessarily mean it is inoperable or considered terminal. With expert care and an expert centre, it can be managed effectively," he added.

Around 1,068 hectares of railway land is under encroachment: Railway Minister

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 27: Around 1,068 hectares of land owned by Indian Railways is under encroachment across the country, which is only 0.21 per cent of the total 4.99 lakh hectares of land, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw informed the Rajya Sabha on Friday.

Replying to supplementary queries during Question Hour, the minister said that if one sees the utilisation of all railway land, nearly 80 per cent of the land is near the tracks, 5 per cent around it, while the remaining 15 per cent of land is used for development of stations, colonies, hospitals and other things.

"Around 0.21 per cent of Railway land is under illegal encroachment in the country," he told members in the House.

"It is correct that this illegal encroachment on land is a serious problem. Action has also been taken, but timely action has also been taken from time to time. But every time such an action is taken, a humanitarian approach is adopted, as the poorest people have set up jhuggis on railway land. Wherever possible, a practical solution has been taken together with state governments," he said.

He also informed the Upper House that several good initiatives have been taken to protect railway land. Among the technological steps taken, he said, complete digitisation of railway land has been done, and electronic land records have been put on a portal.

"Each and every plot of land has been properly mapped and electronically preserved. Surveys have also been done through drones and satellite images of the land of all railway land. Overall, further encroachment has been stopped significantly.

"There have been some good examples of getting railway land vacated. In Surat, we have worked together with the state government, which assured



to provide houses under PM Awas Yojna to those who had encroached railway land. Hence, a humanitarian approach was adopted, and land was vacated, and development work was taken forward," he told the members.

He said wherever states help, they yield good results, and the issue of land comes under the state government, and hence the centre works together with state governments.

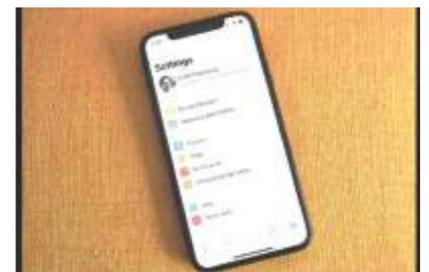
The minister said the Railways is using two basic technologies -- satellite technology and second is drone-based surveys and both produce maps, and then the same is compared with our reference maps to find out, through AI and algorithms.

"If any new encroachments have happened, we are able to take immediate steps. That is why fresh encroachment has significantly reduced and almost stopped. The problem is more of the encroachment that has been there for many decades now," he said. For utilisation of unused land, the minister said the Railways has created a very transparent mechanism in the last few years, and the results of that are now visible.

"Railways have an authority called the Railway Land Development Authority. Though some non-transparent steps were taken during the

'Two accounts, one phone'

WhatsApp rolls out new features for iPhone users, introduces Meta AI tools



PTI

New Delhi, Mar 27: Meta-owned messaging platform WhatsApp on Friday announced a slew of new features, allowing Apple iPhone users to operate two accounts on a single device simultaneously, while also introducing new artificial intelligence (AI) tools for photo editing and drafting messages.

The 'two accounts, one phone' feature, which was previously available only to Android users, is now rolling out on iOS. The company in a blog post said the update eliminates the need for users to carry two separate devices to manage personal and work conversations. Users will be able to identify the active account via a profile picture visible in the bottom tab of the app.

Riding the generative AI wave, WhatsApp is also integrating Meta AI directly into chats. Users can now utilise Meta AI to touch up photos, remove distracting elements, swap backgrounds, or apply different styles before sending an image.

Additionally, an 'AI Writing Help' feature will now draft suggested responses based on the context of the conversation.

Addressing potential security concerns regarding the AI tool, WhatsApp emphasised that user chats will remain "completely private".

The company noted that the Meta AI features may not be available to all users immediately.

The update also simplifies cross-platform chat transfers. The platform now officially supports moving chat history, including photos and videos, from iOS to Android devices.

Other additions include predictive sticker suggestions, allowing users to swap an emoji for a suggested sticker as they type.

The new features are rolling out and will be available to everyone soon, WhatsApp said.

UK says Iran can't be allowed to hold global economy hostage

AP

Vaux-de-Cerney (France), Mar 27: UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper has called for a "swift resolution" to the war in the Middle East and the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz.

Speaking at a meeting of G7 foreign ministers on the outskirts of Paris, Cooper said Iran is undermining the global economy by blocking international shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most important waterway for oil shipments.

"Frankly, Iran cannot be allowed to hold the global economy hostage as a result of a strait that is vital to international shipping routes and the freedom of navigation," she said.

American investors view IPL as highest sports growth opportunity in world: RCB's new co-owner



PTI

New Delhi, Mar 27: Renowned American companies buying stakes in legacy franchises like RCB and Rajasthan Royals validates how these investors view the IPL as the "highest growth sports opportunity in the world", Times Internet Limited chairman Satyan Gajwani said on Friday.

Recent ownership changes in the Indian Premier League reflect a significant surge in its commercial value, with teams now trading at billion-dollar valuations that cement its status as a top-tier global sports event.

"As you would have seen, there were multiple international parties interested in the teams through the process. It is great validation for the IPL and WPL's success to date and their promise and trajectory ahead. Many of these investors see the IPL as the highest growth sports opportunity around the world today," Gajwani, RCB's new co-owner, told PTI in an exclusive interview.

Rubio tries to sell Iran war to skeptical G7 diplomats after Trump insults allies

AP

Vaux-De-Cerney (France), Mar 27: US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is in France meeting his Group of Seven foreign minister counterparts on Friday, after President Donald Trump attacked NATO countries over a reluctance or refusal to take part in the Iran war, a conflict that some of America's closest allies have met with deep skepticism.

Rubio will have a hard time trying to sell the other top diplomats from G7 countries on the US strategy for the Iran conflict, to which almost all nations have raised objections. On his arrival at the meeting venue at a historic 12-century abbey in Vaux-de-Cerney outside of Paris, Rubio posed for a group photo with his fellow foreign ministers but none of them spoke.

Trump's vitriolic comments about NATO during a Cabinet meeting on Thursday will likely make it an even tougher task. Of the G7 nations — besides the US — Britain, Canada, France, Germany and Italy are members of the trans-Atlantic military alliance. Japan is the only one that is not.

Rubio left Washington for the G7 meeting just hours after Trump complained bitterly about NATO countries not stepping up to help the US and Israel in the Iran war.

"We are very disappointed with



NATO because NATO has done absolutely nothing," Trump said.

Rubio has work to do to smooth things over with allies like those in Europe that have faced criticism or outright threats from Trump and others in his administration. The Europeans are still smarting over Trump's earlier demands to take over Greenland from NATO ally Denmark and are concerned about US support for Ukraine in its war with Russia. The conflict in the Middle East has added another point of tension.

"Frankly, I think countries around the world, even those that are out there complaining about this a little bit, should actually be grateful that the United States has a president that's willing to confront

a threat like this," Rubio said at the Cabinet meeting.

Trump has complained about lack of support from allies.

Asked by reporters about the reception he was expecting to get, Rubio said before his flight to France that he was looking forward to gathering with his G7 counterparts and that "we're going to have great meetings."

"I'm not there to make them happy," he said. "I get along with all of them on a personal level, and we work with those governments very carefully, but the people I'm interested in making happy are the people of the United States. That's who I work for. I don't work for France or Germany or Japan."

Jaishankar, Canadian FM discuss West Asia crisis on G7 sidelines

PTI

Paris, Mar 27: The West Asia crisis and its consequences figured prominently during a conversation between External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Canadian counterpart Anita Anand on the margins of a G7 meeting in France.

Jaishankar arrived here on Thursday for the G7 Foreign Ministers' Meeting.

On its sidelines, he met Anand, and the two followed up "on the partnership our Prime Ministers

advanced during our visit to India earlier this year," the Canadian Foreign Minister said in an X post.

They also discussed "trade, the situation in the Middle East, and key areas where we can deepen cooperation, including critical minerals, agriculture, and education," she said.

At the two-day G7 meeting, Jaishankar will discuss the West Asia crisis with a focus on coordinating efforts to ensure that the Strait of Hormuz remains open for international shipping.



Nepal's youngest prime minister takes oath of office



AP

Kathmandu, Mar 27: Nepal's youngest prime minister took the oath of office Friday after his party won a landslide victory in elections earlier this month and following a youth-led uprising that toppled the government in September.

Balendra Shah was appointed the prime minister by President Ram Chandra Paudel Friday after his Rastriya Swatantra Party won nearly two-thirds of the seats in the House of Representatives, the lower chamber of parliament, in the March 5 polls.

Shah, the 35-year-old

political outsider widely known as Balen, will lead a government tasked with navigating deep public frustration with Nepal's established parties, who were widely blamed by voters for corruption and chronic political instability.

Religion and astrology play a big role in Nepal, which is more than 80 percent Hindu and where people begin new work, get married and hold religious rituals according to auspicious times.

Shah was born in the capital Katmandu but his family comes from the Hindu-dominated Terai region of Nepal, near the border with India.

Modi congratulates Balendra Shah

PTI

New Delhi, Mar 27: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday congratulated Balendra Shah 'Balen' on being sworn in as Nepal's new prime minister, saying that he looks forward to working closely with him to deepen India-Nepal ties for the mutual benefit of both nations.

Rapper-turned-politician Balendra Shah 'Balen', took oath as Nepal's democratically elected prime minister on Friday, around six months after the K P Sharma Oli-led government was ousted in a Gen-Z protest that shook the nation.

"Warm congratulations to Mr. Balendra Shah on being sworn in as the Prime Minister of Nepal. Your appointment reflects the trust reposed in your leadership by the people of Nepal. I look forward to working closely with you to take India-Nepal friendship and cooperation to even greater heights for the mutual benefit of our two peoples," Modi said in a message on 'X'.

Auqib Nabi sets sights on 'ultimate goal' of playing for India with successful IPL



PTI

Mumbai, Mar 27: From the confines of his room in Baramulla, Jammu and Kashmir star Auqib Nabi watched a large crowd celebrate his entry into the IPL on auction day. But, he says, the "ultimate goal" is to play and win matches for India.

Long before he lifted the Ranji Trophy with his J&K teammates, Nabi had grabbed attention for his exploits with the red ball. His persistent line, length, and discipline were key factors in the state's maiden triumph — traits he now hopes to emulate with the Delhi Capitals.

"It was not about money; I wanted to play at least once. Even if I would have got Rs 30 lakhs (base price), I wanted to play in IPL. Obviously, it felt good that DC took me in for such a huge amount," Nabi, who was bought for Rs 8.40 crore, told reporters in a virtual interaction organised by Delhi Capitals on Friday.

"I was at home on the auction day as the Vijay Hazare (Trophy) camp was to start on the next day. When my name was announced, a lot of people got emotional as it happened after so many years of hard work. It was everyone's dream (for me) to play at the next level. I got a

little emotional too, seeing my family members emotional," he said.

Nabi added, "I had not told my friends or the villagers that I was at home. There was a lot of noise. I was locked in a room and I didn't tell anyone that I was at home. When people started coming in including the media, there was a lot of commotion, I was looking from inside the room. Everyone was happy and dancing. It felt good to see that."

Former India captain and ex BCCI president Sourav Ganguly had said Nabi was on his way to earning national colours after J&K's triumph. For Nabi, having a successful IPL will be another step in that direction.

"It (the IPL) will be very important because, it is global (tournament) and you can watch it everywhere. The competition here is very good. Our selection is only through domestic cricket, if you do well in red-ball (cricket), and I think I have done well in red-ball."

"I am not thinking much about the selection. I am doing what I can. I am not paying much attention to the things that are not in my control. My focus is on IPL and I want to do well," Nabi said, adding that so far he has not had any conversations with the national selectors.

Movies Watchlist

Saturday, 28 March

THE REVENGE
DHURANDHAR

DHURANDHAR THE REVENGE (A)
HINDI - 11:00 AM, 12:45 PM, 03:30 PM, 05:15 PM
HINDI ATMOS - 10:00 AM, 02:30 PM, 07:00 PM

ANDY WEIR
AUTHOR OF THE MARTIAN

PROJECT HAIL MARY

PROJECT HAIL MARY (U/A)
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
09:40 AM, 08:00 PM

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