



Ayodhya cradle of civilisation, eternal fountainhead of consciousness: LG Sinha

'World must learn from ideals of Lord Ram's rectitude, dharma, duty & sacrifice'

KNO Desk

Jammu, Apr 03: Terming Ayodhya as the cradle of civilisation and eternal fountainhead of consciousness, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday said that the world must learn from the ideals of Lord Ram's rectitude, dharma, duty and sacrifice.

Speaking at the 8th Ayodhya Parv, organised by Shri Ayodhya Nyas, in collaboration with Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts (IGNCA) and Pragya Sansthan at IGNC, New Delhi, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "When we invoke Ayodhya, we summon that very consciousness which is Prabhushri Ram's benediction and which has given meaning to human civilisation."

The Lieutenant Governor highlighted the significance of internalising Ayodhya's idea with Prabhushri Ram's blessing



and to carry forward that timeless flame which has burned for millennia and will continue to illumine generations to come.

"The world must learn from the ideals of Lord Ram's rectitude, dharma, duty and sacrifice. His life is living proof that those who walk the path of truth and righteousness ultimately prevail," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He observed that to

understand Ayodhya is not to understand a city and its geography, but to understand oneself.

"Ayodhya is the living consciousness of the present and the compass of the future. It is not just a city; it is our root. Ayodhya is not only a shrine; it is the nation's dynamic inspiration. Ayodhya is urging us to awaken our inner consciousness. It instils in us the

confidence that however high the obstacles or however much times may change, if faith and awareness remain alive, tradition never ends," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that Ayodhya is awakening a sense of moral values, principles and balance in life.

"Ayodhya reminds us that progress never means abandoning our roots. Ayodhya tells

us that life is not about speed alone, but also about the right direction.

In today's global climate, I would say Ayodhya stands before us as a guide," LG Sinha said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that Ayodhya stands as a symbol that values such as duty, dignity, compassion, sacrifice and balance were not merely taught there but they were lived.

"As an idea, Ayodhya teaches us that strength and sensitivity can walk together, because leadership is not only governance but service.

Ayodhya is not only the city of our revered Lord Ram, it is also a vital pillar of our global identity, our economic strength and our cultural continuity," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised that on the global stage, we must position Ayodhya as a civilisational centre where humankind first saw nature not | More on P6

LG Sinha orders magisterial probe into Ganderbal encounter

District Magistrate to complete probe in 7 days, submit report to Home Dept



KNO Desk

Srinagar, Apr 03: Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday ordered a thorough and impartial magisterial probe into the killing of an alleged terrorist in an encounter in the Arhama area of central Kashmir's

Ganderbal district.

In a post on X, office of LG, per news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), informed that he has ordered a thorough and impartial magisterial inquiry into Arhama, Ganderbal incident. "The inquiry will examine all aspects | More on P6

Centre asks states to crack down on hoarding, black marketing

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 03: The Centre has directed states and Union Territories to take strict action against hoarding and black marketing of petroleum products and LPG, amid supply concerns triggered by the closure of the Strait of Hormuz.

Invoking provisions under the Essential Commodities Act and the LPG Control Order, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas (MoPNG) asked states to intensify enforcement, conduct daily raids and inspections in coordination with oil marketing companies, and maintain strict vigilance against diversion and misinformation, according to an official statement.

States have also been instructed to institutionalise daily press briefings, set up control rooms and helplines, and actively counter fake news to reassure the public about fuel availability.

The move comes as the government steps up measures to ensure an uninterrupted supply of petrol, diesel and LPG across the country despite the ongoing geopolitical situation.

The government advised citizens "to avoid panic purchase of petrol and diesel as well as unnecessary booking of LPG," and cautioned against rumours, urging reliance on official sources. Consumers have also been asked to use digital modes for LPG bookings and avoid visiting distributors | More on P6

'New Kashmir emerging': AIIO's chief Ilyasi credits post-article 370 changes

Says peace, dev, tourism | Calls Valley 'crown of India' | Urges people to visit & witness changing realities

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Apr 03: Chief Imam of the All-India Imam Organization (AIIO), Umer Ahmed Ilyasi, on Friday described Kashmir as a "new and progressing region."

Talking to reporters during his visit to the Valley, Ilyasi, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), termed Kashmir as 'crown of India,' and said, "Visible changes on the ground reflect peace and development in the years following the abrogation of Article 370."

Ilyasi said that Jammu and Kashmir is witnessing a phase of transformation marked by



improved conditions and a sense of normalcy.

He credited the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah for what he described as a shift towards a "better and new India."

"The happiness and progress being seen in Kashmir today are commendable. This is a new Kashmir, a reflection of a changing India," Ilyasi said, adding that | More on P6

JERC creates separate BPL consumer category for J&K

Allows relief of 30 free units on power consumption to socio-economic backward consumers

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Apr 03: The Joint Electricity Regulatory Commission (JERC) has created a separate Below Poverty Line (BPL) consumer category for the Jammu and Kashmir—allowing the socio-economic backward consumers relief on power consumption up to 30 units a month.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO)—the government recently informed the house that the Commission has created a separate BPL consumer category to provide relief to socio-economic backward consumers for consumption of up to 30 units per month.

"It should be noted that only those consumers who submit a BPL certificate from a competent authority of the State Government will be included in the BPL category," the government said.

It also informed the house that in case consumption within this category exceeds 30 units per month, the consumption over and above it would be charged as per the applicable rates for the domestic metered category in accordance with the relevant consumption slab.

Furthermore, the government also said that the commission has fixed the applicability of the domestic tariff for supplies | More on P6

Upper reaches get snow, rains lash Kashmir plains

Weather to remain erratic till April 10 | MeT warns of heavy showers, hailstorms, gusty winds

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 03: Even as the Meteorological Department predicted that the wet spell would continue for over next 24 hours, upper reaches of Kashmir on Friday received fresh snowfall, while rain lashed the plains.

Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that snowfall was recorded in Gurez, Tulail, Razdan Top and other upper reaches of North Kashmir, while rainfall was reported from the plains, including Srinagar city.

The Meteorological Department predicted that erratic weather conditions



would prevail across Jammu and Kashmir till April 10, with intermittent rain and snowfall

expected in several parts of the region. According to the MeT of office, generally | More on P6

272-km Udhampur-Sgr-Bla Railway link completed: GoI

Says infrastructure boost enhances connectivity, economy, dev in J&K

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar, Apr 03: The 272-km Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla link has been completed as part of a major railway infrastructure expansion under the National Rail Plan, the Government of India informed the Lok Sabha.

In a reply to a starred question, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the project is among key railway developments aimed at enhancing connectivity and capacity across the country.

The government said Indian Railways has significantly expanded its network and capacity over the past decade, with a focus on new lines, doubling of tracks and electrification to improve regional connectivity and



freight movement.

The completion of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla rail link is expected to strengthen connectivity in

Jammu and Kashmir and improve the transportation of passengers and goods in the region. Officials told the news agency—Kashmir News Observer

(KNO) that railway infrastructure projects play a key role in socio-economic development by enabling faster movement of goods, reducing transportation costs and improving logistics efficiency.

"Such projects also generate employment opportunities and boost tourism and industrial activity in connected regions," they added.

The government further informed that a total of 431 railway infrastructure projects covering 35,966 km, with an estimated cost of about Rs 6.75 lakh crore, are currently sanctioned across the country.

"The timely completion of projects depends on multiple factors, including land acquisition, forest clearances, shifting of utilities and | More on P6

Rising awareness, persistent gaps: Autism in Kashmir demands early action, inclusive support

Experts call for timely diagnosis, better services, societal acceptance | More families seek help for 'Autism Spectrum Disorder'

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Apr 03: Experts on Friday said that there is urgent need to deepen understanding, promote early diagnosis, and strengthen support systems for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in Kashmir.

Renowned psychiatrist Dr Abrar Guroo while talking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "It's important to approach autism with empathy and sensitivity rather than limiting it to a clinical diagnosis."



"As a psychiatrist, one thing I have learnt from children with autism is that they experience the world differently, not less

deeply. Our job is not to change who they are, but to understand them better," he said. Dr. Guroo elaborated that

autism is far more than a label in medical records; it represents a spectrum of unique developmental patterns that vary from child to child.

"Autism is not simply a diagnosis in a file. It is a child who may struggle to speak, to connect, or to be understood—but with early support and patience, their potential can surprise us all," he added.

Another leading psychiatrist, Dr. Aijaz Abdullah, highlighted the transformative impact of early recognition and professional support. | More on P6

Railways charts roadmap to boost Kashmir's fruit trade via Parcel Trains

High-level meeting focuses on strengthening rail-based supply chain, enhancing market access

KNO Desk

Jammu, Apr 03: A high-level meeting was convened on Friday in the Jammu Division to strategize measures aimed at transforming the economic landscape of the Kashmir Valley by linking its renowned fruit industry and parcel trade with national markets.

According to a statement issued to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the meeting was presided over by the Additional Member (Commercial) of the



Railway Board and attended by Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Jammu, Uchit Singhal, along with parcel traders from Kashmir, prominent fruit growers, and key cargo aggregators.

The primary objective of the deliberations was to develop a comprehensive roadmap to enhance parcel traffic from the Kashmir region.

Discussions | More on P6

Sakeena Itoo dedicates 1.5 Tesla MRI facility to Public at GMC Anantnag

Inaugurates 3 Modular OTs, Virectomy Machine for advanced eye surgeries

KT NEWS DESK

ANANTNAG, APRIL 03: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo dedicated the state-of-the-art 1.5 Tesla Magnetic Resonance Imaging (MRI) facility to the public at Government Medical College (GMC) here Friday. She also inaugurated Three Modular Operation Theatres (OTs) and Virectomy Machine in the Ophthalmology department of the Associated Hospital of GMC Anantnag.



MLA Anantnag-West, Abdul Majeed Bhat (Larmi); MLA Rajpora, Ghulam Mohi-ud-din Mir; MLA Pampore, Justice (Retd) Hasnain Masoodi; MLA Zainapora, Showkat Ahmad Ganie; MLA Devsar, Peerzada Feroze Ahmad; Principal GMC Anantnag, Dr. Rukhsana Najeeb; Director Health Services Kashmir, Dr. Jehangir Bhakshi; HoDs of different faculties of GMC, Medical Superintendent, CMO Anantnag, other senior officers of district administration and large number of locals were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister, as per an official statement, underlined that this significant development of establishing MRI facility at GMC Anantnag reflects the firm commitment of the Omar Abdullah-led Government to modernize healthcare services and ensure equitable access to advanced medical technologies for all sections of society.

"The Government is focused on transforming public healthcare by strengthening diagnostic capabilities at district and medical college levels. The commissioning of this MRI facility at GMC Anantnag

will significantly enhance patient care and ensure timely diagnosis of patients closer to homes," the Minister stated.

Crediting Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah for the already functional Cath Lab at the GMC Anantnag, Sakeena Itoo said that this Cath Lab has turned a game-changer for saving the lives of people in South Kashmir districts as well as Pir Panchal region. "Earlier numerous patients referred from this hospital lost their lives as they couldn't reach Srinagar Hospitals in golden hour period, but due to functional Cath Lab now at this GMC people are receiving advanced treatment for cardiac issues here", she said. She added that with the establishment of Cath Lab, in GMC Anantnag, cardiac care facilities have been boosted in entire South Kashmir.

The Minister highlighted that that improved and advanced diagnostic infrastructure forms a critical pillar of the Omar Abdullah led Government's broader healthcare reform agenda, aimed at reducing waiting times, improving treatment outcomes and enhancing overall service delivery

across Jammu and Kashmir.

Outlining other remarkable achievements made in the health sector of Anantnag district, Sakeena Itoo said that with the personal efforts of Chief Minister, the shifting of Paediatric section from Sherbagh hospital was made possible, adding that this was a long pending demand from people of this area. She also said that a Sarai has also been made functional in this GMC to provide housing and other facilities to the attendants during their stay in the hospital.

The Minister also said that with the consistent efforts of this Government, medical seats have been increased in various specialities and super specialities in various GMCs across Jammu and Kashmir, including GMC Anantnag.

Calling doctors as life savers, the Minister said that the doctors and paramedics need to be more emphatic towards patients, adding that public trust in Government Hospitals depends on conduct and compassion of doctors and paramedical staff.

Reiterating the Government's vision, Sakeena Itoo

said that several initiatives are underway to upgrade hospitals, augment manpower and introduce cutting-edge medical technologies across Jammu and Kashmir, with special focus on rural and peripheral areas. She added that the Government remains committed to building a resilient and patient-centric healthcare system aligned with modern medical standards.

The Minister also interacted with doctors, technicians, and hospital administrators, appreciating their efforts in improving healthcare services and urging them to maintain the highest standards of patient care and professionalism. She stressed the importance of optimal utilization and regular maintenance of advanced medical equipment to ensure uninterrupted services.

Pertinently, the inauguration of MRI and other facilities at GMC Anantnag marks a major milestone in expanding access to advanced diagnostic services for patients in South Kashmir as well as some areas of Pir Panchal region. The newly installed MRI facility is equipped with modern imaging technology designed to deliver high-precision diagnostic results, enabling early detection and accurate evaluation of complex medical conditions, including neurological disorders, musculoskeletal injuries, cardiovascular ailments, and oncological cases. The facility is expected to substantially reduce patient referrals to tertiary care hospitals outside the district, thereby easing financial and logistical burdens on patients and their families.

Follow discipline, attendance norms, academic calendar: SEK Director

Conducts surprise visits across several Schools in Srinagar

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 03: Director of School Education Kashmir (SEK), Naseer Ahmad Wani, Friday conducted a series of early morning surprise inspections across several schools in Srinagar within the first half hour of their opening, with a focus on ensuring punctuality, discipline, and institutional accountability.

During the visits, the Director SEK, as per an official statement, closely monitored the attendance of teaching staff and assessed the overall functioning of schools during the crucial opening period. He visited Government Middle School Alooohi Bagh at around, where he personally verified staff attendance and later joined the students in the morning prayer.

Interacting with the staff, the Director stressed



that the initial moments of school opening set the tone for the entire day and therefore must reflect discipline,

commitment and a sense of purpose. He directed that morning assemblies be conducted with full enthusiasm,

incorporating moral and value-based education as an essential component.

Highlighting the importance of structured academic functioning, Wani emphasized that all teaching-learning activities should be carried out in an organized manner and strictly in accordance with the academic calendar prescribed by the department.

Reaffirming the importance of regular monitoring, the Director instructed all Zonal Education Officers across Kashmir Division to ensure 100% inspection of schools under their jurisdiction and submit weekly reports to the Directorate without fail.

The Directorate reiterates its commitment to strengthening accountability, improving academic standards and fostering a disciplined and value-driven educational environment across all schools in the region.

IN THE COURT OF JUDICIAL MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS TANGDHAR

FILE NO:09/BAY

Date of Institution : 02.06.2016

Date of Order : 07.03.2026

In the case of:-

UT of J&K through P/S Karnah

FIR NO. 01/2016 Offences under section 379 RPC

Through Ld. APP

Versus

- Mohd Ashraf Lone S/O: Mohd Sultan Lone R/O: Hajinard
- Mohd Anzar Chechi S/O: Raj Mohd Chechi R/O: Handwal Nechiyan Karnah (Accused Persons)

Coram: Mansoor Ahmad Mir

U.I.D NO: JK 00334

ORDER

07.03.2026

- The instant case came up for hearing today . Mr Muzafar Majeed Chopan , APP present for the UT of J&K Accused NO: 01 is absent and is remaining continuously absent despite issuance of non-bailable warrants.
- The challan in present case has been filed on 02.06.2016 under section 379 RPC . The allegations as reflected in the chargesheet , disclose that on 15-01-2016 the complainant of the present challan appeared before the concerned police station and submitted a written report stating that the complainant had parked his vehicle , Tata Sumo bearing registration No. JK01J-9527, AT Nechiyan on the previous evening. In the Morning when he went to the said place to take back the aforesaid vehicle, he did not find the said vehicle at the spot. Thereafter he along with his relatives searched for the vehicle in question and during the course of search it came to light the vehicle had been stolen by Mohammad Ashraf Lone son of Mohammad Sultan Lone resident of Hajinard and Mohammad Anzar Chichi son of Raj Mohammad Chichi resident of Handwal Nechiyan.
- The record reveals that despite repeated issuance of non- bailable warrants vide orders dated 22.05.2025, 25.06.2025, 27.08.2025 26.09.2025 and 26.12.2025, the accused No. 01 has failed to cause his appearance before this Court.
- The compliance report in respect of accused Nos. 01 indicates that he is absconding and deliberately evading execution of the non-bailable warrants issued against him from time to time. The said report prima facie establishes that the accused No. 01 is intentionally concealing himself so as to avoid the execution of warrants and the due process of law as per the report filed by P/s Karnah dated 22.10.2025. Accused No. 01 has crossed LoC and is presently concealing at Foreign Territory.
- Learned APP submits that since the accused No. 01 is absconding and deliberately avoiding legal proceedings, proclamation proceedings under Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure be initiated against him.
- Heard the Ld. APP and perused the record, the report reveals that the accused No. 01 has illegally crossed the LoC and is residing in Pakistan.
- Section 82 Cr.P.C. provides that where a Court has reason to believe, after issuance of a warrant, that the person against whom such warrant has been issued has absconded or is concealing himself so that such warrant cannot be executed, the Court may publish a written proclamation requiring such person to appear before it at a specified place and time not less than thirty days from the date of publication of such proclamation. The bare provision of Section 82 is reproduced below: Section 82: Proclamation for person absconding
- If Any Court has reason to believe (whether after taking evidence or not) that any person against whom a warrant has been issued by it has absconded or is concealing himself so that such warrant cannot be executed, such Court may publish a written proclamation requiring him to appear at a specific place and at a specified time not less than thirty days from the date of publishing such proclamation.
- The proclamation shall be published as follows
- (i) a) it shall be publicly read in some conspicuous place of the town or village in which such person ordinarily resides; b) it shall be affixed to some conspicuous part of the house or home-stead in which such person ordinarily resides or to some conspicuous place of such town or village;
- c) a copy thereof shall be affixed to some conspicuous part of the Court house;
- (ii) the Court may also, if it thinks fit, direct a copy of the proclamation to be published in a daily newspaper circulating in the place in which such person ordinarily resides.
- (3) A statement in writing by the Court issuing the proclamation to the effect that the proclamation was duly published on a specified day, in the manner specified in clause (i) of Sub-Section (2), shall be conclusive evidence that the requirements of this section have been complied with, and that the proclamation was published on such day.
- Where a proclamation published under Sub-Section (1) is in respect of a person accused of an offence punishable under section 302, 304, 364, 367, 382, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 402, 436, 449, 459 or 460 of the Indian Penal Code (45 of 1860) and such person fails to appear at the specified place and time required by the proclamation, the Court may, after making such inquiry as it thinks fit, pronounce him a proclaimed offender and make a declaration to that effect.
- In view of the repeated non- execution of non- bailable warrants, the compliance report showing deliberate evasion, and the material on record suggesting that the accused No. 01 absconding, this Court is satisfied that there are sufficient grounds to initiate proceedings under Section 82 Cr.P.C. against accused Nos. 01.
- The names of accused person mentioned in challan are reproduced herein below:

S.NO	S.NO of accused in Challan	Particulars of the accused
1	01	Mohd Ashraf Lone, S/O: Mohd Sultan Lone, R/O: Hajinard

- Therefore, in view of the foregoing discussion and the satisfaction recorded hereinabove, this Court deems it proper to proceed in terms of Section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure. Accordingly, proclamation is issued against accused Nos. 01 and 02, requiring him to appear before this Court on 24.04.2026 at 10:00 A.M.
- Further, the proclamation shall be published in accordance with Sub- Section 2 of Section 82 Cr.P.C. i.e The Proclamation shall be published as follows.
- it shall be publicly read in some conspicuous place of the town or village in which such person ordinarily resides;
- ii. it shall be affixed to some conspicuous part of the house or home-stead in which such person ordinarily resides or to some conspicuous place of such town or village;
- iii. a copy thereof shall be affixed to some conspicuous part of the Court house;
- iv. the copy of the proclamation to be published in a daily newspaper circulating in the place in which such person ordinarily resides.
- The proclamation shall be published in accordance with Sub- Section 2 of Section 82 Cr.P.C strictly (In Form 4, II Schedule of Cr.P.C).
- The executing officer (SHO Police Station Karnah) shall submit compliance report along with photographic proof of affixation and publication.
- Let the file come up for further proceedings on 24.04. 2026.

Announced 07- 03- 2026

Sd/-
(Mansoor Ahmad Mir)
Judicial Magistrate 1st Class
Tangdhar.

NO:- 137/jmic
Dt. 07- 03- 26

FORM NO.4

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON/ ACCUSED

Whereas challan has been presented before this court against the accused and it has been alleged that they have committed the offence punishable under section 379 RPC and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Nos 01 cannot be found, and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the accused No01 is absconding and is concealing himself to avoid the service of said warrant); Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused No 01, whose particulars are given below, are required to appear before this Court to answer the said allegations on 24th of April 2026 at 10:00 AM.

S No.	S No. of accused in Challan	Particulars of the accused.
1.	01	Mohd Ashraf Lone S/o: Mohd Sultan Lone R/o: Hajinard.

Announced 07.03.2026

DIPK-92/26
Dated: 03-04-2026

Judicial Magistrate 1ST Class Tangdhar

Inclement Weather: ADC Handwara reviews flood preparedness

KT NEWS DESK

HANDWARA, APRIL 3: In view of the prevailing inclement weather conditions and the likelihood of heavy rainfall leading to floods, the Additional Deputy Commissioner, (ADC), Handwara, Javed Naseem Masoodi Friday chaired a meeting to review flood preparedness and disaster management measures across the sub-division.

During the meeting, the ADC, as per an official statement, issued important directions to ensure prompt and effective response to any emergency situation. All field functionaries were directed to remain on high alert, particularly in flood-prone areas, and to maintain close coordination with concerned departments.

Tehsildars and Block Development Officers (BDOs) were instructed to ensure the readiness of emergency response teams and to keep essential resources, including rescue equipment, food supplies, available. They were also directed to identify vulnerable locations and take preventive measures to minimize risks.

The ADC emphasized the importance of timely communication, public awareness, and swift action in mitigating the impact of any potential flood situation. He urged all officers to remain vigilant and responsive to safeguard lives and property.

The meeting was attended by Tehsildars, BDOs and other concerned officials.

DC Kulgam visits EMRS Tangmarg, reviews progress on hostel, principal's residence



KT NEWS DESK

KULGAM, APRIL 03: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Shahzad Alam Friday visited Eklavya Model Residential School (EMRS) Tangmarg to take stock of the functioning of the institution and review the progress of ongoing infrastructure works.

During the visit, the DC inspected various sections of the school and assessed the facilities being provided to students.

He directed the concerned authorities to expedite the completion of the hostel building, principal's residence and boundary wall of the institution within the stipulated timeframe.

The DC also instructed the concerned department to ensure extension of electricity connection to the newly constructed building at the earliest so that the facilities can be made fully functional.

Later, the DC visited ITI K.B. Pora, where he reviewed the functioning of the institute and inspected various training sections. He also interacted with the students and patiently listened to their demands regarding the strengthening of infrastructure and facilities at the institute.

The DC assured that the genuine

issues raised by the students would be taken up with the concerned authorities.

While interacting with the trainees, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of skill development in enhancing employability and entrepreneurship among youth.

He also asked for recommendations on introducing new courses that are in demand in the area so that the institute can better cater to local employment needs.

During the tour, the Deputy Commissioner also visited solid waste management sheds in different areas and inspected their condition.

He directed the concerned officials to ensure proper cleanliness and effective utilization of these sheds so as to strengthen waste management practices in the district. The DC emphasized the need for coordinated efforts among departments to ensure that public institutions function efficiently and provide better services to the people.

The DC was accompanied by JDP, Malik Suhail; SDM D.H. Pora, Bashir Ul Hassan; ACD Kulgam, Bilal Ahmad Kamgar, Executive Engineers from Jal Shakti R&B, CEO Kulgam Tehsildar D.H. Pora and other concerned officers.

Adequate availability of fuel, LPG in J&K: OMCs

PIB

Srinagar, Apr 03: Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have informed on Friday that the supply of petroleum products and LPG remains stable and adequate to meet the current demand across the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

According to Shri Himanshu Sharma, State Level Coordinator for Oil Industry, J&K, the stock position of Motor Spirit (MS) and High-Speed Diesel (HSD) is normal across the Union Territory. OMC depots are maintaining adequate inventory levels, and retail outlets have sufficient stock to ensure uninterrupted sales. He further informed that the LPG stock position at bottling plants is also comfortable, with inventory levels in line with prescribed norms and regular replenishments being undertaken.

Shri Sharma informed that the OMCs are closely monitoring the supply situation and



have taken necessary steps to streamline logistics and expedite deliveries to maintain uninterrupted availability.

Consumers have been advised to refrain from panic purchasing, as adequate stocks are available and supplies are being replenished regularly. LPG consumers have also been requested to book cylinders

through digital modes and acknowledge receipt using the Delivery Authentication Code (DAC) to ensure a transparent and efficient delivery system, Shri Sharma added.

OMCs have sought public cooperation in maintaining smooth and efficient distribution of fuel and LPG across the Union Territory.

'J&K gets 1,436 km of NWs since 2018'

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Apr 03: Around 1,436 kilometres of National Highways have been constructed in Jammu and Kashmir since 2018-19, the Centre informed the Lok Sabha.

According to official data, the Union Territory witnessed fluctuating highway construction over the years, with 95 km built in 2018-19, 46 km in 2019-20, 234 km in 2020-21, 263 km in 2021-22, 217 km in 2022-23, 243 km in 2023-24, 214 km in 2024-25 and 124 km during 2025-26 till February.

The Centre also informed that expenditure on development and maintenance of National Highways in Jammu and Kashmir has seen a steady rise in recent years. The spending increased from Rs 2,932 crore in 2020-21 to Rs 6,817 crore in 2021-22, Rs 7,370 crore in 2022-23 and Rs 10,528 crore in 2023-24, before slightly declining to Rs 10,204 crore in 2024-25.

The government said that it is primarily responsible for the development and maintenance of National Highways, while execution is carried out



through various agencies.

On road safety, the Centre said that nationwide data indicates a rise in accidents and fatalities on National Highways, with 1.28 lakh accidents and 56,007 deaths reported in 2021, increasing to 1.50 lakh accidents and 64,772 deaths in 2024.

The minister further said that 67 highway stretches across the country have reported major deficiencies

in the last three years and the current year. Action against defaulting contractors includes penalties, termination of contracts, debarment and blacklisting, depending on the severity of defects.

The government further informed that 85 National Highway projects, including those under Bharatmala Pariyojana, are delayed by more

than three years due to issues such as land acquisition, clearances, utility shifting and financial constraints.

"Several measures have been taken to reduce delays, including faster land acquisition through digital platforms, streamlined environmental clearances and regular monitoring of project progress," it said—(KNO)

3.07 lakh drinking water samples tested in J&K: GoI

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Apr 03: The Government of India said that over 3.07 lakh drinking water samples were tested in laboratories across Jammu and Kashmir during the current financial year 2025-26 (till March 31). Replying to an unstarred question in Lok Sabha, the Ministry of Jal Shakti said that under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM), water quality testing is being carried out regularly to ensure safe drinking water supply to rural households.

As per official data, Jammu & Kashmir recorded testing of 2,53,364 samples in laboratories and 34,793 through Field Testing Kits (FTKs) in 2023-24. In 2024-25, 2,66,547 samples were tested in labs and 2,129 using FTKs.

In the ongoing financial year 2025-26, the number of laboratory-tested samples has increased to 3,07,793, while only 32 samples were tested using FTKs.

The government said that drinking water remains a State subject, and the responsibility for planning, implementation

and maintenance of water supply schemes lies with the respective State/UT governments. The Centre provides financial and technical assistance to support these efforts.

It further stated that an online Water Quality Management Information System (WQMIS) portal has been developed under JJM to monitor sample testing, contamination levels and remedial actions. The data is available in the public domain for transparency and awareness.

The Ministry also said that dashboards at State and district levels, along with a "Citizen Corner", have been created to display village-level water quality data and build public confidence in drinking water supply systems.

A handbook on monitoring water quality of piped drinking water was also released in December 2024 to guide States and UTs in ensuring comprehensive testing and timely remedial measures wherever contamination is detected, the government added—(KNO)

Pharmacist accused of corruption, absenteeism, Rs 20 lakh fraud

KNO

Srinagar, Apr 03: Serious allegations of corruption, abuse of authority, and financial misconduct have surfaced against a pharmacist in Jammu and Kashmir's Health & Medical Education Department, raising questions about administrative oversight and accountability within the system.

A formal complaint submitted to the Secretary, Health & Medical Education Department, has accused Mohammad Salim Wani, a pharmacist substantively posted at Tangdhar in Kupwara district, of willfully defying government orders, engaging in corrupt practices, and misusing official proximity to influence postings and extract money.

According to the complaint, Wani was transferred from Srinagar to Tangdhar in October 2025 under Government Order No. 670-JK(HME) of 2025, issued in the interest of administration following earlier allegations of misconduct.

The order explicitly directed him to report to his new place of posting "forthwith", deeming him relieved from his previous assignment at the Directorate of Health Services, Kashmir.

However, the complainant alleges that Wani never joined his designated posting and instead continued to remain stationed in Srinagar, with his absence from Tangdhar allegedly corroborable through official and local verification.

More alarmingly, the complainant states that Wani allegedly functioned unofficially as a Personal Assistant to senior officers within the Directorate of Health Services without any formal authorisation. Even after administrative changes, he is said to have "repositioned" himself within the Directorate without any valid government order, suggesting a pattern of unauthorised attachment and defiance of transfer directives.

The allegations go beyond absenteeism. The complainant accuses Wani, in alleged collusion

with another official, of running a bribery and influence network within the department, demanding and accepting illegal gratification from officers in exchange for favourable transfers and postings. The complainant further claims that undue pressure was exerted on officials by leveraging proximity to decision-making authorities.

In one of the most serious charges, the complainant has alleged that Wani was involved in a financial fraud exceeding Rs 20 lakh during an emergency or crisis period, pertaining to the procurement of emergency items without adherence to codal procedures, raising concerns of misuse of public funds during a critical time.

The complaint has urged the government to initiate a thorough and time-bound inquiry, fix accountability, and take strict action against all those found involved, while also calling for a deeper examination of systemic loopholes that allow such alleged practices to persist—(KNO)

Nodal officers to oversee essential supply in Jammu

KNO

Jammu, Apr 03: Amid West Asia crisis, Divisional Commissioner Jammu has designated nodal officers for all districts across the Jammu division to strengthen monitoring of essential commodities and ensure effective redressal of public grievances.

According to an official, the appointed officers will supervise the functioning of District Control Rooms and address complaints related to the availability and distribution of essential supplies. The move comes as part of the administration's efforts to streamline grievance redressal and enhance coordination at the district level.

Each district, including Doda, Poonch, Jammu, Reasi, Rajouri, Kishtwar, Samba, Ramban, Udhampur, and Kathua, has been assigned a designated officer responsible for overseeing operations and ensuring timely response to public concerns. An

official spokesperson said, "The nodal officers will play a key role in monitoring the situation on the ground and ensuring that essential commodities are available to the public without disruption."

Further, Naresh Kumar, JKAS, Additional Commissioner in the office of the Divisional Commissioner Jammu, has been appointed as the nodal officer at the divisional level. He will coordinate with district-level officers to ensure seamless functioning of the control rooms and prompt grievance resolution.

"The objective is to strengthen the mechanism for addressing public complaints and to maintain close supervision over the supply of essential commodities across the division," the official added. The order has been circulated to all Deputy Commissioners of the Jammu division and other concerned departments for implementation—(KNO)

Traffic advisory issued for 2-day Vijaypur Satsang

YOGESH

Jammu, Apr 03: Ahead of the two-day Radha Soami Satsang scheduled to be held on April 4 and 5 at Thandi Khui in Vijaypur along the Jammu-Pathankot National Highway, SSP Traffic Rural Jammu, Farooq Qaiser, has issued a comprehensive traffic management plan to regulate the expected heavy influx of devotees.

The SSP said the religious congregation is likely to attract more than five lakh followers from across Jammu and adjoining regions, prompting authorities to implement elaborate traffic diversions and access control measures to ensure smooth vehicular movement and public safety.

Traffic diversions announced according to the advisory, special diversions will be enforced on key stretches of the Jammu-Pathankot highway, particularly near Vijaypur and adjoining rural links leading to Thandi Khui. Vehicles coming from Jammu towards Pathankot have been advised to take the Ring Road via Satwari-Mira Sahib before



Vijaypur towards alternate rural roads to ease congestion near the satsang site.

Traffic from Pathankot heading towards Jammu is expected to be regulated and staggered, with possible diversions through link roads connecting Bari Brahmana and Samba sectors. Heavy motor vehicles may be restricted or diverted during peak hours of the satsang to prevent bottlenecks on the highway. Traffic officials have stressed that commuters should follow on-ground signage and instructions from deployed personnel, as diversions may be adjusted dynamically depending on traffic density.

Parking and entry arrangements

Separate parking areas have been earmarked at a safe distance

from the satsang venue, with shuttle or walking access to the main congregation area. Authorities have urged devotees to avoid random stopping on the highway and instead use only designated parking and entry routes.

The traffic department will deploy adequate personnel at strategic junctions, diversion points, and entry gates to regulate movement. Real-time monitoring and public announcements will be used to guide commuters, while temporary signage will assist drivers unfamiliar with the area.

Advisory for commuters
Commuters travelling on the Jammu-Pathankot highway during April 4 and 5 have been advised to plan their journeys in advance and allow extra travel time. Non-essential travel through the Vijaypur-Thandi Khui stretch has been discouraged during peak hours. The public has also been asked to stay updated through official advisories issued by the Jammu and Kashmir Traffic Police, as traffic arrangements may change depending on crowd size and road conditions—(KNO)

ACB chargesheets revenue officials in bribery case

KNO

Srinagar, Apr 03: The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) in Jammu & Kashmir on Friday said it has filed a chargesheet against a Naib Tehsildar and a Patwari from Uri in Baramulla district for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe to provide revenue documents.

Officials said one of the accused was caught red-handed while accepting Rs 50,000 during a trap operation.

In a statement, a spokesperson said the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), Jammu & Kashmir, has presented a charge-sheet before the Hon'ble Court against two public servants, namely Altaf Hussain Khan, then Naib Tehsildar Uri, and Pardeep Kumar, Patwari Halqa Uri, for their involvement in a bribery/trap case FIR No 12-2024 of PS ACB Baramulla. He said, a complaint was received by ACB from a resident of Uri, District Baramulla, on 11.09.2023, alleging that he had purchased land measuring 10 marlas and constructed a house thereon. Owing to a dispute with the seller, the complainant approached the Tehsil office Uri for requisite revenue documents.

"It was alleged that the accused officials demanded a bribe of 10 lakh, which was subsequently negotiated to 1 lakh, in lieu of furnishing the required report/documents."

The spokesperson said, unwilling to succumb to corrupt practices, the complainant approached Police Station ACB Baramulla with a written

complaint seeking legal action. Upon verification, a case was registered and a trap was laid. During the operation, accused Altaf Hussain Khan was caught red-handed while demanding and accepting a bribe of ₹50,000 from the complainant. He said, the tainted amount was recovered from his possession, and he was arrested on the spot. He was subsequently remanded to police/judicial custody by the Hon'ble Court from time to time.

"Investigation into the matter has prima facie established the involvement of both accused officials, including the role of Patwari Pardeep Kumar, based on evidence collected during the course of investigation."

The spokesperson said, upon completion of the investigation and after obtaining the requisite sanction for prosecution from the Government of Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, the ACB has today filed a charge-sheet (challan) against both accused under Section 7 and Section 12 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 read with Section 61 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), before the Hon'ble Special Judge, Anti-Corruption Court, Baramulla.

"The Hon'ble Court has fixed 02/05/2026 as the next date in the case. This is the 7th charge-sheet filed in the year 2026 by Police Station ACB Baramulla before the Special Judge, Anti-Corruption Court, Baramulla in different corruption cases," he said—(KNO)

Police arrest drug peddler in Pulwama

KNO

Srinagar, Apr 03: As a part of its sustained efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from society, J&K Police in Pulwama arrested a drug peddler and recovered Contraband substance from his possession.

According to a statement, a police party from Police Station Pulwama at a checkpoint established at Eid Gah area of Pulwama intercepted a suspicious person. During his personal search, approximately 52 grams of charas-like substance was recovered from his possession. He has been identified Anayatullah Makdooi son of Showkat Ahmad resident of Drasoo. Accordingly, a case vide FIR No. 46/2026 under relevant section of law has been registered at Police Station Pulwama and investigation has been taken up.

J&K Police reiterate its commitment to maintaining a drug-free society and appeals to the general public to cooperate in this noble mission. Citizens are requested to share any information regarding drug abuse or peddling to the nearest police establishment—(KNO)

EDITORIAL

Himalayan Lakes Have Become Time Bombs. It's Time To Act

The identification of five glacial lakes in the Kashmir Himalaya with "very high susceptibility" to Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOFs) is a chilling reminder that climate change is not a distant abstraction but a present danger, etched into the landscape we inhabit. Bramsar, Chirsar, Nundkol, Gangabal, and Bhagsar are now not just geographical features but potential sources of catastrophic flooding that could engulf over 2,700 buildings, critical bridges, roads, and even a hydropower project. The government's acknowledgement of this threat, while welcome, must now translate

into action that matches the magnitude of the risk. The study's findings are a double-edged sword. On one hand, the classification of these lakes as "very high susceptibility" provides a crucial baseline for prioritising vulnerable areas. On the other hand, the minister's clarification that such classification does not indicate "immediate danger" risks being misinterpreted as reassurance that no action is needed. The truth lies in the uncertainty: these lakes are not yet breaching, but under certain triggering conditions—an earthquake, a sudden surge in water pressure, sustained heavy rainfall—they

could unleash devastation without warning. The government's preparedness measures are a step in the right direction, but remain alarmingly preliminary. The procurement of a robotic echo-sounding boat for bathymetric surveys is essential, but field surveys scheduled to begin "in 2026" move at a pace that does not reflect the urgency of the threat. Each year of delay is a year of risk for the thousands living downstream. What is required is a comprehensive, time-bound action plan with clear accountability. First, continuous satellite monitoring must be institutionalised, with regular

updates on lake expansion rates shared with disaster management authorities. Second, field-based bathymetric surveys must be expedited, with resources allocated to complete them within the current year, not stretched across multiple years. Third, early-warning systems tailored to mountainous environments cannot remain research projects; they must be deployed at the most vulnerable lakes, integrating satellite data, sensor networks, and community-level alert mechanisms. Fourth, downstream communities must be prepared—with evacuation drills, hazard zonation maps,

and clear protocols for rapid response. The government's commitment to "strengthening scientific research and institutional coordination" is essential but insufficient. Scientific research must be translated into actionable policy. Institutional coordination must produce drills, not just meetings. The Himalayas are warming, glaciers are retreating, and glacial lakes are expanding. Every monsoon season brings new precipitation, new pressure, and new risk. The question is not whether a GLOF will occur, but when. The answer to that question lies in how urgently we act today.

Khelo India Tribal Games: Nation's Hidden Sporting Capital

Sports Excellence Centres in Eklavya Model Residential Schools now provide modern facilities. The Asmita scheme promotes girls' participation in sports. Young people who once chose Naxalism are now choosing the positive track of sports. The energy of youth finds constructive expression through play.

Droupadi Murmu

I have observed that in rural areas and forest regions, children spend more time outdoors amidst nature. They discover simple ways to play games. They create play areas by drawing lines and making shapes on the ground. They use dried fruit-seeds as dice and pieces. They make balls from dry leaves, tree roots, and rags. Using bamboo, they make hockey and football goalsposts. In this way, using various natural materials, they create their own worlds of sports. Several children play enthusiastically without shoes or jerseys. Children also swim a lot in ponds and lakes. Honing this innate talent for swimming with the help of training and resources available now, Anjali Munda, a 15 year old daughter of Jajpur, Odisha has inspired the youth of the entire country by winning three gold medals on the first day of the inaugural 'Khelo India Tribal Games 2026'.

Tribal people have a natural passion for archery. In 1855, the Santhal community waged a fierce struggle against exploitation, which is immortalized as 'Santhal Hool'. British forces, equipped with modern weapons, suppressed that revolt, but in their accounts, the British made special mention of the martial skills, especially archery, of the Santhal bravehearts. I had the privilege of unveiling the statues of the heroic leaders of the 'Santhal Hool', the immortal brothers, Sidho-Kanhu and Chand-Bhairav, and the valiant sisters, Phulo-Jhano, located at their village Uri-Mari in Jharkhand, during my tenure as Governor. Every child in India knows about the greatness of Eklavya who



is revered as the greatest archer. Eklavya is an inspiring icon for every Indian, especially for the tribal communities. The 'Sports Excellence Centers' set up in Eklavya Model Residential Schools are enabling the children with modern sports facilities and methods. Similarly, schemes to identify and train sports-talent existing elsewhere, alongside the school system, are also being implemented.

Through my personal efforts, a residential school for children from underprivileged segments has been established in my village. As a part of this humble initiative, arrangements for training in archery are also provided on the school campus. Along with initiatives by the government, small individual and collective efforts will help nurture the inherent talent for sports among tribal children.

Like other tribal children in my village, I too was very keen on exercises and sports, including swimming. I often stood first in sports tournaments in my school. In one

such tournament, I deliberately held myself back so that a friend of mine could enjoy the delight of winning the first prize. Sports develop team spirit and lead to stronger social bonding. Generally, it is observed that players who demonstrate fierce competition on the field have strong friendships off it.

My brother was a good football player, but he could not pursue the game due to a major injury. Several other members of my family have excelled in various sports. I am sharing this personal account to convey that tribal families have a vibrant tradition of sports. They possess immense talent, energy, interest, and the drive to excel. If such talent is nurtured through facilities and training, sports will not remain just a means of entertainment and social interaction for them but will become an avenue for moving ahead in life, achieving economic self reliance and commanding social respect. In this context, the 'Khelo India' campaign, launched by the Central Government in association with state governments and some

sports organisations since 2018, has ushered in positive changes.

Till a few years ago, good sports facilities in our country were available only in big cities, whereas rural and forest areas are full of talented players. Sports academies and training facilities were not available in tribal areas. Now, from paying special attention to children's sports in Eklavya Model Residential Schools to initiatives like the 'Khelo India Tribal Games', several activities are underway to provide training to tribal sportspersons and promoting excellence among them.

I remember that during my student days, people from five or six villages would come together and organize sports tournaments. Some spiritual and cultural organizations have also been promoting sports in tribal areas. Often, even the good players participating in such rural tournaments were unable to rise above the village level. Many commendable efforts have been made in the past few years to change this situation. The 'Khelo India Tribal Games 2026' were organized to give a forward push to such efforts. In the process of organizing this event, tribal players at grassroots level have been identified and have been provided with sports facilities and training. Players from the States and Union Territories have showcased their talent in these national tribal games.

Based on the natural talent of the players, India won its first Olympic gold medal in hockey in 1928. Players from tribal communities had an important role in that victory. Right since then, star hockey players such as Dilip Tirkey, Subodh Lakra, and Salima Tete have continued to enrich India's men's and

women's teams with their talent.

Under the national sports development program 'Khelo India', of the Government of India, an inclusive effort is being made to provide appropriate sports ecosystems for all geographical regions, social segments, and institutions from the local to the national levels. Under this program, a scheme called 'Asmita', being implemented to promote the participation of girls in sports, is also developing the potential of our tribal daughters. Continued strengthening of the momentum built by 'Khelo India Tribal Games 2026' and sustained encouragement to tribal sportspersons will create a pool of players who will establish India as a global sports superpower.

Over seven lakh players participated in the Bastar and Surguja Olympics held in the last few months. Among those players were some young people who gave up the path of Naxalism and chose the positive track of sports. The energy of young people finds constructive expression through sports. The government's efforts to identify and develop sports-talent among the youth have started delivering good results in national and international tournaments.

The sports-talent of our youth, including that of the tribal communities, forms an invaluable social capital for our nation. I am confident that, by harnessing this priceless resource effectively, our country will establish numerous glorious benchmarks of excellence in the field of sports. With this confidence, my message is: Khelo India! Khoo Khelo India!

The author is the President of India

How Mission Karmayogi Is Rewriting Story Of India's Governance

Dr Jitendra Singh

Imagine a district collector in a remote corner of Rajasthan who has just been handed charge of an ambitious welfare scheme he knows little about. A decade ago, his only recourse would have been a dog-eared government manual, a senior colleague who might be free after three meetings and a lunch, or the distant promise of a training programme that might arrive in a year or two — if at all. Today, he opens his phone, logs on to iGOT — the Integrated Government Online Training platform — and within minutes is navigating a structured, competency-linked course tailored to his exact need. By evening, better informed and more confident, he chairs the first beneficiary meeting of the scheme. The change seems small. In truth, it is seismic.

This is the quiet revolution that Mission Karmayogi has been engineering since its launch five years ago — not with fanfare, but with the patient, purposeful work of building a new kind of civil servant for a new kind of India.

To understand why this matters, one must first reckon with the context. India in 2047 — the Viksit Bharat our Prime Minister envisions — is not a destination we shall simply arrive at. It is a destination we must build, brick by careful brick, through the institutions and individuals that govern the republic. And the single most important variable in that equation is not capital, not technology, not even policy. It is the capability — the trained, motivated, citizen-centred capability — of roughly 3.5 crore public servants who wake up each morning and make the Indian state function.

For much of independent India's history, the model for building that capability was what might be called episodic: a young officer

joining service would receive formal training at the start, perhaps a mid-career course here and there, and would otherwise be expected to learn by doing — and by watching. In a stable, slow-moving world, this was adequate. In an era of artificial intelligence, climate disruption, demographic pressure, and cascading technological change, it is plainly insufficient. The pace at which governance challenges evolve has simply outrun the pace at which old-fashioned training systems could respond.

Mission Karmayogi was conceived as the answer to this mismatch. Launched in 2021, and anchored institutionally by the Capacity Building Commission (CBC) — established in April of that year — it set out to do something genuinely ambitious: transform the learning culture of the Indian civil services from a periodic, compliance-driven exercise into a continuous, role-based, self-directed journey of growth. The shift, as the Commission describes it, is from being a Karmachari — a functionary who follows rules — to becoming a Karmayogi: a public servant animated by purpose, service, and excellence.

Five years on, the numbers are instructive. Over 1.5 crore government officials are now active learners on the iGOT platform — a figure that would have seemed fantastical at inception. Across more than 4,600 competency-linked courses, these officials have logged upward of 8.3 crore course completions. In the last National Learning Week alone, participation generated 4.5 million hours of course enrolments and 3.8 million hours of actual learning. These are not abstract statistics. Each hour logged represents a public servant somewhere in India — a revenue inspector in Chhattisgarh, an urban local body officer in Pune, a health worker in Manipur — investing in their own ability to serve their fellow citizens better.

What makes the iGOT platform genuinely transformative is not its scale alone, but its architecture of access. It is available anytime and anywhere, on a smartphone or a desktop, in multiple languages, personalised to the learner's professional profile. Courses are updated every three to six months, ensuring that content on how to deploy AI tools in governance or how to navigate new financial regulations stays current. The platform, in other words, is not a digital library gathering dust — it is a living, adaptive ecosystem of learning. Consider what this means for a junior Anganwadi worker in a tribal district who receives a module in her own language explaining the latest protocols for child nutrition assessment. She need not wait for a trainer to travel to her block. She learns, and she acts. That is the democratic dividend of this mission.

The Capacity Building Commission, as the strategic custodian of this ecosystem, plays the role of architect and conductor simultaneously. It identifies what competencies are needed across the vast spectrum of public roles — from a secretary framing national policy to a panchayat functionary implementing it at the village level. It sets quality standards for the nation's training institutions through the National Standards for Civil Services Training Institutions framework, known as NSCTI 2.0, under which over 200 training institutes across the country have already been accredited. It works with states — all 30 States and Union Territories are now signed on through formal Memoranda of Understanding — to create bespoke Capacity Building Plans that map workforce competencies to organisational goals. And through landmark initiatives like the Rashtriya Karmayogi Jan Seva Programme, it has brought large-scale behavioural training — the subtle but vital art of treating every citizen as the

ultimate stakeholder — to over one million certified officials.

This last dimension of the mission deserves particular attention, because it speaks to something that cannot be measured easily in completion certificates or logged hours. One of the deepest aspirations of Mission Karmayogi is a shift in attitude — the movement from a transactional relationship between the state and the citizen to one defined by the spirit of Nagarik Devo Bhava: the citizen as god, as the highest authority to whom the servant of the state is accountable. When citizen-facing officials — those at railway counters, at revenue offices, at health centres — were trained under this philosophy and citizens were subsequently surveyed, the feedback was striking. They noticed the difference. Not just in efficiency, but in warmth, in attentiveness, in the human quality of the interaction. In an age when AI threatens to automate vast swathes of administrative function, this human layer — empathetic, culturally aware, locally rooted — is not a redundancy but India's governance superpower.

The mission has also made a conscious effort to honour India's intellectual inheritance alongside its technological ambitions. Through the Indian Knowledge System Cell, traditional wisdom — in fields ranging from community governance and agriculture to finance and healthcare — is being woven into the fabric of training content, not as nostalgia but as living knowledge. The Amrit Gyaan Kosh repository, with over 70 completed case studies, is building a body of governance wisdom rooted in Indian contexts and Indian solutions. This decolonisation of the administrative mind — returning Indian public servants to a confident engagement with their own civilisational heritage as they navigate modern challenges — is one of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's defining aspirations, and

Mission Karmayogi is operationalising it.

S DHANA Saptah — the National Learning Week observed from the 2nd to the 8th of April — is both a celebration of this five-year journey and a recommitment to its unfinished work. The word S dhana is apt. It means dedicated practice, the disciplined daily effort of one who seeks mastery not through a single act of brilliance but through sustained devotion to craft. As we inaugurate the week with a National Conclave of Civil Services Training Institutions, bringing together nearly 700 senior officials in person and over 3,000 virtually, we are not merely marking an anniversary. We are setting our compass for the next five years — towards a future in which every civil servant at every level is a continuous learner, a citizen-champion, and a confident steward of India's aspirations.

The goals of Viksit Bharat 2047 — from universal health coverage to net-zero commitments, from digital public infrastructure to global manufacturing leadership — will not be met by policy alone. They will be met by people: by the district official who understands the scheme well enough to implement it with precision, by the urban planner who can deploy spatial data tools, by the frontline health worker who communicates a public health alert in a way her community trusts. Mission Karmayogi is building that cohort — not for tomorrow, but for the decades ahead.

In the long, luminous arc of India's governance story, this may well be the chapter in which the state finally learnt to learn.

The author is the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science & Technology and Earth Sciences; Minister of State, PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, and Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions

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

Rana lays foundation for Tawi embankment works

KT News Desk

JAMMU, APRIL 03: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmad Rana, Friday laid the foundation stone for two important flood protection projects along River Tawi aimed at strengthening the riverbanks and safeguarding vulnerable areas from future flood risks.

The projects, as per an official statement, included restoration of the earthen embankment on the left bank of River Tawi at Bikram Chowk upstream, allotted at a cost of Rs. 3.05 crore and scheduled for completion within six to nine months. The construction of damaged flood protection works on the right bank near Hari Singh Park has been allotted at a cost of Rs. 82 lakh and is expected to be completed within two years.

MLA Jammu East, Yudhvir Sethi, Chief Engineer I&FC Manoj Gupta, officers from the Irrigation & Flood Control Department, Jal Shakti (PHE) Department and other concerned agencies besides local representatives and residents were present on the occasion.

Speaking at the ceremony, Javed Rana said that these projects will significantly enhance the flood resilience and protect critical infrastructure and residential areas from future risks.

Describing River Tawi as the



pride of Jammu, he reiterated the commitment of the Omar Abdullah government to undertake all necessary measures for its protection and beautification. "The major river protection initiative along River Tawi underscores our unwavering commitment to flood mitigation and the protection of lives and livelihoods in the region. No effort will be spared to ensure the safety and well-being of every resident," he maintained.

The embankment restoration and bank protection works are designed to address the longstanding vulnerabilities in the river's flood management infrastructure. The proposed works included construction of concrete panels and necessary backfilling to stabilise the eroded sections.

The Minister emphasised that such projects form part of

a broader strategy to modernise the flood control and water resource infrastructure across the Union Territory, complementing the ongoing efforts under Central and UT-level schemes.

He informed that all damages caused by the recent floods will be taken up on priority, with necessary restoration and protection works being planned to ensure timely relief and long-term resilience for the affected areas.

Repair Works on Sindh Power Canal

Water Supply to remain disrupted in several parts of Srinagar

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, APRIL 03: Executive Engineer, Water Supply Master Plan, Division Srinagar has informed that due to urgent repair works on the Sindh Power Canal, scheduled to be carried out by the Civil Investigation & Design Wing of JKPCDC, Kashmir, at Ganderbal on April 06, 2026, the raw water supply to Water Treatment Plants at Alusteng and Rangil will be affected.

Consequently, the potable water supply to several parts of Srinagar city and its adjoining areas shall remain disrupted for a period of 24 hours, commencing from 6:00 AM on Monday (April 06, 2026) to 6:00 AM on Tuesday (April 07, 2026).

The areas, as per an official statement, likely to be affected include Zakoora, Gulab Bagh, Habak, Naseem Bagh, Malla Bagh, Ahmad Nagar, Illahibagh, Buchpora, Soura, Anchar, Bohlochipora, Zoonimar, Nowshera, Bagh-i-Ali Mardan Khan, Sikhbagh, Zadibal, Hawal, Alamgari Bazar, Rajouri Kadal, Nallahmar, Nawakadal, Bohri Kadal, Nowhatta, Lal Bazar, Hazratbal, Sadribal, Karan Nagar, Kakasari, Balgarden, Chattabal, Kawdara, Eidgah, Mahraj Gunj, Zaina Kadal, Saidpora, Firdous Abad, parts of Batmaloo, Qamarwari, Zainakoot, Noorabad, Lawaypora, Mujgund, Bemina, Iqbalabad, Usmanabad, Sir



Syedabad, Mansoor Colony Bemina, Boatman Colony, Gousia Colony, EWS Colony, Qamarabad, Nundreshi Colony Bemina, Tengpora (partly), JVC Hospital, Government Dental College, GMC Hostel Bemina, New Children Hospital Bemina, New Court Complex Mominabad, Haji House Bemina, Parimpora, Shalteng, HMT, Umarabad, Gund Hassi Bhat, Maloora, Panzina and

adjoining areas. The general public is advised to store sufficient quantity of water in advance to meet their requirements during the disruption period. For any complaints or grievances regarding water scarcity or shortage, the public may contact the PHE Provincial Control Room (0194-2477207, 0194-2452047, 9419413914, 9419413915), which shall remain functional round the clock.

Director Agriculture Jammu reviews agricultural activities, enforcement measures in Billawar

KT News Desk

BILLAWAR, APRIL 03: Director Agriculture Jammu (DAJ) Anil Gupta, Friday visited Sub Division Billawar, where he chaired a meeting to review agriculture activities and enforcement of Fertilizer Control order.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Sub-Divisional Agriculture Officers of Kathua, Hiranagar, Basohli and Billawar along with SDL SMS Billawar, AEOs, Agriculture Assistants (Input) and the Law Enforcement team. The Chief Agriculture Officer (CAO) Jatinder Kumar joined through virtual mode.

The Director reviewed ongoing agricultural activities and issued key directions to strengthen fertilizer regulation, promote sustainable practices and enhance farmer outreach.

He stressed strict monitoring of fertilizer sale centres, directing officers to ensure regular physical verification of stock and its reconciliation with POS data to prevent discrepancies, hoarding or diversion.

He also reviewed preparations for the next phase of the Viksit Bharat programme. He called for launching mass awareness campaigns by organizing camps to educate the Farmers about judicious use of fertilizers, balanced nutrient management and departmental schemes. Special emphasis was laid on the "Dharti Mata Bachao Abhiyan" to promote soil health and sustainable farming practices.

Reiterating adherence to the Fertilizer Control Order (FCO) 1985, the Director emphasised proper record maintenance, transparency in transactions and prevention of overcharging.

Panchayat Electoral Roll Revision-2026

DEO Udhampur flags off IEC Van to spread awareness

KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 03: District Election Officer Udhampur Minga Sherpa Friday flagged off an Information, Education and Communication Van here from the DC Office Complex to generate mass public awareness regarding the Annual Revision of Panchayat Electoral Roll 2026.

The flag-off ceremony was held in the presence of Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh and Deputy District Election Officer Babu Pradeep Kumar along with other concerned officials.

Interacting with media persons, the DEO informed that the IEC Van

shall traverse across the district to disseminate information about the ongoing revision process. The initiative aims to educate citizens on procedures related to inclusion, deletion, correction and transposition of names in the Panchayat electoral rolls.

Emphasizing the significance of accurate and updated electoral rolls, the DEO stated that these are essential for strengthening grassroots democracy. He urged all eligible residents, particularly new voters who have attained the age of 18 years as on April 1-2026—to verify their details and ensure their names are included in the electoral rolls within the stipulated time frame.

DLSA Budgam conducts awareness Programme on dowry, social evils

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, MARCH03: District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Budgam, in collaboration with the Boys Higher Secondary School, Khan Sahib, under its Legal Literacy Club (LLC), organized an awareness programme on the issue of dowry and allied social evils.

The programme also incorporated an important session on the rights, protection, welfare, and entitlements of senior citizens, emphasizing the need to ensure dignity, security, and legal protection for the elderly in society. Participants were sensitized to the challenges faced by senior citizens and the legal safeguards available to them under existing laws.

The primary objective of the programme was to create awareness among students and participants regarding the serious social and legal consequences of the dowry system, while also educating them about the legal mechanisms in place to curb such practices. The initiative further aimed at fostering a sense of responsibility among the youth to stand against social evils and uphold the values of equality, respect, and justice.

The session witnessed enthusiastic participation from

students and faculty members, who actively engaged with the resource persons through interactive discussions and queries. The programme provided a platform for meaningful dialogue, enabling participants to better understand the social realities and legal implications associated with dowry and the neglect of senior citizens.

On the occasion Resource Persons delivered comprehensive and insightful lectures highlighting the multifaceted nature of the dowry system and its adverse impact on society.

The resource persons elaborated on the provisions of the Dowry Prohibition Act, 1961, explaining that the Act strictly prohibits the giving, taking, or demanding of dowry and prescribes stringent penalties for those found guilty of such offences. They emphasized that what was once considered a voluntary exchange of gifts has now transformed into a coercive and exploitative practice, often leading to harassment, cruelty, domestic violence, and even dowry-related deaths.

They further underscored the importance of the landmark judgment of the Supreme Court in State of Uttar Pradesh vs. Ajmal Beg, wherein the Court called for

strict enforcement of laws relating to dowry and stressed the urgent need to spread legal awareness to effectively combat such social evils.

In addition, the speakers highlighted the legal rights of senior citizens, stressing the duty of society and family members to ensure their well-being and protection. The participants were informed about the legal remedies available to senior citizens in cases of neglect, abuse, or abandonment.

Through such awareness programmes, the Legal Literacy Club continues its endeavour to empower young individuals with knowledge of their legal rights and responsibilities.

These initiatives play a vital role in shaping socially conscious citizens who can contribute towards the eradication of harmful practices and the promotion of a just and equitable society.

The programme concluded with a formal vote of thanks, wherein the efforts of DLSA Budgam and all stakeholders were appreciated for their commitment to promoting legal literacy and awareness among the youth.

DC Ramban reviews fuel, LPG stock position



KT News Desk

RAMBAN, APRIL 03: Deputy Commissioner Ramban Mohammad Alyas Khan Friday chaired a meeting to review the stock and supply position of LPG and petroleum products in the district.

ADC Varunjeet Singh Charak; Assistant Director FCS&CA Niamatullah Sheikh, other FCS officials and representatives from Indian Oil Corporation, Bharat Petroleum Corporation and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation attended the meeting.

The Deputy Commissioner took a detailed review of the available stock of petroleum products, operational status of petrol pumps, availability of LPG cylinders and the overall supply chain mechanism to ensure uninterrupted availability of fuel to consumers across the district.

The Deputy Commissioner, as per an official statement, directed the Assistant Director FCS&CA and TSOs to closely monitor the sale and stock position of LPG, besides carrying out inspections of LPG sale counters. The Assistant Director

FCS&CA informed the meeting that the district has adequate stocks of petrol, diesel and LPG with the delivery of supplies without any disruption.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized close coordination between enforcement authorities and oil companies to ensure timely replenishment and smooth distribution of supplies. He directed the AD FCS&CA and other officers to keep a close check on hoarding, black-marketing and overcharging of petroleum products and LPG cylinders.

The Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the progress of e-KYC of LPG connections and directed representatives of LPG companies to complete the remaining targets at the earliest. Officials of the FCS&CA Department were instructed to extend full support to LPG dealers in reaching out to left-out connection holders.

Warning against black-marketing, illegal hoarding and overcharging, the Deputy Commissioner said any attempt to create artificial scarcity shall be viewed seriously.

Mission YUVA: Review meeting held in Bhandarwah

KT News Desk

BHANDARWAH, APRIL 03: The weekly review meeting regarding Mission YUVA was held Friday in the office chamber of the Additional

Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Bhandarwah Sunil Kumar Bhutyal.

The meeting was attended by Branch Manager J&K Bank Bhandarwah Rajesh Bhandari; AEO Agriculture Karan Singh;

BPM NRLM Aakash Jaswal; AEO Agriculture Javid Iqbal; Junior Assistant Employment Department, Sarvesh Singh and BHD DECC Kamran Manzoor.

During the session, discussions were held regarding

progress, challenges and future strategies for strengthening the Mission YUVA programme at the grassroots level. Emphasis was laid on coordination among departments and timely execution of schemes.

The meeting concluded with directions to all concerned officers to work in close coordination and accelerate efforts for the successful implementation of Mission YUVA in the Bhandarwah area.

Adequate stocks of fuel available in Rajouri: DC reassures public

KT News Desk

RAJOURI, APRIL 03: Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma on Friday said that the district has adequate stocks of LPG, petrol, diesel, food grains, fertilizers and other related items.

Addressing a press conference Friday, the Deputy Commissioner informed that the district has sufficient stock and the supplies are being maintained as per the guidelines of the Government of India and the Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas. He reassured the public that there is no shortage of any essential commodity in

the district. The DC made it clear that hoarding, black marketing and illegal stocking will not be tolerated under any circumstances. "The distribution mechanism has been streamlined and is being closely monitored. The opening and closing stock positions of petrol pumps, LPG outlets and other supply points are being monitored closely," he added.

To ensure prompt grievances redressal, a dedicated Control Room has been established at the DC Office, the Deputy Commissioner said and added that the administration is actively addressing public

concerns and ensuring smooth supply across all areas.

The DC further cautioned that certain elements are deliberately attempting to create panic among the public to gain undue profit. He urged citizens not to fall prey to such misinformation and instead cooperate with the administration.

He urged the public to follow the OTP-based sale system and complete e-KYC through the designated portal or Common Service Centres (CSCs) to ensure transparency and accountability in distribution.

Highlighting enforcement measures, the Deputy Commissioner informed that the district

administration has conducted around 80 enforcement drives so far. During these operations, more than 130 domestic LPG cylinders being used for commercial purposes have been seized.

He added that enforcement teams at the tehsil level are actively monitoring the situation to curb hoarding and black marketing.

Reiterating the administration's commitment, the DC assured that all necessary steps are being taken to maintain adequate supply and prevent any disruption in essential services. He appealed to the public to remain calm and extend full cooperation to the administration.

Gyan Bharatam Survey

Udhampur administration hosts capacity building & training

KT News Desk

UDHAMPUR, APRIL 03: District Administration Udhampur Friday organized a capacity building and training programme for the effective implementation of the Gyan Bharatam Survey in the district.

The session was conducted in virtual mode under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Minga Sherpa.

The training programme was attended by Additional District

Development Commissioner Jugal Kishore along with other concerned officers and officials.

The technical session was led by Dr. Jahangir Iqbal, who delivered a detailed presentation outlining the objectives, scope, methodology and field-level execution of the survey. He elaborated on the importance of systematic data collection and adherence to survey protocols to ensure reliable outcomes.

The ADDC emphasized the need for dedication, sincerity

and a strong sense of responsibility while conducting the survey. He directed the field functionaries to strictly adhere to the prescribed guidelines and ensure comprehensive household coverage without any omission.

The participants were sensitized to survey protocols, household coverage strategies, data collection mechanisms and significance of maintaining accuracy and transparency throughout the survey process.

Courts not experts in faith, says seers' body Seeks to intervene in Sabarimala case

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 03: Courts should not determine essential religious practices as they are a matter of faith held to be sacred by the followers of a religion, the Akhil Bharatiya Sant Samiti has told the Supreme Court while seeking to intervene in the upcoming Sabarimala review proceedings.

A nine-judge bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Surya Kant is set to commence the final hearing on April 7 on petitions relating to discrimination against women at religious places, including the Sabarimala temple in Kerala, and on the ambit and scope of the religious freedom practised by multiple faiths.

In September 2018, a five-judge Constitution bench had, by a 4:1 majority verdict, lifted a ban that prevented females between the ages of 10 and 50 years from entering the Ayyappa shrine at Sabarimala and held that the centuries-old Hindu religious practice was illegal and unconstitutional.

The Akhil Bharatiya Sant Samiti, in its plea filed through lawyer Atulesh Kumar, has sought the court's nod to intervene in the Sabarimala review proceedings.

The organisation, which describes itself as an umbrella body representing 127 sects of the Sanatan Dharma, including approximately 18.5 lakh priests and 12 lakh seers, has said courts are not equipped to act as "experts" in religious matters.

The plea says the judiciary should only intervene in religious practices if those directly violate public order or on the grounds of morality and health. It says the fundamental right



to equality (guaranteed under Article 14 of the Constitution) should not be used to override the right to freely profess and practise religion (Article 25).

"Religion is a matter of faith and religious beliefs are held to be sacred by those who share the same faith. Thought, faith and belief are internal, while expression and worship are external manifestations thereof ... the phrase 'equally entitled to', as it occurs in Article 25(1), must mean that each devotee is equally entitled to profess, practise and propagate his religion, as per the tenets of that religion," the plea has said.

"The courts should not determine the essential religious practices because the court is not an expert in religious matters/practice. The courts should step in only when such religious practice violates public order, morality or health," it has added.

Justifying the restrictions at the Sabarimala temple, the plea says certain shrines follow purity rituals and specific traditions.

"This is based on the belief that the deity is a Naishtika Brahmachari (celibate) and worshippers must observe 41 days of strict purification, which the tradition believes is difficult for women during this phase," it says.

This religious practice should be protected under Article 25 and it cannot be said to be an absolute restriction on women as it prohibits a particular age group and consequently, it is not violative of Article 14, the plea has contended.

It has highlighted that there are more than 1,000 other temples dedicated to Lord Ayyappa where no such age restrictions exist, proving that the tradition at Sabarimala is site specific and rooted in the "essential practice" of that particular shrine.

Trump says US can take Strait of Hormuz with more time

REUTERS

Washington, Apr 03: President Donald Trump on Friday said the US can open the Strait of Hormuz with a little more time, as pressure mounts for his administration to find a quick resolution to a war against Iran.

"With a little more time, we can easily OPEN THE HORMUZ STRAIT, TAKE THE OIL, & MAKE A FORTUNE," Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

Nearly five weeks after it started with a joint US-Israeli aerial assault, the war in Iran continues to spread chaos



across the region and roil financial markets, raising the

pressure on Trump to find a quick resolution to the conflict.

Iran has effectively shut down the Strait of Hormuz, a key waterway that carries about a fifth of the world's total oil consumption, in retaliation for US-Israeli strikes that began in late February.

Reopening it has become a priority for governments around the world as energy prices soar.

In the speech on Wednesday night, Trump repeated his threats against Iran's civilian power plants and gave no clear timeline for ending hostilities, drawing vows of retaliation from Iran and depressing share prices.

Delhi court acquits husband, kin in dowry death case Cites history of wife's suicidal tendency

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 03: A Delhi court has acquitted a man and his family of all charges related to domestic cruelty and causing the dowry death of his wife in less than a year of marriage, pointing to text messages suggesting a long history of suicidal tendencies.

The messages referred to in the case were exchanged between the deceased wife and her friend.

Additional Sessions Judge Nipun Awasthi acquitted accused Daman Deep, Harpreet Singh, Amarjeet Kaur and Milan Deep Kaur of all charges under Sections 489A (cruelty by husband or in-laws towards wife), 406 (criminal breach of trust), 304B (dowry death) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

"It is proved that the accused persons cannot be imputed with any conduct of cruelty or harassment towards the deceased, and it is also proved that deceased was troubled by

negative feelings and suicidal tendencies.

"Hence, this court finds that the prosecution has failed to prove its case and the accused persons are not proved to have subjected the deceased to cruelty or harassment in respect of dowry demand," the court said, acquitting all four in its judgment dated March 30.

According to the prosecution, the deceased, Harinder Kaur, had been married to accused Daman Deep since December 6, 2017. On the evening of February 16, 2018, Harinder hanged herself in her matrimonial home.

Since she died within months of the marriage, the executive magistrate conducted inquest proceedings. An FIR was then filed based on the allegations levelled by the deceased's mother against her husband, brother-in-law, mother-in-law and sister-in-law.

The deceased's mother alleged her husband and in-laws used to harass her, demanding dowry of Rs 10 lakh and a big

vehicle. She alleged they also did not allow the deceased to visit her parental home after marriage.

The defence argued that the deceased had suicidal tendencies and had exhibited the same throughout her lifetime. It was argued that her suicide was a result of the tendencies and not induced by the accused's conduct.

The Forensic Science Laboratory retrieved all data from the mobile handset of the deceased and produced it in court as evidence. The court highlighted a few text messages between the deceased and her friend in April 2017 and July 2017 clearly expressing suicidal tendencies even before her marriage.

"It is found that the accused persons have successfully proved that the psyche of the victim was such that it was driving her to suicide," the court said, highlighting messages indicating that the deceased felt unwanted since birth.

The court also noted that the deceased's messages showed

she had "no grievance" with her husband and in-laws.

"There is not even an allusion to any dowry demand made from her or of any cruelty or harassment committed on her by the accused," the court said.

The court also highlighted all conversations between the deceased and her mother were "general inquiries about each other's well being" with nothing in the conversations suggesting she was subjected to cruelty by the accused.

The deceased's mother alleged that she had received a phone call from the deceased, informing her that she was being harassed for dowry. But the court found that none of the messages sent that day by the deceased to her mother and her sister were indicative of such a conversation.

The court also relied on a conversation between the deceased and her friend two days before her death -- indicating the feelings of being an unwanted child of her parents since her childhood.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Ayodhya cradle of

merely as a resource, but as a living force, and through the efforts of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi this power has been rekindled anew.

"The true strength of nations lies in their identity, their cultural depth and their civilisational roots. In that light, the significance of a civilisational source like Ayodhya is not confined to India but its impact can be felt deeply across the world," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that if we understand our roots, preserve them and present them in a contemporary idiom, we become not only culturally richer but economically stronger as well. Ayodhya is a living example that civilisation itself is the bedrock of future possibilities, he said.

"I see Ayodhya as a living idea whose greatest strength is its continuity. There, the past and the present are not separated. Even today, I believe, the same mantras resound, the same traditions live and the same faith flows as it did thousands of years ago. This continuity is the flow of consciousness, and through an unbroken inner dialogue we strive to carry forward that eternal flame which has burned across countless generations," the Lieutenant Governor further said.

Mahant Kamal Nayan Das Ji Maharaj of Maniram Das Chhawni, Ayodhya; Ram Bahadur Rai, President IGNA; Suresh Bhaiyyaji Joshi, Member, Akhil Bharatiya Karyakarini, RSS; Diya Kumari, Deputy Chief Minister, Rajasthan; Dr. Ashok Bajpai, former Member of Parliament, Lallu Singh, former Member of Parliament; Dr Sachchidanand Joshi, Member Secretary, IGNA graced the occasion. (KNO)

LG Sinha orders

related to the incident and ensure that justice is served," he said.

Meanwhile, in a communication to the District Magistrate Ganderbal the Under Secretary to the government the issue has been examined and accordingly, you are requested to get a thorough and impartial magisterial inquiry.

The magistrate has been asked to ascertain the facts and circumstances leading to the death of Raashid Ahmad Mughal son of Late Gull Zaman Mughal.

He has been directed to complete the inquiry within 7 days and submit the report to the Home Department. (KNO)

Centre asks states to

without necessary. People were encouraged to adopt alternate fuels such as PNG, induction and electric cook-tops where feasible, and to conserve energy in daily use.

Despite the "war situation," the government said it has accorded the highest priority to domestic LPG and piped natural gas, along with essential services such as hospitals and educational institutions.

Measures taken include boosting refinery output, extending LPG booking intervals to 25 days in urban areas and up to 45 days in rural areas, and prioritising critical sectors. Alternate fuels like kerosene and coal are being deployed to ease LPG demand, with additional coal supplies directed to states.

States have been advised to expand PNG connections and ensure targeted LPG distribution. In a review meeting with state officials, the MoPNG reiterated that there is no disruption in LPG supply for migrant workers.

More than 4,000 raids have been conducted across states and UTs to check hoarding and black marketing, with over 1,300 LPG cylinders seized in the latest action. Public sector oil marketing companies have also issued over 670 show-cause notices to LPG distributors.

So far, 21 states and UTs are conducting regular press briefings to keep citizens informed, the statement said.

'New Kashmir emerging'

tourism has also seen an increase in the recent years.

Referring to the situation on the ground, he said that people should visit Kashmir to witness the changes themselves. "There was fear in the past, but today there is peace and development. I appeal to people from across the country to come and see Kashmir," he said.

Ilyasi while referring to the Pahalgam terror attack said, "Such events may create temporary fear but do not define the overall situation. The atmosphere today reflects progress and stability."

During his visit, Ilyasi said he also visited the revered Hazratbal Shrine, where he appreciated the facilities and overall management, calling it a "model place of worship."

The cleric also touched upon the impact of past unrest, stating that the region is moving towards stability. "The youth who were once caught in cycles of violence are now moving towards education and progress. This is a positive sign," he said.

Referring to regional dynamics, he urged neighbouring countries to take note of India's development trajectory while reiterating that peace remains essential, he said, "War is not a solution."

Termining Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) as an "integral part of India", Ilyasi said the people there are closely observing the developments in Kashmir.

He said the progress in the Valley has generated interest among residents across the Line of Control. "War brings destruction," he said.

"Kashmir is integral to India's identity and the developments in the region should serve as an example of progress driven by peace," he added.

The Chief Imam further called for continued harmony and development, expressing hope that the current phase of progress in Kashmir will strengthen further in the coming years. (KNO)

JERC creates

pertaining to domestic premises, religious institutions, group housing societies, orphanages, old-age and infirm homes, charitable institutions providing services free of cost or on nominal charges, post offices at residences of villagers and residential premises of architects, engineers, advocates, doctors, teachers, artists, weavers, stitching and embroidery workers occupying not more than 20 percent of built-up area for respective professional purposes.

"This tariff category is applicable to electricity used for operating various appliances such as lighting, heating, cooling, cooking, washing, cleaning, entertainment or leisure, water pumping, etc," the government said.

It also informed that the group housing societies can avail of single-point power supply. The energy bill of a housing society shall be divided by the number of houses in it to determine the consumption of each house.

About the tariff for non-domestic and commercial supply category, the government informed the house that this tariff category shall be applicable to the shops, showrooms, business houses, offices, educational or technical institutions, clubs, meeting halls, places of public entertainment, hotels, cinemas, hospitals, dispensaries, clinics, nursing homes, X-ray units, diagnostic centres, pathological labs, fisheries, aquaculture, sericulture, dairy, hatcheries, printing presses—other than those qualifying to be charged under the LT industrial supply category, milk chilling centres—other than those specifically mentioned under Agricultural Supply, poultry farms, cattle breeding farms, nurseries, plantations, mushroom growing.

It also said that this tariff category shall be applicable to carpenters and furniture makers, juice centres, hoardings and advertisement services, typing institutes, internet cafes, STD/ISD PCOs, photocopying shops, tailoring shops, photo studios and colour labs, laundries, cycle shops, compressors for filling air, restaurants, eating establishments, guest houses, marriage gardens, welding transformer and lathe machines for repair works and services, book binders, petrol pumps and service stations, lifts and other appliances in shopping centres and offices, tourist house-boats, and other similar establishments.

"In addition, any connection not covered under other categories shall be billed under this category. However, this would exclude connections pertaining to State or Central Government or Defence services, which have been included in a separate category," the government said. (KNO)

272-km Udhampur

local conditions," it said. (KNO)

Upper reaches get

cloudy conditions with light to moderate rain or snowfall at many places, accompanied by thunder, hailstorm and gusty winds, are likely

on April 3 and 4. Some areas in both Kashmir and Jammu divisions may receive moderate to heavy precipitation, with brief spells of intense showers.

Weather is expected to improve slightly on April 5 and 6, with partly cloudy skies and chances of light rain at isolated locations.

Fresh spells of light to moderate rain or snowfall in higher reaches, along with thunder and gusty winds, are likely at many places between April 7 and 9.

On April 10 and 11, brief spells of light rain or snowfall in higher reaches are expected at a few places, while the weather is likely to remain generally dry from April 12 to 15.

MET ISSUES ADVISORY

The Met Department issued an advisory warning of thunderstorms, hail and gusty winds with speeds of 40-50 kmph at isolated places on April 3-4 and April 7-8.

It said intense showers over short durations could trigger flash floods and landslides at vulnerable locations and cause waterlogging in low-lying areas.

Farmers have been advised to suspend agricultural operations during this period, while travellers have been asked to plan their movement accordingly, the officials said.

INDEPENDENT WEATHERMAN FORECASTS THUNDERSTORMS, GUSTY WINDS

Meanwhile, an independent weather forecaster, Kashmir Weather said a strong western disturbance is set to impact Jammu and Kashmir over the next 36 hours, bringing widespread rain and snowfall across the Union Territory.

The forecaster said moderate to heavy rain is expected at many places, accompanied by thunderstorms, gusty winds and isolated hail-storm activity.

He warned that intense showers over short durations may trigger flash floods at vulnerable locations. Higher reaches and key mountain passes, including Zojila, Sinthan Top, Mughal Road, Sadhna Top and Razdan Top, are likely to receive fresh snowfall during the period.

Light snowfall over middle elevations between 2,100 and 2,400 metres cannot be ruled out, although the chances remain low, he said. Weather conditions are expected to improve gradually by Sunday, though a few places may continue to receive brief spells of rain, he added. (KNO)

Railways charts

focused on positioning rail transport as a reliable, time-bound, and cost-effective alternative to roadways, particularly for the transportation of cherries and other perishable produce.

Key strategies included increasing the occupancy of the JPP-RCS Parcel Train, which departs from Badgam at 6:15 AM and reaches Adarsh Nagar, Delhi, at 5:30 AM the following day via Bari Brahmana and Ambala Cantt, ensuring timely delivery of goods to markets. Participants also agreed on collaborating

with cargo aggregators to support small-scale traders by enabling consolidation of smaller consignments for efficient rail transportation.

Plans were further shared to upgrade loading infrastructure at Badgam, Srinagar, and Pampore railway stations to facilitate smoother operations.

To incentivize greater usage of rail services, the Railway administration discussed offering competitive freight rates and introducing concession schemes for bulk bookings by aggregators.

Speaking on the occasion, Uchit Singh emphasized the unique global identity of Kashmir's products and highlighted the Railways' commitment to establishing a seamless supply chain.

He noted that the initiative aims to empower farmers and traders by enabling uninterrupted transport of goods across the country, positioning the Railways as a key partner in the region's economic growth. (KNO)

Rising awareness,

"Early signs of autism—such as delayed speech, minimal eye contact, repetitive behaviours, and challenges in social interaction—are frequently overlooked in many Kashmiri households. These signs are often dismissed as temporary delays, leading to missed opportunities for early intervention," said Dr Abdullah, adding, "Many parents come to us worried about delayed speech or poor eye contact. Recognising these signs early and seeking help can make a huge difference in the child's development."

"We should remember that awareness is only the first step. What families really need is acceptance, support, and early intervention," he added.

Both experts emphasized that autism should not be viewed as a limitation but as a different way of perceiving and interacting with the world.

"Autism is not a lack of ability; it is a different way of experiencing and communicating with the world," Dr. Abdullah said.

Dr Guroo added that Autism also challenges societal norms and perceptions, urging communities to adopt a more inclusive outlook. "One thing autism teaches us is humility—every mind works differently, and sometimes the world is not the one who needs to change; the world around them does," he said.

"Despite increasing awareness, access to specialized therapies—including speech therapy, occupational therapy, and behavioural interventions—remains limited in Kashmir, particularly in rural and remote areas. Many families are forced to travel long distances or depend on expensive private services, placing both financial and emotional strain on caregivers," said another doctor.

He said, "Parents of children with autism often grapple with social stigma and a lack of understanding within their communities, further compounding their challenges" (KNO)

Strengthening nuclear triad

India commissions new nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine INS Aridaman

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 3: India on Friday commissioned its third indigenously-built nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, INS Aridaman, significantly bolstering the naval component of the nation's nuclear triad, authoritative sources said.

There is no official word yet on the commissioning of the boat that came amid a rapidly evolving regional security environment.

India's nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine (SSBN) programme is a closely guarded project. INS Arihant was the first boat under the SSBN project that was followed by another boat, INS Arighat.

INS Arihant is India's first home-made nuclear submarine. It was launched in July 2009 and was quietly commissioned in 2016. The navy commissioned its second indigenous SSBN, INS Arighat, in August 2024. The SSBN stands for ship submersible ballistic nuclear or nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines.

The SSBN programme is a key element of India's nuclear deterrence capability.

The induction of INS Aridaman



is seen as a major milestone to enhance India's strategic strike capabilities.

India is among a select group of countries that possess nuclear-powered submarines. The countries that have such assets are the US, Russia, the UK, France and China.

INS Aridaman has been commissioned after months of sea trials. It is learnt that Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Navy Chief Admiral Dinesh K Tripathi attended the commissioning ceremony held at a frontline naval base in southern India.

"It's not words but power, 'Aridaman,'" Singh said in a cryptic social media post in Hindi this morning. While India has proven

air and land-launched nuclear capabilities, it is now looking at ramping up underwater nuclear prowess. It is learnt that the focus will now be on a fourth nuclear-powered submarine. While India has proven air and land-launched nuclear capabilities, it is now focusing on boosting its underwater nuclear prowess.

In December, Admiral Tripathi had confirmed that a new nuclear powered ballistic missile submarine will be commissioned into the service soon.

India has been a leading voice in pitching for universal nuclear disarmament aimed at complete elimination of atomic weapons.

In 1998, India conducted Pokhran-II nuclear tests,

triggering strong reactions from many countries.

Following the tests, India maintained that it carried out the tests to have 'credible minimum deterrence' and it will follow the approach of "no first use".

In 2003, India officially came out with its nuclear doctrine that clearly elaborated on the 'no first use' policy.

Earlier in the day, Indian Navy's new warship INS Taragiri was commissioned in the presence of Singh at Visakhapatnam.

In his address at the commissioning ceremony, Singh described INS Taragiri as not merely a warship but a symbol of India's growing technological prowess, self-reliance, and formidable naval power.

"This ship is capable of high-speed transit and can remain deployed at sea for extended periods. It is equipped with systems designed to monitor enemy movements, ensure its own security, and if necessary, deliver an immediate response," he said.

"It features modern radar, sonar, and missile systems, such as BrahMos and surface-to-air missiles, which further augment its operational prowess," he added.

Jan Vishwas Bill rationalises compliance, decriminalises minor offences in health sector



PTI

New Delhi, Apr 3: The Jan Vishwas (Amendment of Provisions) Bill, 2026, passed by both Houses of Parliament, amends certain provisions in the health sector aligning with the broader objective of simplifying compliance while maintaining robust safeguards for public health.

The Bill reflects the government's commitment to fostering a trust-based governance framework and ensuring proportionate regulation by reducing the compliance burden on individuals and businesses, the Union health ministry said.

A central feature of these reforms is the replacement of criminal penalties, particularly imprisonment for minor procedural violations, with graded monetary penalties.

"This marks a shift towards a more facilitative regulatory framework while retaining strict action for serious violations affecting public health and safety," the ministry said in a statement.

Within the health sector, the amendments span key legislations including the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940; the Pharmacy Act, 1948; the Food Safety and Standards Act; the Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010; and the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions Act, 2021.

In the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940, several provisions have been amended to substitute imprisonment with financial penalties and to introduce a structured adjudication mechanism, the statement said.

Notably, an adjudication mechanism has been introduced

for violations under Section 27A(ii) and Section 28A.

This ensures that minor violations in the case of cosmetics (other than spurious or adulterated) will not require court intervention and can instead be addressed through a civil penalty framework, it said.

Further, violations such as non-maintenance of documents or non-submission of information, which were earlier punishable through court-imposed fines or imprisonment, can now be adjudicated through this civil penalty mechanism.

For the first time, the Act provides for the appointment of adjudicating authorities by the central government and state governments, along with a defined process involving issuance of show cause notices, provision for personal hearing and an appellate mechanism.

This reform will significantly reduce the burden on courts, minimise layers of litigation and enable faster resolution of minor compliance issues, the statement said.

It will particularly benefit the cosmetics industry by allowing structured and predictable handling of minor infringements, including procedural lapses such as non-maintenance of statutory records or documents, which are now free from prolonged litigation, it said.

Similarly, amendments to the Pharmacy Act, 1948 aim to modernise penalty provisions and enhance accountability through increased financial penalties for non-compliance. The reforms also ensure alignment with updated legal frameworks.

Under the Food Safety and Standards Act, 2006, provisions have been streamlined to strengthen enforcement while

ensuring that penalties are proportionate to the nature of the offence.

This supports a balanced approach between regulatory oversight and ease of compliance.

The Clinical Establishments (Registration and Regulation) Act, 2010 has been updated to emphasise monetary penalties for non-compliance, particularly in cases where deficiencies do not pose immediate risks to patient safety.

This encourages corrective action without resorting to criminal proceedings, the statement said.

Further, the National Commission for Allied and Healthcare Professions Act, 2021 has been strengthened to ensure compliance with professional standards and regulatory requirements, with penalties designed to deter violations while maintaining proportionality.

"The alignment of these reforms across multiple health-related legislations reflects a coherent policy approach aimed at harmonising regulatory frameworks. By standardising the shift from criminal penalties to civil penalties and introducing adjudication mechanisms, the amendments ensure consistency, predictability and proportionality in enforcement," the statement said.

This alignment reduces regulatory fragmentation, simplifies compliance requirements and provides clarity to stakeholders operating across different segments of the health sector.

"The involvement of 23 ministries in implementing these reforms underscores a whole-of-government approach towards improving the regulatory ecosystem," the statement said. "This broad-based participation reflects the government's strong resolve to advance ease of doing business and ease of living across sectors, ensuring that reforms are comprehensive, coordinated and impactful," it said. Overall, these measures are expected to improve compliance, reduce litigation and build greater trust between stakeholders and regulatory authorities, while continuing to safeguard public health and public interest.

Forex reserves drop by USD 10.29 billion to USD 688.06 billion

PTI

Mumbai, Apr 3: India's forex reserves dropped by USD 10.288 billion to USD 688.058 billion during the week ended March 27, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said on Friday.

In the previous reporting week, the overall reserves had declined by USD 11.413 billion to USD 698.346 billion. The kitty had expanded to an all-time high of USD 728.494 billion during the week ended February 27 this year, before the onset of the West Asia conflict.

The rupee has come under pressure since the start of the West Asia conflict, and the RBI has been intervening in the forex market through dollar sales and has also taken some surprising policy measures to harness the fall.

For the week ended March 27, foreign currency assets, a major component of the reserves, decreased by USD 6.622 billion to USD 551.072 billion, the central bank's data showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include effects of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units, such as the euro, pound, and yen, held in the foreign exchange reserves.

Value of gold reserves decreased by USD 3.666 billion to USD 113.521 billion during the week, the RBI said.

The Special Drawing Rights (SDRs) were up USD 17 million to USD 18.649 billion, the apex bank said.

India's reserve position with the IMF was down by USD 17 million to USD 4.816 billion in the reporting week, according to the apex bank's data.

Vande Bharat operates as distinct passenger service segment with specific fare structure: Vaishnaw

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 3: Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has said that the Vande Bharat trains operate as a distinct passenger service segment having a specific fare structure and referred to various factors that are taken into consideration before deciding their fare structure.

"While deciding the fare structure of various types of passenger services, due consideration is given to aspects like the cost of service, value of service, type of services/facilities offered, affordability, competition from other competing modes and socio-economic considerations, etc.," Vaishnaw recently informed the Lok Sabha in a written reply while responding to questions regarding expenditure on Vande Bharat trains.

"Accordingly, Vande Bharat trains operate as a distinct passenger service segment having a specific fare structure," he added.

According to the minister, Vande Bharat services have been widely accepted across the country, and during 2024-25, their average occupancy was approximately 100 per cent. Currently, 81



pairs of Vande Bharat train services (chair car) are being operated on the Indian Railways network.

Vaishnaw's statement was in response to DMK MP Malaiyarasan D's questions who wanted to know the total expenditure incurred by the government on the manufacturing and introduction of Vande Bharat trains so far, including funds allocated to the Integral Coach Factory and other production units.

Malaiyarasan also asked whether the government has conducted any assessment regarding passenger demand, affordability of fares and overall performance of these trains since their introduction, and the steps being taken by the government to expand its

network to smaller cities.

"Indian Railways (IR) is focused towards providing affordable and good quality service to all sections of society. Taking this initiative forward, IR has indigenously designed and developed the Chair Car and Sleeper version of Semi High-speed Vande Bharat Trainsets for enhanced passenger mobility and better travel experience," Vaishnaw said.

"To set new benchmarks in terms of safe and comfortable journey, these train sets have been provided with modern coaches having advanced safety features and passenger amenities," he added, while providing various facilities available for passengers in the train.

QR codes on question papers not web links: CBSE after controversy over viral search results

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 3: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has issued an advisory clarifying the purpose of QR codes printed on question papers, saying they are not web links, according to officials. The advisory comes in the wake of recent incidents where QR codes in CBSE exams went viral on social media for reasons unrelated to the examination.

"The QR codes printed on CBSE question papers are not intended to function as direct internet hyperlinks. These codes are part of internal systems for authentication, tracking, and examination integrity, and do not open as web links when scanned. Rather, they show the intended text," said CBSE Examination Controller Sanyam Bhardwaj.

"However, if the user opts to use Google search on the text, Google search suggests certain other words. This doesn't occur if standard browsers such as Chrome are used," he added.

The board further emphasised that any unrelated web results are algorithm-driven outputs and bear no connection to the CBSE or its examination processes. "...some individuals are deliberately misrepresenting these search results to spread false propaganda. The linking of QR codes to unrelated individuals or content is factually incorrect and misleading," Bhardwaj said.

During the class 12 history exam held on March 30, students reported that scanning a QR code on the question paper led to search results related to influencer Orhan Awatramani, popularly known as Orny.

'94 pc of world's childhood cancer deaths occur in low, middle-income countries'

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 3: Ninety four per cent of childhood cancer deaths and 85 per cent of new cases occur in low and middle-income countries, highlighting persistent inequities in healthcare access and treatment, according to a global analysis published in The Lancet journal.

Total childhood cancer deaths in 2023 were estimated at 17,000 in India, 16,000 in China, and about nine thousand each in Nigeria and Pakistan.

The analysis of data from the Global Burden of Diseases, Injuries, and Risk Factors Study (GBD) also estimated 377,000 new cases of childhood cancer worldwide in 2023, resulting in about 144,000 deaths.

Researchers forming the GBD 2023 Childhood Cancer Collaborators said deaths due to childhood cancer across the world reduced by 27 per cent from 1.97 lakh in 1990, but increased in Africa by 55.6 per cent. They added that childhood cancer was the eighth leading cause



of childhood deaths, with global burden contributing substantially to global childhood disease and cancer burden and

weighted disproportionately towards resource-limited places. Among nations with a low-middle sociodemographic index,

including India, childhood cancer was found to be the eleventh highest contributor to global cancer deaths across all ages in 2023.

It is also the tenth highest contributor to the world's child disability-adjusted life years (DALY) in 2023. One DALY represents the loss of one year lived in full health.

"The majority of childhood cancer burden occurred in settings with limited resources, with 85.1 per cent of incident cases, 94.1 per cent of deaths, and 94.1 per cent of DALYs occurring in LMICs (comprising low-income, lower-middle-income, and upper-middle-income countries by World Bank grouping)," the authors wrote.

"Global childhood cancer burden remains a substantial contributor to global childhood disease and cancer burden and is disproportionately weighted towards resource-limited settings," they said.

Deaths due to leukaemia (45,900) was found to be the highest contributor to the world's childhood cancer deaths, followed by cancer of brain and nervous system (23,200) and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma

(15,200, cancer of the lymph system).

"While outcomes for many childhood cancers have improved in high-income countries, these gains have not been equitably shared," said lead author Lisa Force, from the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation at the University of Washington School of Medicine, US, which co-ordinates the GBD study. "The vast majority of children with cancer live in low- and middle-income countries, where delays in diagnosis, lack of access to essential cancer treatment, and other health system limitations and barriers to care can contribute to disparities in childhood cancer burden," Force said.

The study emphasises that improving outcomes will require an expanded investment in cancer control systems, particularly in low and middle-income countries, including referral systems that support timely diagnosis, workforce training, access to chemotherapy, surgery and radiotherapy, as well as stronger cancer registration and surveillance systems, the researchers said.

Iran fires on targets across West Asia while Israel, US hit Tehran

War nears end of 5th week

AP

Dubai, Apr 3: Iran fired on targets Friday across the Middle East, damaging a desalination plant and setting a refinery ablaze in Kuwait, while American and Israeli airstrikes hit the Islamic Republic as the war neared the end of its fifth week.

Tehran has kept the pressure on Israel and its Gulf Arab neighbour, despite US and Israeli insistence that Iran's military capabilities have been all but destroyed.

In a sign that part of Iran's theocracy could be willing to negotiate, the country's former top diplomat published a proposal for ending the conflict in an influential American magazine.

Iran's attacks on Gulf energy infrastructure and its tight grip on the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil and natural gas transits in peacetime, have roiled



hostility will cause a greater loss of precious lives and irreplaceable resources without actually altering the existing stalemate," Zarif, who helped negotiate Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, wrote in Foreign Affairs magazine.

The US has presented Iran with a 15-point plan for a ceasefire that includes reopening the Strait of Hormuz, dismantling Iran's nuclear facilities and limiting its missile production in exchange for sanctions relief. But no signs of progress were apparent in the diplomatic effort.

Iran's initial five-point counterproposal aired by hard-line state television included recognising Iran's sovereignty over the strait, the removal of US bases from the region, compensation for war damage, and a guarantee against further aggression — all things likely unpalatable to the Trump administration.

stock markets, sent oil prices skyrocketing, and threatened to raise the cost of many basic goods, including food.

Iran's ability to wreak havoc in the global economy has proved a major strategic advantage, and world leaders have struggled to figure out how to reopen the waterway. The UN Security Council was expected to look at a new proposal.

Iran's former top diplomat suggests terms to end the war. Former Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif — a seasoned diplomat with long experience negotiating with the West who remains close to a pragmatic wing of Iran's leadership — wrote on Friday that the time has come to end the suffering on both sides. "Prolonged

UNSC to vote today on Bahrain-led resolution on Strait of Hormuz



PTI

United Nations, Apr 3: The UN Security Council will vote on a draft resolution proposed by Bahrain Saturday on reopening the Strait of Hormuz, even as permanent members China and Russia voiced opposition to earlier versions of the text that would have allowed use of force by countries.

The draft Security Council resolution affirms that the Strait of Hormuz is open for all transit passage. No state has the right to close or control it.

It authorises States to take "exclusively defensive measures" to secure transit passage and deter any acts to impede international navigation through the Strait.

It also provides a clear legal basis for all States to mobilise and support safe passage while following international law and international humanitarian law.

The draft resolution says that countries using this authorisation must notify and report to the UN, ensuring

transparency and adherence to international law.

It creates a monitoring mechanism with monthly reporting by the UN Secretary-General so the UN Security Council can take further action based on new developments, the Permanent Mission of the UAE to the UN said.

Bahrain, supported by the GCC and Jordan, has proposed the Security Council resolution on the Strait of Hormuz, which will be put up for a vote in the 15-nation Security Council on Saturday. Bahrain is currently the President of the Council for the month of April.

It is learnt that an initial version of the draft resolution had language that would have allowed countries "to use all necessary means" in the Strait of Hormuz, the Gulf and the Gulf of Oman to ensure passage in the crucial chokepoint.

However, veto-wielding permanent members Russia, China and France are understood to have opposed approval of the use of force.

The final draft now has language that states are authorised to take "exclusively defensive measures" to secure transit passage.

The Council was originally scheduled to vote on the resolution on Friday, but the UN headquarters is closed on the occasion of Good Friday. The vote is scheduled for 11 am (local time) Saturday.

Last month, India had co-sponsored a resolution in the UN Security Council that condemned in the strongest terms the "egregious" attacks by Iran against Gulf Cooperation Council countries and Jordan and demanded immediate cessation of all attacks by Tehran while denouncing its threats of closure of the maritime chokehold the Strait of Hormuz.

The Security Council, under the Presidency of the United States in March, had adopted the resolution with 13 votes in favour, none against and abstentions by veto-wielding permanent members China and Russia.

India cosponsored the Bahrain-led resolution along with over 130 nations including Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Canada, Egypt, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Japan, Kuwait, Malaysia, Maldives, Myanmar, New Zealand, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Spain, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States, Yemen and Zambia.

Affiliate of Iranian state TV claims US pilot ejected from aircraft over southwestern Iran

AP

Dubai, Apr 3: A channel affiliated with Iranian state television claimed Friday that a US fighter pilot ejected from a aircraft over southwestern Iran.

It was not clear what may have happened to the plane, including whether Iran was claiming it was shot down or there was another issue. If the claim is confirmed, it could lead to yet another dramatic escalation in the war, nearing the end of its fifth week. The US did not respond immediately to requests for comment.

The anchor on the Iranian channel urged residents to hand over any "enemy pilot" to police and promised a reward for anyone who did. The channel is in Kohkiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad province, an intensely rural and mountainous region that spans over 15,500 square kilometres (5,900 square miles).

Pope speaks with Israeli, Ukrainian presidents: Vatican

AFP

Vatican City, Apr 03: Pope Leo XVI had telephone conversations Friday ahead with the presidents of Israel and Ukraine in which he wished for peace amid ongoing wars, the Vatican said.

The American-born pope spoke with Israeli President Isaac Herzog and, separately, the president of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, in which the humanitarian situation in each war zone was discussed, the Vatican said in individual statements.

The pope and Herzog "reaffirmed the need to reopen all possible channels of diplomatic



dialogue to bring an end to the serious ongoing conflict, with a view to achieving a just and lasting peace throughout the Middle East," a statement said.

"The conversation also focused on the importance of protecting the civilian population and promoting respect

Ukraine celebrate Orthodox Easter, which this year falls on April 12.

With Zelensky, Leo expressed his "best wishes for the Easter holidays" and both leaders discussed the "urgency of providing the necessary aid to the population suffering from the conflict."

"Reference was also made to efforts aimed at promoting humanitarian initiatives, especially regarding the release of prisoners.

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in early 2022, the Vatican has sought to play a mediating role behind the scenes, in particular trying to bring about prisoner exchanges through its diplomatic channels.

for international and humanitarian law," it added.

The calls happened as the pontiff was observing the Catholic Holy Week leading up to Easter on Sunday, and while Herzog was marking Jewish Passover into next week, and as Zelensky, a Jew, was preparing to see

DPS Srinagar students bring laurels at National Level Pencak Silat Championship

KT NEWS DESK

Srinagar, Apr 03: Delhi Public School Srinagar celebrates a moment of great pride as Hurriya and Samma of Class XII return from the Senior National Women's Pencak Silat League with top honors. The championship, held at the SAI Training Centre, NEHU Campus in Shillong, Meghalaya, from March 25 to 27, 2026, brought together elite athletes from across the country to compete at the highest level.

In a stellar display of technical skill and composure, Hurriya clinched the Gold Medal while Samma secured the Silver, marking a significant milestone for the school's sporting legacy. Their performance on such a demanding national stage is a credit to their discipline and the months of rigorous preparation they put in leading up to the event.

Reflecting on the achievement, Principal



Ms. Shafaq Afshan noted, "Seeing our students bring this level of grit to a national platform is incredibly rewarding; their success is a source of inspiration for the entire school," while Chairman Mr. Vijay Dhar added, "This victory in Shillong reinforces our commitment to supporting young talent at every level, and we are immensely proud of what these young women have accomplished."

I sincerely apologise to MS & Kapil: Yuvraj says told dad Yograj that outbursts not okay

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 3: Distancing himself from Yograj Singh's angry outbursts against Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Kapil Dev, World Cup-winning former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh has said that the controversial remarks of his father were "not okay" and he "sincerely apologises" for them.

In a podcast interview with 'Sports Tak', Yuvraj addressed the contentious issue of his father blaming Dhoni for his ouster from the national team besides claiming to have abused Kapil on selection issues in the past.

"I would like to apologise to Kapil and M S Dhoni about the comments because Kapil paaji has been a great player for India. What kind of relationship they (Yograj and Kapil) had, I don't know, I wasn't even born," Yuvraj said.

"And I have played with Ms Dhoni and had expectations about my relationship with him. But what dad said about him, I have told him that it's not okay.

"I told him 'it's not okay because things reflect on me. I have played with him, I would appreciate you not saying these things about him,' the big-hitting all-rounder, who was the hero of India's 2011 World



Cup triumph, said.

Yuvraj said both Kapil and Dhoni are well aware that the comments of his father are in no way a reflection of his own thoughts.

"Whatever the reasons, you know what they are. But I would sincerely like to apologise to both of them for the words but they also know that the words are not mine. As cricketers, I have huge respect for them for what they have done for the country," he said.

Kapil was captain North Zone, and Haryana when Yograj said he dropped

him "for no reason" which led to him abusing Kapil at his home before quitting cricket altogether.

In case of Dhoni, Yograj has maintained that the iconic skipper was the reason for Yuvraj's ouster from the team. After the World Cup triumph in 2011, Yuvraj battled cancer to come back to cricket before retiring in 2019 when he was not picked for the World Cup that year.

Yograj said Dhoni was responsible for "ruining" Yuvraj's career and that he would never forgive the Ranchi man for this.

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Saturday, 4th April

THE SUPER MARIO GALAXY MOVIE (U/A)
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
03:45 PM

DHURANDHAR THE REVENGE (A)
HINDI ATMOS - 10:00 AM, 02:25 PM, 06:50 PM
HINDI - 11:15 AM, 12:20 PM, 04:45 PM

PROJECT HAIL MARY (U/A)
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
06:10 PM

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