

LG Sinha inaugurates J&K Bank's Regional Business Centre at Jammu

MD & CEO appraises of Rs 2.90 lakh crore business milestone



KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 07: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday inaugurated the Regional Business Centre of Jammu Kashmir Bank at Rail Head Complex, Jammu. He congratulated and extended his felicitations to the entire team of J&K Bank on the occasion.

Marking a significant milestone in the Bank's infrastructure and business expansion strategy, the newly established centre will serve as a vital operational and administrative hub. The

facility is designed to further improve service delivery and operational efficiency through its robust infrastructure and enhanced customer interface areas.

The integrated and technology-enabled business centre will be pivotal in driving efficiency, deepening market penetration and supporting J&K Bank's vision of sustainable and inclusive expansion across geographies.

Amitava Chatterjee, MD & CEO, J&K Bank apprised the Lieutenant Governor of the Bank's strong financial performance, highlighting

that the Bank's business has crossed Rs 2.90 lakh crore.

The commissioning of the Regional Business Centre is not merely an expansion of physical infrastructure, but a decisive step towards strengthening our business architecture in a key growth region, he said.

The new Regional Business Centre will enhance the Bank's presence in the Jammu region while reinforcing its commitment to modernising infrastructure in line with evolving customer expectations and business needs. | More on P6

Can't trust weather anymore, time for modern agriculture: Omar Abdullah

Inaugurates ₹5.93 crore Centre of Excellence for Agriculture at Talab Tillo

Announces CoEs to be established in all 20 districts as per Budget 2026-27

KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 07: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said the establishment of Centres of Excellence in agriculture and allied sectors is aimed at providing high-quality plant material and seeds to farmers, enabling them to significantly enhance their earnings.

The CM made these remarks after inaugurating the Centre of Excellence for Entrepreneurship in Precision Vegetable and Floriculture Farming at Talab Tillo, developed under NABARD at a project cost of ₹5.929 crore.

Last year, in August, the foundation stone for this facility was laid by the Chief Minister on August 4, 2025. On Tuesday, following the inauguration, the Chief Minister took a detailed tour of the facility and appreciated the Agriculture Production Department for establishing



the hi-tech infrastructure in record time.

Addressing farmers on the occasion, the Chief Minister spoke about the growing challenges in agriculture due to changing climatic conditions and the need for modern

interventions.

"In today's world, being a farmer is not an easy task. It may have never been easy, but it may not have been as difficult as it is today. Whether a farmer trusts anything or not, he has faith in | More on P6

Omar calls for robust judicial infrastructure

Calls for swift completion of High Court projects

KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 07: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the progress on the construction of the new High Court complexes for the Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh High Court at Srinagar and Jammu wings, underscoring the need for expeditious execution of the prestigious judicial infrastructure projects.

During the meeting, the CM emphasised time-bound completion and inter-departmental coordination, directing all concerned departments and executing agencies to fast-track the projects. He called for early grant of administrative approval for the Jammu wing at Raika, which is envisioned as a modern, integrated judicial complex. | More on P6

CM assures MLAs of time-bound redressal of issues

KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 07: Several legislators, including Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) and a Member of Parliament (Ladakh), on Tuesday called on

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah at the Civil Secretariat here and apprised him of constituency-specific issues and public grievances. A delegation from Ladakh, led by Member of Parliament Haji | More on P6

J&K police bust major LeT-linked terror module

Two Pak terrorists among 5 arrested

KNO News Desk

Srinagar, Apr 07: Jammu and Kashmir Tuesday claimed to have busted a major interstate terror module linked to Pakistan-based outfit Lashkar-e-Taiba by arresting five persons, including two foreign terrorists, officials said.

A top police official confirmed to news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) that among the arrested individuals is a top wanted LeT terrorist Abdullah alias Abu Hureira, who had been evading arrest for the last 16 years.

"Other individuals, who have been arrested include another Pakistani terrorist Usman alias Khubaib and three Srinagar residents - Mohammad Naeem Bhat, Adil Rashid Bhat and Ghulam Mohammad Mir alias



Mama," he said.

The operation began on March 31 and Naeem Bhat was the first to be arrested that day. His arrest led the police to Adil Rashid and Ghulam Mohammad Mir, he said.

The official added that over the last few days, Jammu and Kashmir police in coordination with other states' police and central | More on P6

Busting of terror module positive step: CM Omar

Says continuous terrorist infiltration into J&K a concern | Rejects Pak minister's remarks, reminds him of failed attempts

Sajid Raina

Jammu, Apr 07: As Jammu and Kashmir Police arrested five persons, including a Pakistani terrorist wanted for over 16 years, after dismantling an alleged Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) | More on P6

From 1967 to 2026 J&K loses half of its lakes: CAG Report

Of 697 waterbodies, 315 vanish, 203 shrink, 63 face extinction threat | Weak coordination, limited conservation, lack of comprehensive plans major concerns

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 07: The Comptroller and Auditor General of India has reported that 315 lakes in Jammu and Kashmir have disappeared since 1967, indicating a decline in water bodies across the region.

According to the CAG report in possession with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), 697 lakes were recorded in 1967, of which 315 are no longer traceable. These covered over 1,500 hectares. The report, which reviewed lake management between 2017-18 and 2021-22, also noted that 203 lakes have reduced in size, losing more than 1,300 hectares of area.

In total, 518 lakes have recorded a decline in water spread, affecting the extent of these water bodies and associated systems.

The audit said 63 lakes have lost more than half of their original area, placing them at risk of disappearance.

It noted that lakes fall under multiple departments, including forest, revenue and agriculture, leading to fragmented oversight.



Among the missing lakes, a majority were under the jurisdiction of revenue and agriculture departments, while others were managed by the forest department.

For shrinking lakes, responsibilities were shared among different agencies, including the forest department, district administrations and the lake conservation authority, the report said.

The audit pointed out that conservation efforts were limited to six lakes—Dal Lake, Wular Lake, Hokersar Wetland, Manasbal Lake, Surinsar Lake and Mansar Lake.

No comprehensive plans were prepared for the remaining lakes, and potential sites

for central assistance were not identified, it said.

Between 2017 and 2022, about one per cent of the capital expenditure budget was allocated to these six lakes, the report added.

The audit also highlighted gaps in implementation of measures such as monitoring water capacity, pollution control, weed removal and desilting.

At Dal Lake, issues related to land use, sewage management and monitoring affected restoration efforts, it said. At Wular Lake, the absence of a functional oversight mechanism affected decision-making and funding.

In Hokersar, the report noted that planning did not address water flow, | More on P6

J&K SLDC pulled up for 51% energy gap

Riyaz Bhat

Srinagar, Apr 07: The Northern Regional Load Despatch Centre (NRLDC) has hauled up the Jammu & Kashmir State Load Despatch Centre (SLDC), demanding an explanation for a crippling 51 percent shortfall in power availability.

According to the official document available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Chief General Manager (CGM) of System Operation (SO) at NRLDC has asked J&K SLDC to inform the reason for the shortage of 51% in energy.

Pertinently NRLDC in the month of February had anticipated power supply position for Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh with minus 51 percent.

About the Power Purchase Agreement with J&K and Punjab, the CGM (SO), NRLDC asked how Punjab would provide power to J&K, given that Punjab itself faces shortages during the morning and

evening peak hours.

In this regard, Punjab SLDC informed that they have a tie-up with J&K during the summer season for meeting paddy load requirements.

"Accordingly, whenever surplus power is available, they supply it to J&K, and in case of a shortfall, they purchase power from the market and supply it to J&K during that period," reads the document.

Meanwhile, NRPC Member Secretary highlighted the concern of Total Transfer Capability (TTC) and Available Transfer Capability (ATC) limit violations in Rajasthan and Uttarakhand, and voltage issues in J&K, stressing the need for system augmentation.

Earlier in last week of March, KNO reported that Jammu and Kashmir is likely to require additional 300 Megawatts (MWs) of power during the peak hours over the coming three years.

The official documents in this regard | More on P6

Massive landslide blocks Jammu-Srinagar highway

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 07: Amidst inclement weather forecast till April 10 across J&K, a massive landslide blocked the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway on Tuesday.

According to the MeT office in Srinagar, the weather in Jammu and Kashmir will generally remain cloudy with intermittent light to moderate rain and snowfall over higher reaches.

The department, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said a few places in both Kashmir and Jammu divisions may receive moderate to heavy rainfall, along with light to moderate snowfall in higher reaches during the night of April 7 and morning of April 8.

Amid the weather conditions, a massive landslide struck a stretch between Diggol and Khooni Nallah in Ramban along National Highway-44, leading to complete blockage of the road, officials said.

They said debris and boulders rolled down onto the



highway, rendering the route impassable and forcing authorities to suspend vehicular movement as a precautionary measure.

Commuters have been advised to avoid travel on the highway until clearance operations are completed and the road is declared safe, officials said, adding that restoration work will begin subject to weather conditions.

The MeT office also warned of thunderstorms, hailstorms and gusty winds with speeds of 40-50 kmph at isolated places. It said intense showers over short periods | More on P6

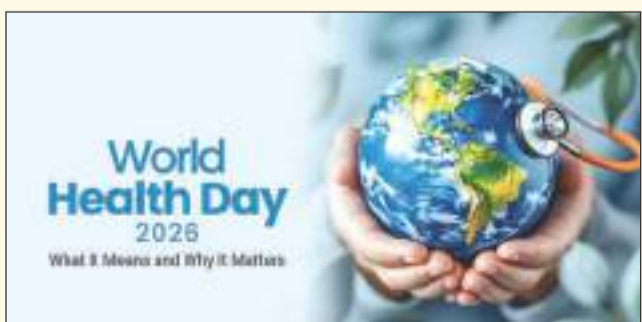
World Health Day 2026: Doctors stress preventive care, infrastructure boost across J&K

Experts seek preventive medicine clinics, advanced facilities to reduce burden on tertiary hospitals

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Apr 07: On the occasion of World Health Day 2026, medical experts and health administrators across Jammu & Kashmir have emphasized the urgent need to shift focus from curative to preventive healthcare, alongside strengthening infrastructure at all levels.

Highlighting the importance of early intervention, Dr Mohammad Salim Khan, Head of the Department of Community Medicine at Government Medical College Srinagar, while speaking to



the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said that establishing dedicated Preventive Medicine Clinics at medical colleges, district hospitals, and Community Health

Centres (CHCs) is the need of the hour.

"Prevention is better than cure. It is high time that we institutionalize preventive healthcare through specialized

clinics offering lifestyle modification support, counseling, and comprehensive preventive services," he said.

An official said that the government is also planning to introduce advanced healthcare facilities across the Union Territory. These include robotic surgery units at Government Medical College Srinagar and Government Medical College Jammu, phased establishment of dental units in all Government Medical Colleges, and new cath labs at Government Medical College Baramulla and Government Medical College

Doda to strengthen cardiac care services.

Doctors have, however, stressed that while tertiary care expansion is important, equal attention must be given to rural healthcare infrastructure.

They underlined the need for MRI facilities at district hospitals, adequate staffing, and improved diagnostic services to reduce patient overload at major hospitals.

This year, World Health Organization has given the theme "Together for health: Stand with science," calling for trust in scientific | More on P6

CS assesses flagship urban schemes for sanitation, housing & livelihood generation across J&K

■ Launches Single Use Plastic Challan, IEC Portal

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, APRIL 7: Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, held a meeting of the Housing & Urban Development Department (H&UDD) to assess the progress of major schemes aimed at transforming urban infrastructure, generating livelihoods, ensuring cleanliness and improving quality of life across the urban areas in J&K.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD; Commissioner, Jammu and Srinagar Municipal Corporations (JMC/SMC); Managing Director, J&K Housing Board; Managing Director, AMRUT; Chairperson, Jammu and Srinagar Development Authorities (JDA/SDA); Directors of Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) for Kashmir and Jammu divisions; Managing Director, Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY-NULM/Shehri); and other senior officers.

During the comprehensive review, the Chief Secretary took a detailed appraisal of the implementation of key Centrally Sponsored Schemes, including the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban), AMRUT 2.0, and Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana (DAY-NULM) Shehri.

Emphasizing the critical role of these initiatives in strengthening urban infrastructure and municipal services, the Chief Secretary directed the department to significantly accelerate the pace of implementation. He underscored the need for expeditious completion of projects, particularly those



related to used water management, sanitation, waste disposal, and treatment.

With regard to PMAY (Urban), he stressed the importance of removing bottlenecks and ensuring timely completion of housing units. He called for proactive sensitization of beneficiaries to commence and complete construction promptly, alongside timely release of financial assistance. He further directed the department to sponsor all eligible beneficiaries under the Interest Subsidy Scheme (ISS) component and ensure rigorous monitoring for early completion of housing projects.

Reviewing the progress under AMRUT 2.0, the Chief Secretary instructed the concerned authorities to fix clear timelines for each project and ensure strict adherence to completion schedules through continuous monitoring.

Earlier, Commissioner Secretary, H&UDD, Mandeep Kaur, presented a detailed

overview of the progress achieved under various schemes. She highlighted key bottlenecks, measures taken for their resolution, and outlined the implementation strategy and future roadmap to achieve the intended objectives.

Commissioner, JMC and MD, SBM (U), Devansh Yadav, made a detailed presentation on preparations for Swachh Survekshan 2026. He elaborated on improvements in door-to-door waste collection, segregation practices, and future plans for source segregation.

He also highlighted the development of sanitation infrastructure, including community and public toilets, Individual Household Latrines (IHHLs), Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs), Sewage Treatment Plants (STPs), Construction & Demolition (C&D) waste processing plants in Srinagar and Jammu, Compressed Biogas (CBG) plants in these cities, and bio-remediation of legacy waste across urban areas.

Commissioner, SMC, Peer Fazlul Haseeb, presented an overview of the existing and upcoming waste management infrastructure in Srinagar, focusing on scientific waste collection and disposal systems.

Managing Director, J&K Housing Board, Shahbaz Mirza, apprised the meeting of the progress under various verticals of PMAY (Urban), including Beneficiary-Led Construction (BLC), Affordable Housing in Partnership (AHP), and Interest Subsidy Scheme (ISS). He informed that out of 39,153 houses sanctioned under Phase-I of BLC, 31,173 have been completed, while 1,791 have not yet been started, with the remaining nearing completion.

He further informed that under Phase-II of PMAY (Urban), around 27,700 applications were received across districts, of which 23,203 have been verified on the ground in coordination with Deputy Commissioners, resulting in identification of 3,011 eligible

beneficiaries too.

Reviewing the progress under the newly launched D-JAY (Shehri) scheme, the meeting was informed that the scheme is currently being implemented on a pilot basis in Jammu and Srinagar cities. The initiative aims to address occupational, social, and residential vulnerabilities of the urban poor through strengthening grassroots institutions, enhancing livelihood opportunities, creating social infrastructure, and extending social security benefits over the next five years.

It was reported that 2,56,659 individuals have been enumerated under the scheme so far, including workers from vulnerable occupational groups such as construction workers, gig workers, waste workers, domestic workers, transport workers, caregivers, and others in the unorganized sector.

These individuals, as apprised in the meeting, have been covered under various social security schemes in convergence mode, including Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Ayushman Bharat, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan, Janani Suraksha Yojana, and One Nation One Ration Card, among others.

Later, the Chief Secretary, under the Swachh Bharat Mission (Urban), launched the Single Use Plastic Challan and IEC Portal aimed at generating awareness about the hazards of single-use plastic and strengthening enforcement mechanisms to curb its usage across the Union Territory.

Govt committed towards improving essential infrastructure, facilities for people: Javed Rana

Inaugurates, lays foundation for multiple development projects in Mendhar

KT NEWS DESK

MENDHAR, APRIL 07: In a significant push to strengthen the public infrastructure in border areas, Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, Tuesday inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for multiple development projects in the Mendhar constituency.

These initiatives, as per an official statement, aim to enhance the essential services, improve connectivity and promote socio-economic development in the area.

The Minister inaugurated a newly constructed Food Store Building at Mendhar, developed under the FCS and CA sector. Built with an expenditure of Rs. 151.80 lakh, the facility is expected to significantly strengthen the public distribution system by improving the storage capacity and ensuring better availability of essential commodities for the local population.

In a significant move to promote education and empowerment among young women, the Minister inaugurated a 100-bedded Girls Hostel (G+1) at Mendhar. Constructed under the SAMAGRA (PAB) 2022-23 programme at a cost of Rs. 259 lakh, the hostel aims to provide safe and improved residential facilities for girl students.

Furthering infrastructure development, the Minister laid foundation stone for a 300-metre RCC motorable bridge and culvert on the Jugal-Salwah road, constructed at an estimated cost of



Rs. 120 lakh. This project is poised to enhance the accessibility, facilitate smoother transportation and stimulate economic growth in the surrounding areas.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister said that these projects reflect the government's commitment towards improving the essential infrastructure and ensuring better facilities for the people, particularly in far-flung and border areas. "Our government is committed to bridge the divide between rural and urban areas so as to achieve balanced and equitable development across the region," he said.

The Minister said that sustained efforts are being made to bridge the developmental gaps and improve infrastructure across all sectors in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly in far flung and underserved areas. He highlighted that investments in infrastructure, education and connectivity are crucial for accelerating growth and improving the

overall quality of life.

During the visit, the Minister also inspected and reviewed the progress of several ongoing projects, including Synthetic Athletic Track at Bhatidhar, 50 MVA, 132/33 KV Grid Station at Kottan, Mendhar and Polyhouses with High-Density Plantation under HADP. He emphasized the importance of timely completion of these projects to ensure that their benefits reach the people without delay.

Among others the event was attended by Ashok Kumar Sharma, Deputy Commissioner Poonch; Manoj Gupta, Chief Engineer I&FC Jammu; Hanief Choudhary, Chief Engineer Jal Shakti Jammu; Gul Sayed, Director Horticulture Jammu; Arshad Hussain Reshi, Chief Engineer (Distribution) JPDC and Ravi Kant, Chief Engineer (Projects) JPDC besides other district and departmental officials.

Higher Education Dept carries plantation drive across J&K

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 07: The Higher Education department carried out a massive plantation drive across Jammu and Kashmir in line with the Green Jammu and Kashmir Mission formally launched by Minister for Education Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo from Jammu.

In alignment with this vision, Directorate of Colleges, as per

an official statement, rolled out a comprehensive action plan for implementation of the plantation drive across colleges in Jammu and Kashmir. Under this plan around 10,000 saplings were planned to be planted in around 145 colleges across Jammu and Kashmir with active institutional participation, identification of suitable plantation sites, monitoring mechanisms, and sustained maintenance of saplings to ensure long-term ecological benefits.

At Srinagar, Commissioner Secretary Higher Education department, Ram Niwas Sharma kick started the plantation drive from Amar Singh college here by planting saplings.

As part of the drive, Special Secretary, Higher Education, Shafiq Iqbal and Director Colleges, Dr. Sheikh Aijaz Bashir planted the saplings at Government Degree College Bema and Government Degree College Women, M.A Road Srinagar.

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROJECT OFFICER POSHAN PROJECT BANDIPORA

Subject:- Tentative Selection list of Sangnis (AWWs of Poshan Project Bandipora). This office has advertised three (04) posts of Sangnis (AWW) vide advertisement Notice No:- (11) of 2026 Dated:- 07.01.2026, under endorsement No: CDPO/PSHAN/BPR/Est/ 2025-26/25-31 Dated: 07.01.2026 and same was published through department of information vide Dip No:- K5716 Dated:- 08.01.2026, in Newspaper Daily paper Daily Aftab on .09.01.2026 vide publicity was given through PRI's and same was also uploaded on website of DC office Bandipora and applications were received accordingly. After proper scrutiny of application forms by the District level selection committee the Tentative merit list of Candidates for each ward was made accordingly as per H.R. policy for Sangnis (AWW) & Sahikayas (AWH) constituted by Government order No:- 222- JK (SWD) of 2022 Dated:- 30.11.2022, Which is now being published for inviting of objections if any within (10) days from the date of publication, after expiry of cut date no objection shall be entertained. The merit list of all Candidates is mentioned at "Annexure- A" and provisional /Tentative selection list as per (Annexure "B") is shown below each wards from were applications for engagement of Sangnis (AWW) were received.

Annexure "A"

Merit list of Candidates of Municipal Ward No. 05 (Sheikh Mohalla) Bandipora for the Post of Sangnis (AWW)

S.No	Name of Panchayat/Municipal Ward	Name of Candidate	Parentage D/o / W/o	Location of AWC	Municipal Ward No	Qualification	D.O.B	Marks Obtained	Percentage %
1	Municipal Ward No.05	Ayman Fayaz	D/o Fayaz Ahmad Hajam	Sheikh Mohalla	05	12th	01.02.1999	397/500	79.40
2	Municipal Ward No.05	Fozia Ayob	D/o Mohammad Ayub Hajam, W/o Waseem Akram	Sheikh Mohalla	05	12th	20.09.1993	550/750	73.33
3	Municipal Ward No.05	Anzila Fayaz	D/o Fayaz Ahmad Sheikh	Sheikh Mohalla	05	12th	06.04.2007	296/500	59.20
4	Municipal Ward No.05	Sumaya	D/o Ghulam Rasool Lone	Sheikh Mohalla	05	12th	03.11.1999	297/500	59.40
5	Municipal Ward No.05	Nazima Qadir	D/o Gulam Qadir Hajam	Sheikh Mohalla	05	12th	19.06.1998	283/500	56.06
6	Municipal Ward No.05	Taieba Farooq	D/o Farooq Ahmad Ganai, W/o Farhad Ahmad Bhat	Sheikh Mohalla	05	12th	20.08.2000	275/500	55.00
7	Municipal Ward No.05	Shabira Akther	D/o Ab Rashid Lone, W/o Irshad Ahmad Kumar	Sheikh Mohalla	05	12th	20.10.1992	390/750	52.00
8	Municipal Ward No.05	Aabiroo Rajab	D/o Mohammad Rajab Hajam	Sheikh Mohalla	05	12th	10.07.2002	240/500	48

S.No	Name of Panchayat Halqa	Name of Candidate	Parentage D/o / W/o	Location of AWC	Ward No	Qualification	D.O.B	Marks Obtained	Percentage %
1	Chuntimulla Ward No.01	Fiza Afzal	D/o Mohammad Afzal LONE	Chuntimulla	01	12th	05.01.2003	327/500	65.4
2	Chuntimulla Ward No.01	Heena Bano	D/o Ab Ahad Lone	Chuntimulla	01	12th	28.10.2001	319/500	63.8
3	Chuntimulla Ward No.01	Shaziyah Manzoor	D/o Manzoor Ahmad Lone, W/o Abdul Hamid Lone	Chuntimulla	01	12th	11.03.2001	305/500	61
4	Chuntimulla Ward No.01	Nusrat Shaban	D/o Mohammad Shaban Lone	Chuntimulla	01	12th	19.05.2000	302/500	60.4
5	Chuntimulla Ward No.01	Khalida Bano	D/o Ghulam Mohammad Reshi, W/o Waseem Ahmad Lone	Chuntimulla	01	12th	05.09.1990	369/750	49.2

Subject: Merit List of Candidates of Panchayat Muqam-A Ward No. 07 for the post of Sangnis AWW

S.No	Name of Panchayat Halqa	Name of Candidate	Parentage D/o / W/o	Location of AWC	Ward No	Qualification	D.O.B	Marks Obtained	Percentage %
1	Muqam-A	Tabish Tariq	D/o Tariq Ahmad Shah	Muqam-A	07	12th	05.03.1998	357/500	71.4
2	Muqam-A	Rabia Jamal	D/o Mohammad Jamal Sheer Gojree	Muqam-A	07	12th	01.09.2006	309/500	61.8
3	Muqam-A	Shayista Jamal	D/o Mohammad Jamal Sheer Gojree	Muqam-A	07	12th	10.03.2000	304/500	60.8
4	Muqam-A	Nuzhat Nazir	D/o Nazir ud Din Peer, W/o Amir Muzaffar Shah	Muqam-A	07	12th	29.03.1993	430/750	57.33
5	Muqam-A	Night Naz	D/o Attaullah Wani, W/o Fayaz Ahmad Sheikh	Muqam-A	07	12th	01.02.1990	302/750	40.26

Subject: Merit List of Candidates of Panchayat Halqa Aloosa Ghat Ward. No.07 for the post of Sangnis AWW

S.No	Name of Panchayat Halqa	Name of Candidate	Parentage D/o / W/o	Location of AWC	Ward no	Qualification	D.O.B	Marks Obtained	Percentage%
1	Aloosa	Surriya Mushtaq	D/o Mushtaq Ahmad Dar W/o Umar Farooq Dar	Aloosa Dar	07	12th	06.01.2001	227/500	45.4

Annexure-B (Tentative/Provisional Selection List)

S.No	Name of Municipal ward/Panchayat	Name of Candidate	Parentage D/o / W/o	Location of AWC	Ward No	Qualification	D.O.B	Marks Obtained	Percentage %
1	Municipal Ward No.05	Ayman Fayaz	D/o Fayaz Ahmad Hajam	Sheikh Mohalla	05	12th	01.02.1999	397/500	79.40
2	Chuntimulla Ward No.01	Fiza Afzal	D/o Mohammad Afzal LONE	Chuntimulla	01	12th	05.01.2003	327/500	65.40
3	Muqam-A	Tabish Tariq	D/o Tariq Ahmad Shah	Muqam-A	07	12th	05.03.1998	357/500	71.4
4	Aloosa Ghat	Surriya Mushtaq	D/o Mushtaq Ahmad Dar, W/o Umar Farooq Dar	Aloosa Ghat	07	12th	06.10.2001	227/500	45.4

Child Development Project Officer
Poshan Project Bandipora
Member Secretary

DIPK-197/26
DATED: 07-04-2026

No: CDPO/Poshan/Bpr/2025/2025-26/432-39

Dated: 06-04-2026

Tonga 2.0: Heritage on hooves returns to Srinagar

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Apr 07: In the middle of Srinagar's fast-moving traffic and modern bustle, a slow, rhythmic clip-clop has begun to turn heads again.

A traditional Tonga, once a common sight across Kashmir, has returned to the streets, thanks to a 70-year-old man, Ghulam Rasool Kumar, determined to keep a piece of the past alive.

Ghulam Rasool, a resident of Srinagar, has reintroduced the horse-drawn cart, offering locals a rare glimpse into a bygone era when tongas were an integral part of daily life in the Valley.

For decades, these carts ferried passengers through markets, neighbourhoods and riverbanks, long before

motor vehicles came to dominate the roads.

With time, they gradually disappeared, replaced by cars, auto rickshaws and buses, surviving only in memory and old photographs.

Kumar's initiative is now bringing that memory back to life. Moving through the city at a slow pace, the tonga has become an instant attraction.

People across age groups pause to watch, often recalling a time when such rides were routine. Youngsters stop to take pictures or hop on for a short ride.

"I wanted to revive something that belongs to our culture," Kumar says. "This is not just transport, it is part of

who we were."

Locals say the experience offers more than just a ride. It creates a moment of pause in an otherwise hurried day something increasingly rare in the city's changing landscape.

Children wave as the cart passes, while commuters slow down to make way, some with smiles of recognition, others with curiosity.

It is pertinent to mention, that the revival comes at a time when Srinagar recently witnessed panic buying at petrol pumps and LPG outlets following rumours linked to global developments in West Asia, although authorities have maintained that supplies remain adequate—(KNO)



"I wanted to revive something that belongs to our culture," Kumar says. "This is not just transport, it is part of who we were."

ULI to transform lending ecosystem in J&K: CS

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 07: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), Jammu on Tuesday organised a workshop on the Unified Lending Interface (ULI) for officials from various government departments and banks operating in the Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

The workshop was graced by Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, as the Chief Guest, and Executive Director, RBI Mumbai, P. Vasudevan, as the Special Guest. The event was held in the presence of Regional Director, RBI Jammu, Chandrashekhar Azad, and attended by senior dignitaries including Dr. Ashish Chandra Verma, Financial Commissioner (ACS), Tourism; Mandeep Kaur, Commissioner Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department; Secretaries of various departments and senior officials from banks.

Addressing the gathering, Dulloo, described the Unified Lending Interface as a transformative step towards democratising access to credit, ensuring that no deserving entrepreneur, farmer or small business is left behind due to procedural bottlenecks. He highlighted the special relevance of ULI for a hilly region like Jammu & Kashmir, noting that technology-driven integration of data has the potential to compress loan processing timelines from weeks to minutes, thereby ushering in a new era of efficiency, transparency and trust in the lending ecosystem.



The Chief Secretary further observed that ULI would bridge longstanding gaps in credit accessibility, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas, and aligns with the broader vision of financial inclusion for MSMEs, farmers and first-time borrowers. Emphasising the shift from collateral-based to data-driven lending, he noted that the platform would enable institutions to take informed decisions based on verified digital footprints while reducing reliance on physical documentation. The Chief

Secretary also stated that ULI's interoperable architecture would eliminate fragmentation across data systems, leading to faster and more reliable credit decisions. He stressed the importance of capacity building and stakeholder awareness for optimal utilisation of the platform and commended its plug-and-play architecture, which is expected to lower operational costs and encourage wider participation from fintechs and financial institutions. He urged all stakeholders to ensure that the

benefits of this initiative reach the last mile, empowering farmers, artisans and small entrepreneurs across the districts of the UT.

In his inaugural address, Regional Director, RBI Jammu, Chandrashekhar Azad, welcomed the participants and highlighted that the Unified Lending Interface, conceptualised by the Reserve Bank of India and developed by the Reserve Bank Innovation Hub (RBIH), is designed to enable seamless and frictionless credit delivery. He noted that the

platform integrates diverse data sources across the credit ecosystem, thereby improving access to credit, reducing turnaround time and enhancing customer experience.

Describing ULI as the "UPI moment" for the lending sector, he remarked that just as the Unified Payments Interface revolutionised digital payments, ULI has the potential to redefine credit delivery by making it more inclusive, efficient and accessible across the country. Executive Director, RBI, P. Vasudevan, in his address, highlighted the platform's potential to transform credit delivery through secure, consent-based access to digital data. He emphasised that ULI aims to reduce delays, improve efficiency and expand access to credit, particularly for farmers, small entrepreneurs and rural sectors. While acknowledging the progress made in financial inclusion, he noted that many borrowers still remain underserved due to the lack of reliable digital data. He encouraged the Government to integrate its datasets through APIs and initiate pilot projects to further strengthen financial inclusion and drive economic growth.

The workshop concluded with detailed presentations and interactive sessions aimed at familiarising stakeholders with the operational aspects and implementation framework of the Unified Lending Interface.

Govt explores AI adoption in governance

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 07: The government of Jammu and Kashmir convened a high level Steering Committee meeting, chaired by Additional Chief Secretary (PwD) Anil Kumar Singh, to deliberate on adopting and mainstreaming Artificial Intelligence (AI) across key governance sectors in the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by the senior officials including Secretary, Information Technology, Dr. Piyush Singla, CEO J&KGA Mahima Madan, technical experts and representatives from leading institutions like IIT, NHRSC and BISAG-N.

The objective of the meeting was to explore the potential of AI-driven solutions in enhancing the public service delivery, improving operational efficiency and enabling data-driven decision-making.

The meeting emphasised on identifying and adapting successful AI use cases being implemented in other States and Union Territories to suit the specific requirements of Jammu and Kashmir.

It was informed that the priority sectors identified for AI integration included public works, disaster management, healthcare, agriculture, education, transport, finance and road safety.

Key application areas discussed included predictive analytics for disaster forecasting, satellite-based monitoring, AI-enabled diagnostics in healthcare, intelligent traffic and crime analysis systems besides smart learning and assessment tools in education. The need for immediate identification of select high-impact and scalable use cases, particularly in agriculture and healthcare, was also

highlighted.

It was decided that all the Administrative Departments will prepare comprehensive, sector-specific AI roadmaps with clearly defined implementation timelines. Technical agencies and academic institutions will extend necessary support in solution design, pilot implementation and capacity building.

Additionally, the focus will be placed on identifying low-hanging use cases for early adoption to demonstrate quick and measurable outcomes. This initiative marks a significant step towards leveraging the emerging technologies for good governance and positioning Jammu and Kashmir as a forward-looking, digitally empowered Union Territory.

The meeting also emphasized the need for customization of AI solutions considering the unique requirements of J&K, particularly in sectors such as agriculture, security governance besides adopting a synergistic approach across the departments. It was further suggested to organize dedicated workshops for finalization of use cases and awareness.

The meeting concluded with key directions, including constitution of a dedicated group of officers and technical experts for finalization of AI use cases, prioritization of key departments in the first phase and inclusion of domain experts from IITs and BISAG-N for structured implementation. All the Administrative Departments have been directed to prepare comprehensive AI roadmaps for their respective sectors for presentation in the next review meeting.

Army boosts J&K Police for counter-terror Ops

YOGESH

Jammu, Apr 07: In a significant step towards strengthening operational synergy and enhancing counter-terrorism preparedness, Army's Jammu based Tiger Division have started Counter Insurgency/Counter Terrorism (CI/CT) Refresher Course for Jammu and Kashmir Police personnel.

The course was inaugurated by Anand Jain, Additional Director General of Police (Armed), J&K, along with the General Officer Commanding (GOC) Tiger Division and other senior officials of the Indian Army and J&K Police.

The programme is a specialised refresher course focusing on counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism operations, aimed

at upgrading skills, standardising procedures, and enhancing joint operational effectiveness.

The course commenced on April 7 and it will conclude on April 18, 2026.

The field training is being held at the Miran Sahib Brigade under Tiger Division in Jammu. Officials said that unique initiative has been designed to address the evolving security challenges in Jammu and Kashmir by improving coordination, interoperability, and tactical preparedness between security forces. It also seeks to strengthen junior leadership, crucial for executing small-team operations in counter-terror scenarios.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Govt working on crop insurance for farmers: Sakeena Itoo



JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar Apr 07: Cabinet Minister Sakeena Itoo on Tuesday said the government is actively working towards the implementation of a comprehensive crop insurance scheme to safe-

guard farmers and orchardists against losses caused by natural calamities.

The minister visited several hailstorm-affected villages of Kulgam district, where she took stock of the extensive damage caused to horticulture orchards, crops,

residential structures, and public infrastructure.

The areas, Itoo visited, included D.H. Pora, Nihaman, Manzgam, Bathipora, Ladgo Rambhama, Pombay and adjoining localities, many of which witnessed severe damage at a crucial stage of orchard flowering, raising concerns among fruit growers about significant production losses this season.

Conducting an on-the-spot assessment, the minister interacted with affected families, farmers, and local representatives, assuring them of the government's full support during the crisis.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

J&K secures gold in FT at India Skills Contest

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 07: Jammu and Kashmir has made a remarkable mark at the National level India Skills Competition 2025-26, securing a gold medal and Medallion of Excellence and making the Union Territory proud.

In a standout achievement, Diksha, a student of National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT) Srinagar, clinched the gold medal in Fashion Technology (FT), earning the prestigious opportunity to represent India at the upcoming World Skills Competition scheduled to be held in Shanghai, China. The Medallion of Excellence

further highlights the competitive edge, discipline and dedication of the participants from the region.

Mission Director Jammu and Kashmir Skill Development Mission, Leena Pada, lauded the achievement and dedicated this success to the officials who worked tirelessly to ensure effective implementation of the program. She termed it a significant milestone for the Union Territory's evolving skill development ecosystem.

Secretary Skill Development, Rajeev Ranjan Kumar, also lauded the achievement and congratulated the students for their hard work and dedication.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Crackdown on pressure horns, hidden plates, high-beam lights

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Apr 07: Senior Superintendent of Police (Traffic), Srinagar City, Ajaz Ahmad Bhat on Tuesday said the department has intensified enforcement against the use of pressure horns, high-beam lights, hidden number plates and other violations, following a surge in public complaints across the city.

SSP Bhat said several complaints have been received from residents,

particularly along the national highway and city bypass, where heavy vehicles and truckers frequently use high-intensity pressure horns.

"We received many complaints from people regarding pressure horns, especially on highways where truckers use high-intensity horns, causing inconvenience to the public," he said.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

NOTICE

I intend to correct my name in my Driving Licence bearing No. JK0120250011082 from Shaiq Rafiq to Shieq Rafiq Bhat, as per my Matriculation Certificate and other relevant documents.

If anyone has any objection regarding this correction, he/she may contact the RTO Kashmir within 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that, no claim or objection shall be entertained.

Shieq Rafiq Bhat
S/o Rafiq Ahmad Bhat
R/o Friends Colony, Teilbal, Hazratbal, Srinagar

EDITORIAL

Planting Hope: A Green Initiative That Must Grow Into A Movement

The launch of the mega plantation drive across Jammu and Kashmir under the inspiring call of "One Student-One Tree" is a welcome and timely initiative that deserves wholehearted appreciation. Minister Sakeena Itoo's vision to transform educational and health institutions into green, vibrant, life-supporting spaces addresses an urgent ecological reality: climate change is no longer a distant threat but a present crisis, and the beautiful valleys, forests, and rivers of this region are under

silent but accelerating threat. By positioning students as "ambassadors of environmental protection," the initiative instills responsibility, awareness, and long-term stewardship in young minds. When a child nurtures a tree that grows alongside them, the act of planting transforms into a lifelong relationship with nature. This is environmental education, not through textbooks but through lived experience. The scale is impressive—2.50 lakh saplings across schools, colleges, hospitals, Anganwadi centres, and

healthcare facilities. The participation of multiple departments—Education, Social Welfare, Health—demonstrates the kind of cross-sectoral collaboration that effective environmental action requires. Yet planting is only the first step. It is not about how many young trees we plant in a day, but about how many trees survive, grow and become a part of our lives. This is where the call for more such activities becomes critical. A plantation drive without a survival plan is merely symbolic. The government must

now establish clear accountability mechanisms: every tree must have a protector, every institution a responsibility, every district a completion mission. These initiatives should be expanded and sustained. The enthusiasm witnessed across schools and colleges—from Amar Singh College planting over 400 saplings to the CEO of Srinagar urging students to document their trees' progress—demonstrates that the community is ready to embrace this movement. The government must now institutionalise these

efforts: make tree planting and nurturing a graded activity linked to the curriculum, establish nurseries within educational institutions, and conduct annual audits of survival rates. This is not a one-day campaign. It is the beginning of a generational shift. From plantation to preservation, from campaign to commitment, from effort to ownership—that is the path ahead. The government has planted the seed. Now it must ensure it grows into an unshakable forest.

Advancing India's Fisheries Sector: Institutions, Investment, And Inclusion

Press Information Bureau

India ranks as the world's second-largest fish-producing nation, accounting for approximately 8 percent of global output. The fisheries sector constitutes a vital component of national food security, employment generation, and income enhancement, particularly across coastal and rural economies. Reflecting its growing structural significance, fisheries account for nearly 7.43 percent of Agricultural Gross Value Added (GVA), the highest share among the agriculture and allied sectors. This growing prominence is further reinforced by sustained policy prioritisation.

Backed by sustained interventions, total fish output more than doubled from 95.79 lakh tonnes in FY 2013-14 to 197.75 lakh tonnes in FY 2024-25, reflecting a 106 percent increase over the period. Concurrently, seafood exports expanded significantly, reaching 62,408 crore in FY 2024-25. Frozen shrimp remains the dominant export commodity, with the United States and China serving as key markets, highlighting the sector's expanding scale and growing global competitiveness.

Union Budget for the Fisheries Sector

The Union Budget 2026-27 has proposed the highest-ever annual budgetary allocation of 2,761.80 crore for the fisheries sector, underscoring its growing policy priority. Of this total outlay, 2,530 crore is earmarked for implementation through targeted government schemes, including financial assistance, capital subsidies, insurance coverage, capacity-building initiatives, infrastructure development, and welfare support mechanisms designed to directly benefit fishers and fish farmers.

Institutionalising Growth in India's Fisheries Sector

The fisheries sector is a vital pillar of India's economy, contributing to food security, employment generation, export earnings, and livelihoods for millions of fishers, particularly in coastal and rural regions. Since the Blue Revolution, the sector has transitioned from traditional practices toward a more organised, technology-driven, and value-chain-oriented framework aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Policy interventions have prioritised integrated value chain development across the marine, inland, and aquaculture segments. Investments in fishing harbours, landing centres, cold-chain logistics, processing infrastructure, deep-sea vessels, and advanced aquaculture systems have strengthened export competitiveness and value addition.

Blue Revolution

The Blue Revolution, launched in 2015, seeks to increase fish production and strengthen the fisheries value chain across inland and marine sectors by enhancing productivity, expanding infrastructure, and promoting modern practices. To build on these efforts and further advance post-harvest management, traceability, fisher welfare, and market linkages, the Government launched the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) in 2020 to accelerate the sector's transformation.

As per Economic Survey 2025-26, the collective institutions have been strengthened through the formation of 2,195 Fisheries Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs), supported by an investment of Rs 544 crore, to improve market access and financial inclusion. Additionally, as of January 2026, nutritional and livelihood support during fishing ban and lean periods, benefiting approximately 4.33 lakh fisher families with an outlay of 1,681.21 crore, has reinforced income stability and social protection. Collectively, fisheries-related schemes implemented since 2014-15 have generated an estimated 74.66 lakh direct and indirect employment opportunities, underscoring the sector's expanding role in inclusive and sustainable economic growth.

Navigating the Transformational Journey of the Fisheries Sector

A chronological representation of major policy interventions in India's fisheries sector illustrates its transition from production-centric expansion to digitalization and sustainability-oriented governance. Blue Revolution (2015) repositioned fisheries as a strategic growth sector. In 2018-19, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF) was launched to address infrastructure gaps in harbours, landing centres, cold chains, and processing units.

The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) (2019) to fisheries improved access to institutional credit, followed by the launch of the PMMSY (2020), a comprehensive scheme focused on production enhancement, infrastructure, and value chain development. Furthermore, the Modern Aquaculture push under PMMSY (2021-22) and Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY) (2023-24) emphasized formalization, insurance, and financial inclusion. The National Fisheries Digital Platform (NFDP) and the Marine Fisheries Census, strengthened transparency and planning. In 2025, the notification of Sustainable Fisheries Rules for the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and High Seas reinforced regulatory compliance, resource conservation, and long-term sustainability.



Overall, the sector reflects a comprehensive transformation, spanning infrastructure development, expanded production, digital integration, stronger institutions, and sustainable governance. These advancements are positioning India's fisheries sector as increasingly resilient and globally competitive.

Government Initiatives to Enhance Productivity, Mitigate Risk, and Digital Governance

The fisheries sector is increasingly recognised as an important contributor to rural livelihoods, nutritional security, and export expansion. Targeted public policy interventions have facilitated productivity enhancement, expanded financial inclusion, and strengthened infrastructure across the fisheries value chain.

Policy initiative for Productivity Enhancement

The Government has undertaken policy initiatives to expand modern farming systems, strengthen supply chains, and upgrade post-harvest facilities to reduce losses and improve value realisation.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY)

The PMMSY seeks to enhance fish production and productivity, upgrade quality standards, promote technological modernisation, strengthen post-harvest infrastructure, and improve fisheries governance. It adopts a comprehensive value chain approach, emphasising traceability, institutionalised fisheries management, and the socio-economic welfare of fishers. PMMSY continues to anchor fisheries development, with an allocation of 2,500 crore in 2026-27.

As of 05 March 2026, approved activities under the PMMSY include 23,285 hectares of pond area for inland aquaculture, 52,058 reservoir cages, 27,189 fish transportation and handling units, 634 value-added enterprise units (including ice plants and cold storages), and 6,896 fish retail markets and kiosks. These are complemented by supporting infrastructure such as fishing harbours, fish landing centres, feed mills, cold storages, markets, and other value-addition facilities to strengthen the fisheries value chain.

The scheme prioritises technology-driven aquaculture systems that improve productivity while optimising resource use. It promotes high-density, water-efficient models such as Recirculatory Aquaculture Systems (RAS) and Bio-floc technology, which enhance output, maintain quality, enable nutrient recycling, and support environmentally sustainable fish farming.

Recirculatory Aquaculture System (RAS): It is a modern fish-farming method in which water is filtered and reused. The system removes waste and impurities, allowing the same water to be used again. It is ideal for farming fish in high numbers using very little land and water.

Bio-floc technology: Bio-floc systems utilize beneficial microbes to convert organic waste into feed, improving water quality and fish health. This eco-friendly and cost-effective method is ideal for high-density farming and supports sustainable practices.

As of 05 March 2026, 12,081 RAS units have been approved, with an investment of 902.97 crore, while 4,205 Bio-floc units have been approved, with an investment of 523.30 crore, under PMMSY. This reflects strong progress in adopting modern, technology-driven aquaculture systems.

Policy Initiatives for Risk Mitigation and Financial Security

The government has focused on improving the financial security of fishers and fish farmers through targeted schemes that bring them into the formal system and expand access to credit, insurance, and income support.

Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY)

The Pradhan Mantri Matsya Kisan Samridhi Sah-Yojana (PM-MKSSY) is a Central Sector sub-scheme implemented under the umbrella of the PMMSY. Operational across all States and Union Territories for a four-year period from 2023-24 to 2026-27, it carries an estimated financial outlay of 6,000 crore.

The scheme facilitates the structural transformation of the fisheries sector by advancing formalisation,

expanding insurance coverage, strengthening access to institutional finance, and promoting quality assurance and traceability across the fisheries value chain. It aims to enhance financial resilience, risk mitigation, and market integration for fishers, aquaculture farmers, and allied stakeholders, thereby fostering a more organised, transparent, and sustainable fisheries sector.

Kisan Credit Card for Fisheries

The Kisan Credit Card (KCC) scheme has become a pivotal instrument for advancing financial inclusion within India's agrarian economy. Structured to provide timely and affordable access to working capital, it enables farmers to finance the purchase of critical inputs and meet liquidity requirements for crop cultivation and allied activities. Since 2019, the scope of the scheme has been expanded to include animal husbandry, dairy, and fisheries, thereby extending access to institutional credit to allied agricultural sectors and promoting integrated rural livelihoods. The Government has raised the lending limit under the KCC scheme for fisheries and allied activities from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 5 lakh, thereby improving access to credit for fishers, farmers, processors, and other stakeholders.

As per the Economic Survey 2024-25, financial inclusion and welfare programmes have extended KCC benefits to 4.39 lakh fishers, providing insurance coverage to 3.3 million beneficiaries, and delivering livelihood assistance to an average of 7.44 lakh fisher families during lean periods. This underscores the role of formal credit in enhancing resilience, stabilizing incomes, and deepening integration with organized markets.

Fisheries and Aquaculture Infrastructure Development Fund (FIDF)

FIDF was launched in 2018-19 to strengthen infrastructure across marine and inland fisheries and promote sustainable sectoral growth. To continue this momentum, the Government extended the FIDF scheme for three more years, from April 2023 to March 2026. The scheme offers a credit guarantee cover of up to Rs 12.50 crore, helping fishers and entrepreneurs access much-needed credit with lower financial risk. It also provides an interest subvention of up to 3% per year under the FIDF. This support helps Nodal Lending Entities offer concessional finance at a minimum interest rate of 5% per year.

The key achievements under FIDF as of January 2026 are as follows:

225 projects worth 6,685.78 crore have been approved under FIDF, covering Fishing Harbours, Fish Landing Centres, and fish processing units.

These sanctioned projects have mobilised a total investment (6,685.78 crore) in the fisheries sector, including 754.50 crore contributed by private enterprises.

Completed projects have created safe landing and berthing facilities for over 8,100 fishing vessels, increased fish landings by 1.09 lakh tonnes, benefited around 3.3 lakh fishers and other stakeholders, and generated nearly 2.5 lakh direct and indirect employment opportunities.

Policy Initiatives for Digital Governance

As part of broader policy initiatives for digital governance, government interventions seek to institutionalise a unified digital framework for the fisheries sector. By creating interoperable databases and enabling seamless access to credit, insurance, traceability, and incentives, it strengthens transparency, accountability, and data-driven decision-making across the value chain.

National Fisheries Digital Platform (NFDP)

The Department of Fisheries launched the National Fisheries Digital Platform (NFDP) in September 2024 under the PM-MKSSY to advance digital governance and formalization in the fisheries and aquaculture sector. At the foundational level, NFDP generates work-based digital identities for fishers, fish farmers, cooperatives, enterprises, and other value chain stakeholders. It is simultaneously building a centralised national database to improve transparency, streamline service delivery, and support data-driven policymaking.

Operationally, NFDP (https://nfdp.dof.gov.in/nfdp/#/?t=PM_MKSSY) functions as a single-window digital system that enables beneficiaries to access institutional credit, aquaculture insurance, traceability mechanisms, and performance-linked incentives. The platform also supports the strengthening of fisheries cooperatives and facilitates training and capacity-building initiatives.

As of 05 March 2026, the platform has registered over 30.60 lakh stakeholders, integrated 12 banks onto a common digital framework, and enabled the disbursement of 217 loans, thereby promoting formalization, financial inclusion, and efficiency across the fisheries value chain.

Marine Fisheries Census 2025

The National Marine Fisheries Census (MFC) 2025, launched on 31st October 2025, represents a significant advancement toward fully digital, georeferenced data collection in India's fisheries sector.

The MFC adopted an advanced digital ecosystem supported by custom mobile applications, including VyAS-NAV, VyAS-BHARAT, and VyAS-SUTRA, which enabled real-time, geo-referenced enumeration, immediate data verification, and continuous monitoring of field operations. For the first time, the Census has generated detailed socio-economic profiles of fisher households, including information on income, insurance status, access to credit, and participation in government schemes.

Mission-Driven Reservoir Development and Fisheries Value Chain Expansion

India has one of the world's largest inland reservoir networks, spanning approximately 31.5 lakh hectares, offering significant potential for expanding inland fisheries. Under Mission Amrit Sarovar, the Government has facilitated the development of 68,827 Amrit Sarovars, including 1,222 water bodies integrated with fisheries activities, thereby promoting fish culture, livelihood diversification, and the enhancement of aquatic ecosystems (as of 01 February 2026). The targeted interventions are proposed to integrate the development of 500 reservoirs and Amrit Sarovars to further consolidate the fisheries value chain, particularly across coastal and inland regions.

These measures seek to strengthen market linkages and value addition by involving startups, women-led collectives, and Fish Farmer Producer Organizations (FFPOs), fostering inclusive growth, entrepreneurship, and sustainable fisheries-based livelihoods.

Sustainable Governance of Marine Fisheries and EEZ Resources

In addition to the inland reservoirs, India's extensive coastline of over 11,099 km and an Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) of approximately 24 lakh square kilometres sustain the livelihoods of more than 50 lakh members of the fishing community across 13 maritime States and Union Territories. Marine fisheries constitute a strategic component of the blue economy, contributing to export earnings and national nutritional security.

To ensure responsible harnessing of aquatic resources, the Government has notified the Rules and Guidelines for Sustainable Harnessing of Fisheries in the EEZ and High Seas (2025), establishing a forward-looking regulatory framework aligned with sustainability and international compliance standards.

Policy measures granting duty-free status to catch landed abroad and treated as exports aim to enhance price realisation and global competitiveness, while traceability, sustainability, and compliance safeguards mitigate misuse. The Marine Products Export Development Authority (MPEDA) further anchors sustainable export growth through quality assurance, market facilitation, capacity building, and ecological stewardship, reinforcing long-term resource security and livelihood resilience.

Conclusion

The fisheries sector is a critical contributor to India's economy, supporting the livelihoods of nearly three crore people, particularly among marginalised coastal and inland communities. In recent years, the sector has witnessed sustained growth, driven by targeted policy interventions to expand production, strengthen export competitiveness, upgrade infrastructure, and promote the adoption of modern, sustainable technologies. The Union Budget 2026-27 further consolidates this transition through capital-intensive investments, modern aquaculture systems, smart and sustainable fisheries infrastructure, and targeted measures to unlock export potential, including high-seas fishing.

This transformation is being reinforced by key reforms such as the Sustainable Harnessing Rules for the Exclusive Economic Zone, the Marine Fisheries Census 2025, and major investments under PMMSY and PM-MKSSY, which are strengthening evidence-based governance, responsible resource management, and welfare delivery. Collectively, these initiatives are advancing a more inclusive and resilient blue economy while contributing meaningfully to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 14: Life Below Water by sustainably managing fisheries and aquaculture.

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

Kulgam Hailstorm Affected Villages

Our Govt stands with farming community, will ensure all losses are compensated fairly: Sakeena Itoo

KT News Desk

KULGAM, APRIL 07: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo Tuesday visited the hailstorm affected villages of Kulgam district to assess the extent of damage and review ongoing response measures on the ground.

During the visit, the Minister, as per an official statement, conducted an on-spot appraisal of losses to agricultural crops, horticulture orchards, residential structures, and public infrastructure in various villages like D.H Pora, Nihama, Manzgam, Bathipora, Ladgou Rambhama, Pombay and other areas.

Interacting directly with affected families, farmers, and local representatives, she assured them that the Government stands firmly with the people during this difficult time and that timely assistance will be ensured.

"District Administration has been asked to conduct detailed assessment of losses accurately, facilitate timely relief under



existing government norms and extend all possible assistance to affected orchardists and farmers without delay", Sakeena assured the affected farmers.

The Minister stated that the Government is committed to providing immediate relief as well as long-term support to mitigate the impact of natural calamities on farmers and rural

livelihoods.

"Our Government completely stands with the farming community in this difficult time. We will ensure all losses are compensated fairly," she stated.

The Minister also instructed the accompanying officers of various stakeholder departments to deploy field teams for rapid surveys and ensure that

eligible beneficiaries receive compensation strictly as per government norms. "Loss reports must be compiled transparently and submitted within a fixed timeframe to facilitate swift assistance for affected families", she maintained.

The Minister also directed the stakeholder departments to keep officers and officials on ground and maintain close liaison with local representatives and ensure prompt relief measures across all affected villages.

While interacting with the Minister, the locals appreciated the Minister's visit and expressed hope that timely intervention by the Government will ensure swift and timely assistance to recover from the losses incurred by this devastating hailstorm.

Senior officers of district administration, including SDM Noorabad, Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, other concerned officers and large number of locals also accompanied the Minister during the visit.

Div Com Kashmir reviews flood mitigation measures

Directs NDRF, SDRF to conduct regular mock drills for effective emergency response

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, APRIL 07: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting to review flood mitigation measures undertaken by the Irrigation & Flood Control (I&FC) Department, along with preparedness of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) ahead of the upcoming monsoon season.

The meeting, as per an official statement, focused on strengthening embankments to enhancing the overall flood resilience of the River Jhelum system besides mock drills of disaster management.

During the meeting, the Divisional Commissioner conducted a comprehensive review of ongoing flood management works and emphasized the need for timely execution of advance measures prior to the onset of the monsoon.

He also reviewed key non-structural interventions, including flood hazard mapping, land-use planning regulations,



flood early warning systems, public awareness initiatives, and sediment management strategies such as regulated riverbed material extraction.

The Div Com also assessed preparedness and resource augmentation of NDRF and SDRF.

On the occasion, the Divisional Commissioner directed NDRF and SDRF to conduct regular mock drills in coordination with district administrations to ensure effective emergency response. He also stressed the importance of Yatra-specific preparedness

of mountain rescue teams, alongside strengthening urban flood response mechanisms and augmenting equipment availability.

The Div Com directed I&FC Department to work as the nodal agency for resource and equipment pooling, as well as maintaining a centralized repository of manpower and contact details.

Furthermore, the Divisional Commissioner emphasized the need for clear demarcation of stretches along the River Jhelum under the jurisdiction of respective Executive Engineers.

He also directed the rational deployment of manpower, including shifting personnel from northern districts to southern areas for effective gauge monitoring across 126 identified beats comprising canals and rivulets of the Jhelum basin.

The meeting was attended by the Chief Engineer, I&FC; Executive Engineers; officers of NDRF and SDRF; and the Officer on Special Duty to the Divisional Commissioner.

DC Anantnag visits Yatra Transit Camps



KT News Desk

ANANTNAG, APRIL 07: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, (Yatra Officer Pahalgam Axis), Dr. Bilal Mohiud Din Bhat Tuesday made an extensive tour to Yatra Transit Camps, FCI Godown, Mir Bazaar and Walnut Factory, Qazigund and took first hand stock of arrangements and facilities, to be made available to the pilgrims during SANJY-2026.

On the occasion, the DC, as per an official statement, directed the concerned officers to provide all necessary facilities to the pilgrims in a smooth and seamless manner, ensuring an enriching experience for them. He called for provision of good quality toilets in requisite numbers and parking areas with proper lighting facilities at all places.

To ensure proper drainage of water, the DC asked the concerned officers to install an efficient drainage system besides repairing the paths.

Dr. Bilal further directed

officers of line departments to augment the services and ensure every facility committed will be provided to the pilgrims. He emphasized that proper supply of water be provided to the langars and toilets along with drinking water for the Yatris. Instructions were issued to the concerned departments to ensure uninterrupted supply of electricity besides proper cleanliness, sanitation and hygiene of the transit camps.

The DC was accompanied by ADC, SDM Dooru, Tehsildars Anantnag and Qazigund and other concerned officers.

Later, the DC made a site visit to Khanabal bridge and interacted with the locals who put forth their grievances regarding traffic congestion and construction of it's additional part.

The DC issued on spot directions to Engineer Engineer R&B to resolve the issues in coordination with ACR and submit a revised DPR so the work on the additional part is taken up at the earliest possibility.

IGNOU holds 39th convocation at Srinagar, 344 degrees conferred

Vice President presides over national event, emphasis on inclusive and distance education

KT News Desk

Srinagar, 7 April: Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) Tuesday held its 39th Convocation across 51 regional centres, with the national ceremony presided over by the Vice President of India, C. P. Radhakrishnan.

The regional convocation, as per a PIB statement, for Jammu & Kashmir was organised at the auditorium of Government Dental College Srinagar. Vice Chancellor of SKUAST-Kashmir, Shri Nazir Ahmad Ganie, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-Kashmir and Commissioner Secretary, Government of J&K Saurabh Bhagat were present on the occasion.

A total of 344 degrees were conferred to learners during the regional function, while 10,989 students received degrees overall from the Srinagar Regional Centre.

Addressing the gathering, Nazir Ahmad Ganie congratulated the learners and highlighted the growing relevance of distance education in expanding access to learning. He noted that institutions like IGNOU have helped overcome geographical barriers and are contributing to the evolving



model of education.

Saurabh Bhagat, in his address, emphasised the role of IGNOU in promoting access to education, particularly in remote areas. He underlined the importance of distance and on-line education in improving the Gross Enrolment Ratio in line with the National Education Policy 2020. He stated that convocation marks the culmination of sustained academic effort and commitment by learners.

Regional Director, IGNOU Regional Centre Srinagar, Dr. A. H. Rizvi, informed that the centre has been serving learners since 1999 and currently oversees 29 active study centres across Kashmir and Ladakh. He added that 46,468 students were enrolled in various programmes

in the previous year.

Dr. Rizvi encouraged graduating students to enhance their skills and adapt to emerging opportunities, including entrepreneurship, in a competitive global environment. He informed that IGNOU has a total of 57 regional centres across the country, which supervise more than 200 centres nationwide. Srinagar's Center serves as its Nodal Center for conducting various programmes across the 29 active study centers it has across Kashmir and in Ladakh. While congratulating all the graduating students, Dr. Rizvi encouraged graduating students to enhance their skills and adapt to emerging opportunities, including entrepreneurship, in a competitive global environment.

Kandhari Beverages donates ambulance to J&K High Court

KT News Desk

JAMMU, APRIL 7: A formal ceremony was held Tuesday at the High Court of J&K and Ladakh at Jammu to mark the generous donation of a fully equipped ambulance by Kandhari Beverages Private Limited for the benefit of Judges, advocates litigants and staff visiting the Court premises.

The ambulance, as per an official statement, was formerly handed over by Major Deepak Choudhary, Advisor of Kandhari Beverages Private Limited to Chief Justice Arun Palli in presence of Justice Sindhu Sharma, Justice Rajnesh Oswal, Justice Rahul Bharti, Justice Moksha Khajuria Kazmi, Justice Rajesh Sekhri, Justice Mohammad Yousuf Wani and

Justice Shahzad Azeem.

M.K. Sharma, Registrar General, Senior Advocates, Members of the Bar, Officers and officials of the Registry of the High Court besides medical staff deployed in the High Court were also present on the occasion.

The Chief Justice expressed deep appreciation for the philanthropic gesture noting that the facility would significantly strengthen the emergency medical response within the High Court premises besides enhancing the overall welfare infrastructure.

The High Court administration expressed gratitude to the donor for this meaningful contribution which will serve as a vital resource in safeguarding health at responding to the emergencies within the Court premises.

DC Kupwara reviews heritage conservation works

KT News Desk

Kupwara, April 7: Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Shrikant Suse, Tuesday undertook a detailed tour of heritage sites in Trehgam to review ongoing preservation works.

At the historic Shiv Temple, the DC inspected renovation works being executed under the Cultural Heritage Preservation Programme by PWD. He directed department to expedite pace of work with strict adherence to quality standards underscoring the importance of safeguarding the town's cultural and religious heritage.

The Deputy Commissioner,



as per an official statement, further visited the Trehgam Jamia Masjid, where he held deliberations with the Masjid Intizamia regarding developmental requirements and upkeep of the site. He assured that genuine concerns would be addressed expeditiously, reiterating the administration's commitment to preserving cultural and religious landmarks.

JKAACL pays tributes to eminent Punjabi, Urdu writer S Saran Singh

KT News Desk

JAMMU, APRIL 07: The Jammu & Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (JKAACL) Tuesday held a meeting at K.L Saigal hall to pay rich tributes to noted Punjabi and Urdu writer S. Saran Singh (Retd Chief Conservator of Forests and former Member, Public Service Commission), who passed away in Delhi at the age of 89 years.

Born in Baatpora-Baramulla, S. Saran Singh was a distinguished literary figure who made remarkable contributions to both Punjabi and Urdu literature. His writings were marked by deep human sensitivity, social consciousness and a rich cultural ethos.

In Punjabi literature, he authored three acclaimed short story collections – Bhulekhe Te Hor Kahaniyan, Nangi Dhoop De Vairi and Panj Peer. He also penned a novel titled Nangi Dhoop Kaji Kaji. His poetic works include Parchhaviaan Da Jangal and Paper Di Janjh. In addition, he contributed significantly to Urdu literature by translating Nangi Dhoop into Urdu, thereby fostering



linguistic harmony and cultural integration.

To mourn his demise, JKAACL organized a condolence meeting where eminent literary personalities and officials gathered to pay heartfelt tributes and recall the rich literary legacy of the departed soul.

Among those who paid tributes were Secretary Harvinder Kour; Popinder Singh Paras; Ajit Singh Mastana; Dr. Monojit; Khalid Hussain; Dr. Satwant Singh; Prof. Gurcharan Singh Raina; M.S. Kamra; Suraj Singh; Balvinder Singh; Prof.

Raj Kumar and several others.

The speakers described Saran Singh's demise as an irreparable loss to the literary fraternity and highlighted his immense contribution towards enriching Punjabi and Urdu languages. They also shared personal reminiscences, acknowledging his dedication and passion for literature.

The meeting concluded with a two-minute silence observed in honour of the departed soul, pray for his eternal peace and express solidarity with the bereaved family

Mission Gyan Bharatam Survey: Training programme held in Kulgam

KT News Desk

KULGAM, APRIL 07: A training programme regarding Mission Gyan Bharatam was held Tuesday in Kulgam under the supervision of Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Kulgam, Altaf Ahmad Khan, for the surveyors deputed for the mission.

During the session, the surveyors, as per an official statement, were imparted necessary training and orientation to ensure the smooth conduct of the upcoming household survey under Mission Gyan Bharatam. Speaking on the occasion, the ADDC Kulgam emphasized that the survey process must begin from the grassroots level and be carried out with utmost sincerity, dedication and responsibility. He directed that every household must be surveyed thoroughly so that accurate and reliable data is collected for the successful implementation of the mission.

He further stressed that the role of surveyors is crucial in ensuring the effectiveness of



Mission Gyan Bharatam and urged them to maintain proper coordination and strong field-level commitment during the survey process.

On the occasion, Trainer Showkat Hussain delivered a detailed presentation on the survey application, explaining its features, usage and practical field-level operation. He guided the participants on the effective use of the survey app during field visits, including data entry, submission procedures and other important technical aspects to be followed while conducting the survey.

The training programme aimed to equip the surveyors with the necessary knowledge and technical understanding to ensure the timely, efficient and accurate completion of the survey process under Mission Gyan Bharatam.

Panchayat Electoral Roll Revision: DC Shopian flags off SVEEP IEC Van

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, APRIL 07: Deputy Commissioner (District Panchayat Election Officer), Shopian, Shishir Gupta Tuesday flagged off SVEEP IEC Van from the Mini Secretariat Shopian, to create mass awareness on Revision of Panchayat Electoral Roll 2026.

Among others, ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz, Dy. DEO, Shakoor Ahmad Dar, CEO (Nodal Officer SVEEP), officials from Election and Education Department were present on the occasion.

The IEC van, as per an official statement, will travel across Panchayat Halqas of block Keller Tuesday to disseminate information about the ongoing revision process and educate citizens about the procedures for inclusion, deletion,

correction and transposition in the Panchayat Electoral Roll.

Notably, to facilitate greater public participation, Special Camp Days have already been notified at designated polling stations on 04, 05, 11, 12, 18, 19, 25 and 26 April, 2026, during which Panchayat Election Booth Officers (PEBOs) will be available to assist citizens in filing claims and objections with effect from 27 March to 29 April, 2026.

To ensure timely registration, the concerned authorities appealed to all the eligible persons who have attained the age of 18 years or above as on 01-04-2026 to enroll themselves in the Panchayat Electoral Roll during the ongoing exercise.

They may contact the concerned PEBOs (VLWS/ GRs), BDOs(AEROS) or Electoral

MP Ramzan hails Private Universities Bill as game-changer for J&K education

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Apr 07: The Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Additional General Secretary and Member of Rajya Sabha, Chowdhry Muhammad Ramzan on Tuesday welcomed the passage of the Private Universities Bill, 2026, in the J&K Legislative Assembly, terming it a landmark legislative reform poised to redefine the higher education landscape of Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement issued from the party headquarters, Nawa-e-Subha, Chowdhry Ramzan underscored that the bill represents a paradigm shift toward strengthening academic infrastructure, fostering institutional diversification and catalysing knowledge-driven economic growth.

He noted that the initiative will significantly curb the outward migration of local students



by enhancing access to quality higher education within the region, thereby ensuring both talent retention and financial circulation in the local economy. "This progressive legislation

will serve as a cornerstone for developing Jammu and Kashmir into a premier educational hub," he said, adding, "By facilitating the establishment of private universities, we are

expanding the academic ecosystem, promoting interdisciplinary learning, and creating avenues for research, innovation, and skill development."

Highlighting the historical legacy of Kashmir as a centre of intellectual and cultural excellence, he said, "From times immemorial, Kashmir has been a vibrant nucleus of literary and scholarly pursuits in Asia. This initiative has the potential to restore that legacy and reposition the region as a beacon of academic distinction and cultural enlightenment."

Choudhary further emphasised the bill's multiplier effect on employment generation, noting that the establishment of private universities will create substantial opportunities across teaching, non-teaching, administrative, and technical domains. "This will not only enhance employability but also

stimulate localised development in areas where these institutions are established, contributing to inclusive growth and regional equity," he added.

Commending the leadership of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, he described the passage of the bill as a milestone achievement aligned with the broader vision of transforming Jammu and Kashmir into a knowledge economy. He recalled the enduring vision of Sher-e-Kashmir Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah, who aspired for the people of Jammu and Kashmir to lead in education and intellectual advancement across South and Southeast Asia.

"This measure is a decisive step toward realising that vision. I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the Hon'ble Chief Minister and Education Minister Sakina too for ushering in this forward-looking reform," he said.

EC may roll out SIR in remaining 22 states, UTs post this month's assembly polls



PTI

New Delhi, Apr 07: The Election Commission may roll out the third and final phase of special intensive revision of voters' list in the remaining 22 states and Union territories, including Delhi, after the polls to five assemblies this month, officials said.

Assembly elections are taking place in Kerala, Assam, Puducherry, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal this month and counting will take place on May 4.

The officials said special intensive revision (SIR) could be rolled out after the polls conclude on April 29. Another possibility is to begin the massive exercise after the declaration of results.

So far, SIR has been carried out in 10 states and three Union territories. A 'special revision' of electoral rolls was carried out in Assam.

Except for Uttar Pradesh, final voters' lists have been published where SIR was carried out. As many as 60 crore of the nearly 99 crore voters have been covered in these voters' list clean up exercises.

The remaining nearly 39 crore electors will be covered in the proposed exercise in 17 states and five Union territories.

On February 19, the poll authority had asked 22 states and Union territories including Delhi to complete preparatory work related to SIR at the earliest as the exercise is "expected to start from April".

Once the exercise is

completed, all states and Union territories will be covered.

In a letter to the chief electoral officers of Andhra Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli & Daman and Diu, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Ladakh, Maharashtra, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Delhi, Odisha, Punjab, Sikkim, Tripura, Telangana and Uttarakhand, the poll authority said pan-India SIR of voters' list was ordered in June last year.

Due to a variety of reasons, SIR has seen frequent tweaking in schedules.

Like Bihar, political parties had approached the Supreme Court challenging SIR in Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

Recently, TMC president and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee personally pleaded before a bench of the chief justice of India against the poll roll cleanup exercise in her state.

As the EC was preparing for SIR in Bihar, its officials had claimed that several nationals from Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar were found by its grassroots level functionaries.

But eventually, the poll authority did not share any numbers or proof of such people who were not eligible to be on the voters' list. Opposition parties had dubbed the EC's claims as a ploy to carry out SIR to target electors not aligned to BJP and its allies.

Voluntary retirement not mere act of leaving, rather distinct right of employee: SC

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 07: The Supreme Court said on Tuesday that voluntary retirement is not a mere act of leaving or discontinuing but is rather a distinct right of an employee that is available on completion of the requisite number of years of service.

A bench of Justices JK Maheshwari and Vijay Bhishno delivered its verdict on appeals filed by a bank challenging two separate 2019 orders of the Chhattisgarh High Court.

The high court had issued a direction for the grant of terminal benefits to a bank employee, saying that after the completion of the three-month notice period as specified in the notice for voluntary retirement or from the date of stopping to attend the service, he be

treated voluntarily retired.

The apex court noted that the employee was appointed in September 1983 and was promoted as manager in April 2007.

It said that in July 2010, while working as branch manager at Raipur, some suspicious transactions in two accounts came to the knowledge of the bank. In the meantime, the employee sent a notice of voluntary retirement on October 4, 2010 to the general manager and in response, the zonal office asked for a fresh application under pension regulations.

Later, since the period specified in the notice for voluntary retirement had elapsed, the employee stopped working with the bank with effect from May 16, 2011.

The top court noted that

after about eight months from the date when he severed his employment with the bank, he was chargesheeted on March 5, 2012 over the allegedly suspicious transactions.

He later moved the high court challenging the non-acceptance of voluntary retirement and consequent initiation of inquiry and dismissal.

While dealing with the appeals, the bench referred to the relevant provisions of pension and service regulations.

"Upon reading, it is quite clear, if an employee on or after 1st day of November 1993 completes 20 years of qualifying service, and furnishes a notice of not less than three months to the appointing authority, he may retire voluntarily," the bench noted.

It said the notice of three

months indicating intention to retire voluntarily was given on October 4, 2010 and the period was supposed to expire on January 4, 2011, to which refusal was not ordered within the notice period.

The bench said the non-approval communicated on June 29, 2011, after expiry of the notice period and cessation of work, was of no avail. It noted that a show-cause notice was issued by the bank on November 11, 2010 but it would not indicate the intention to institute disciplinary proceedings in terms of the service regulation.

"Nonetheless, voluntary retirement is not a mere act of leaving or discontinuing, rather, a distinct right of an employee that is available on completion of the requisite number

of years of service, etc," it said.

The bench said existence of such a show cause notice itself was not sufficient without refusal by the competent authority to stop automatic operation of the notice of voluntary retirement.

"In absence, the notice of voluntary retirement would take its course. In the present case, no such order of refusal or order of withholding was passed by the competent authority within the stipulated period," it said.

"In our view, it is correct to hold that when an employee decides to sever the master-servant relationship and serves a notice indicating such intention specifying the period, by operation of law it will become effective in the absence of any order of refusal," the bench said.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

LG Sinha inaugurates

The building houses a currency chest, a state-of-the-art branch, multiple departmental offices, and dedicated operational and administrative units, significantly enhancing administrative and backend support. This facility will enable faster decision-making, improved coordination and superior customer service.

Atal Dulloo, Chief Secretary; Dr Mandeep K. Bhandari, Principal Secretary to Lieutenant Governor; Sudhir Gupta, Executive Director, J&K Bank; R.K Chhibber and Arun Gandotra, Directors on Board of J&K Bank; Bhim Sen Tuti, IGP Jammu; Chief General Managers, Divisional Head, General Managers and other office bearers of the Bank, senior officials of the Industries and other line departments attended the inaugural ceremony.

Can't trust weather

the weather. But the circumstances of the world have changed so much that it would be foolishness to trust the weather today," he said, adding that erratic weather patterns have made farming increasingly unpredictable.

The CM added, "When we need rain, sometimes we don't get it. Then, when the rain comes, we don't get it. We get a month's rain in 24 hours. We often sell our crops and get rain. Now, look at tomorrow. Look at Shopian and other areas, how much damage has been caused by the hailstorm"

Calling it the government's responsibility to support farmers, he said: "Now, in these circumstances, it is the government's responsibility to help the farmers as much as possible. Now, we cannot change the weather. The weather is for everyone. But at least we should reduce the effects of the weather, the dangers of the weather."

Abdullah stressed measures such as crop insurance, assured irrigation and improved infrastructure to mitigate risks. "Whether it is for crop insurance, for agriculture, or now it will be for horticulture. Assured water supply through irrigation."

He highlighted the importance of strengthening irrigation at the grassroots level. "Often, there is a complaint that we clean the big canals, but we don't pay attention to the small canals that deliver water to the tail end. This time, I have told the minister concerned and officials that we will have to clean the last part of the canals, the tail end, so that the water reaches the farmers and the farmers can do their farming properly."

Emphasising the critical role of quality inputs, the Chief Minister said: "As long as we provide plant material to the farmers, as long as we do not provide the proper quality of the seed, it is an injustice to the farmers. Because the poor farmer puts the seed in the ground, then works hard, and if the seed is not of the right quality, then all the hard work of the farmer is wasted."

Omar said the newly established Centre of Excellence would address this gap. "This is the purpose of this high-tech polyhouse that we have made today, this Centre of Excellence. The

farmers will have faith in that plant material that, yes, after doing their hard work, the crop that will grow from here, I will get the full benefit of it when I sell this thing in the market."

Lauding the department for the timely execution of the project, he congratulated the Agriculture Department, the Minister, the Additional Chief Secretary, and all the officers.

The Chief Minister called for replication of such facilities across districts. "In the same way, this should be done in the other districts so that the right quality plant material can be delivered to us at the right time."

Reiterating the government's commitment, he said: "Whatever resources I have, whether it is finance, planning... however much we can help the Agriculture Production Department, we will definitely do it."

He assured continued support to farmers and local representatives. "We will try our best to strengthen the hands of our people who are involved in agriculture and increase their earnings... we will do our best to serve their area," he said.

On the occasion, the Chief Minister also handed over sanction letters to beneficiaries under the HADP scheme.

Speaking at the event, Minister for Agriculture Production Javid Ahmed Dar said that Centres of Excellence would be established in all 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir, as announced in Budget 2026-27, adding that significant progress in the agriculture and allied sectors would be visible within the next 2-3 years.

Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani expressed hope that other projects would also be completed in record time, stating that the government believes in delivering results on the ground.

He noted that while most of J&K's population resides in rural areas and traditionally practices farming, the adoption of modern techniques would significantly boost the region's economy.

MLA Jammu West Arvind Gupta thanked the Chief Minister for completing the facility in record time and said that the people have high expectations from the Omar Abdullah-led government

Additional Chief Secretary Agriculture Production Department Ashish Chander Verma, Director Agriculture Jammu Anil Gupta, Director J&K Horticulture Produce, Marketing and Processing Corporation Gulam Jeelani Zargar, senior officers, and a large number of farmers were present on the occasion.

Omar calls for robust

The project, being executed by National Buildings Construction Corporation Ltd, (NBCC), involves the relocation of the existing High Court from Janipur to a purpose-built campus at Raika, designed to accommodate the growing requirements of the judiciary. The new complex is planned with state-of-the-art courtrooms, judges' chambers, administrative blocks, litigant facilities, parking infrastructure, and digital-enabled court systems, aligning with contemporary standards of judicial functioning.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary PVD, Divisional Commissioner Jammu Ramesh Kumar, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Anshul Garg, Commissioner Secretary Law Achal Sethi, Director General Codes Mahesh Das, Director General Budget, senior officers, and representatives of NBCC.

NBCC officials informed the meeting that the project is being executed in multiple phases (Phase-I, II and III) to ensure structured development and optimal resource utilisation. A detailed presentation highlighted the site layout, area distribution (area matrix), zoning plan, and phased construction strategy, along with timelines and execution challenges.

The Chief Minister also reviewed proposals for the redevelopment of the Lower Court Complex in Srinagar, which aims to modernise the existing judicial infrastructure in Kashmir. These projects are expected to improve accessibility, case handling efficiency, and overall litigant experience.

Stressing the importance of robust judicial infrastructure, the Chief Minister directed officials to ensure strict adherence to timelines, quality benchmarks, and transparency in execution. He called for regular monitoring and resolution of bottlenecks, particularly in approvals, fund flow, and on-ground coordination.

The Chief Minister observed that modern court infrastructure is essential for efficient justice delivery and public trust in the legal system, and reiterated the government's commitment to strengthening institutional capacity across both Jammu and Kashmir divisions.

CM assures

Mohd Haneefa Jan, also met the Chief Minister and discussed common issues concerning J&K and Ladakh. Among others, legislators Vijay Kumar (Hiranagar), Rameshwar Singh (Bani), Mushtaq Guroo (Channapora), Nazir Ahmed Khan Gurezi (Gurez), Shabir Ahmed Kullay (Shopian), Javid Mirchal (Karnah), Thakur Randhir Singh (Kalakote-Sundarbani), Mehar Ali (Kangan), Balwant Singh Mankotia (Chenani), Mir Saifullah (Trehgam), Justice (Retd) Hasnain Masoodi (Pampore), Qaysar Jamsheed Lone (Lolab), and Dr Sajad Shafi Uri (Uri) also met the Chief Minister.

They apprised him of various pressing demands, developmental concerns, and public grievances pertaining to their respective constituencies, and urged their early resolution, emphasising that most of the issues raised were of public importance.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to the visiting legislators and assured them that all genuine issues would be addressed with priority. He reiterated that his government is committed to ensuring equitable and inclusive development across all regions, emphasising that balanced growth is a collective endeavour.

J&K police bust

agencies carried out searches at 19 locations

across Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, and Haryana. "The raids led to recovery of a large quantity of weapons, including four AK rifles, and incriminating material".

He said that forged documents with addresses located in other states have also been recovered from Abdullah and Usman. "The use of false identities indicates facilitating of the module's expansion in other states," he said, adding that further investigation into the case is still ongoing and more arrests are likely to take place. (KNO)

Busting of terror

module with inter-state links, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said the operation was a positive step but raised concerns over continuous terrorist infiltration into the region.

While talking to the reporters here CM Omar, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, "It is good that it (terror module) was busted, but alongside that, the question arises — where did they come from and why did they come?"

He said repeated claims that terrorism has ended do not align with ground realities, as modules continue to surface.

"We are told that terrorism is over and there is no trace of it left, yet such modules keep getting busted and terrorists coming from across the border are found," he said.

The Chief Minister also dismissed remarks made by Pakistan's Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, terming them unrealistic.

Referring to past incidents, CM Omar said attempts to carry out major attacks had not succeeded. "They could barely reach Jammu and did not cause any significant damage. They could not even reach the country's capital. The dream of reaching Kolkata should be forgotten," he said.

He added that instead of issuing threats, efforts should be made to improve bilateral relations. "It would be better if they focus on improving relations rather than worsening them further," the Chief Minister said, while stressing the need for continued vigilance against terrorist activities. (KNO)

From 1967 to 2026

pollution and encroachment, with over 2,500 kanal of land affected.

The audit said that changes in land use, lack of coordination among departments and absence of a unified framework have contributed to the decline of lake ecosystems in Jammu and Kashmir. (KNO)

J&K SLDC pulled

reveal that from the upcoming financial year 2026-27, Jammu and Kashmir will likely require 3813 MWs of power during the peak demand.

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

Apart from peak demand, the authorities

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

Massive landslide

could trigger flash floods, landslides in vulnerable areas and water logging in low-lying locations.

On April 9 and 10, brief spells of light rain or thundershowers are expected at scattered places, mainly during afternoon hours.

The weather is likely to remain generally dry from April 11 to 16, although brief spells of light rain at isolated places cannot be ruled out, it said.

Advising caution, the department asked farmers to suspend farm operations, while travellers were urged to plan their movement in line with weather and traffic advisories. (KNO)

World Health Day 2026

evidence and collaborative efforts to rebuild resilient health systems.

GMC ANANTNAG REPORTS SUBSTANTIAL ACHIEVEMENTS IN HEALTHCARE DELIVERY

Meanwhile, Government Medical College Anantnag has reported substantial achievements in healthcare delivery and infrastructure development in last one year.

According to Principal Dr Rukhsana Najeeb, associated hospitals of GMC Anantnag have treated over 13.5 lakh patients on an outpatient basis and nearly 69,000 indoor patients. The institutions have conducted 12,837 major surgeries and 3,734 minor surgeries, alongside tens of thousands of diagnostic procedures including X-rays, ultrasounds, ECGs, CT scans, and specialized treatments like cataract surgeries.

The total bed capacity across associated hospitals stands at 534 beds, including MMABM Hospital, Maternity & Child Care Hospital, and rural and urban health training centres.

GMC Anantnag has also achieved several milestones over the past two years, including: Operationalization of a Cath Lab, Establishment of a Government Nursing College, launch of Surgical ICU and advanced procedures like ERCP, introduction of Fiber Optic Bronchoscopy in Chest Medicine, free diet services for patients, advanced neonatal care including double volume exchange transfusion, increase in MBBS seats from 100 to 150, Near completion of DIPHL Lab and Critical Care Blocks, Introduction of ECT and IV Ketamine Therapy, Launch of DISE (Drug-Induced Sleep Endoscopy), ultrasound-guided kidney biopsy services and blood component services, making it among the first new medical colleges to secure such a license.

Dr Najeeb said these developments mark a significant step toward strengthening patient care and expanding specialized services in South Kashmir.

Doctors reiterated that while the expansion of advanced facilities is a welcome move, balanced growth—especially in preventive care and rural infrastructure—is essential to ensure accessible, affordable, and efficient healthcare for all. (KNO)

NDA govt always prioritised women empowerment in every form: PM Modi

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 7: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday asserted that his government has always prioritised women's empowerment in every form, and said that with the Women's Reservation Act, India is moving towards greater women-led governance.

He was commenting on a newspaper article written by Union Minister Annpurna Devi on "Enhancing women's legislative leadership", which highlighted "how greater representation of women is key to stronger, more inclusive governance and a developed India".

In an X post, Modi said, "Representation must translate into real influence. The government has always prioritised Nari Shakti in every form. Hence, with the Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam laying the foundation, India is moving towards greater women-led governance. This is also a key pillar of



Viksit Bharat!"

The Nari Shakti Vandan Adhiniyam, more popularly known as the Women's Reservation Act, was passed by Parliament in 2023. Under

the law, 33 per cent reservation will be given to women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

The law, brought by amending the Constitution, will come into

effect after completion of the delimitation exercise.

The prime minister on Saturday announced an extension of the budget session of Parliament by three days -- from April 16 to 18 -- so that the Women's Reservation Act can be amended for its implementation from 2029.

Officials said that if the proposal to implement the law even before the delimitation exercise actually materialises, another amendment to the Constitution will be required. The government is expected to amend the law in this effect in the three-day sitting of Parliament.

Modi had also urged all political parties to fully support it with an open mind and without political calculations, since "this is an issue related to women's empowerment".

He had asked them to "become partners in winning the trust of the country's mothers and sisters".

World Health Day: PM wishes excellent health for citizens

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 7: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday wished for the excellent health of all fellow citizens and urged everyone to make all possible effort to keep themselves healthy.

On the occasion of World Health Day, he also expressed gratitude to all those who dedicate

themselves tirelessly to the service of others and work towards a healthier planet.

"On World Health Day, I wish for the excellent health of all my fellow citizens. I urge everyone to make every possible effort to keep themselves healthy," he said in a post on X in Hindi. The prime minister also reaffirmed his government's commitment to building a healthier society. "Let

us all keep working together to strengthen healthcare systems and prioritise well-being of every individual," he said.

The World Health Day is celebrated annually on April 7, marking the anniversary of the founding of WHO in 1948.

On this day, each year WHO draws attention to a specific health topic of concern to people all over the world.

Urgent cases to be mentioned only before CJI-led bench: SC



PTI

New Delhi, Apr 7: In a significant procedural directive, the Supreme Court has said that "exceptionally urgent matters" that cannot wait for the listing process have to be mentioned only before the Chief Justice of India, even if he is busy presiding over a constitution bench.

According to the usual practice, urgent matters are mentioned for listing and hearing before the seniormost judge of the apex court if the CJI is either unavailable or busy heading a constitution bench.

In a circular issued on April 6, the top court said, "Mentioning of exceptionally urgent matters, which cannot await listing before the Hon'ble Court as per circular dated November 29, 2025, is permitted before Court No 1, even when the Hon'ble Chief Justice is presiding over a constitution bench."

The circular said that the mentioning of such matters is not permitted before any other bench.

UP: 'Dhurandhar' inspired posters target Akhilesh Yadav

PTI

Lucknow/Amethi (UP), Apr 7: Posters and hoardings inspired by a Bollywood movie "Dhurandhar" targeting Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav have surfaced at several locations in Lucknow and Amethi, triggering a political row months ahead of the 2027 Assembly elections. The posters, put up outside the Amethi railway station and at various intersections, carry a slogan "Aap ko kya chahiye? Akhilesh ka Lyari raj."

The reference was to Lyari, a locality in Pakistan's Karachi, once notorious for gang wars and violence and was mentioned in the Bollywood movie "Dhurandhar". The hoardings, allegedly put up by a group calling itself "Youth Against Mafia", also juxtapose alleged incidents of violence and riots during Yadav's tenure as chief minister with the current government's crackdown on mafia and criminals under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Khera must face consequence for making 'fake' allegations against Assam CM, his wife: BJP

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 7: The BJP on Tuesday hit out at the Congress for calling Assam Police action against Pawan Khera a "witch hunt" and said the opposition party leader must face consequences for levelling "fake" allegations against Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and his wife.

An Assam Police team descended on the Delhi residence of Khera to question him after Sarma's wife filed a case over his allegations that she possesses passports of three countries and the Assam chief minister had concealed information about her properties.

"They have approached the police. The police are doing their job," senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad told reporters at the BJP headquarters while replying to queries on the issue.

Prasad said Khera made "palpably false" allegations against the Assam chief minister and his wife, and now he is "running away" when police have initiated action in the case.

Slamming the police action, the Congress had called it a "witch hunt" and alleged that a "bully" was using state machinery to muzzle the opposition's voice.

Congress general secretary Jairam



Ramesh said the deployment of a "full army of police officials" to arrest Khera for asking basic questions in the public interest proves that the Assam CM is "disturbed, desperate, and rattled".

However, Prasad said Khera should face the consequences for making "fake allegations" against the CM's wife, instead of running away.

"If you make fake allegations impinging upon the national credentials of any lady who is the wife of the chief minister, be ready to face the consequences."

"They have approached the police.

The police are doing their job... Why are you running away now when the police have initiated action? Face it," the BJP MP and former Union minister said.

Khera had on Sunday alleged that Sarma's wife possesses passports of three countries and that he concealed information about her properties, but the BJP leader "categorically rejected" the claims as "malicious" and "fabricated" and vowed to take legal action "within 48 hours".

Speaking with reporters outside Khera's house in Delhi, Assam police DCP Debojit Nath said that Khera was not found at his residence. However, he said, a search was carried out and electronic devices were seized.

Some "incriminating material" was found but its details cannot be disclosed at this stage, he said, adding the case had been registered at the Crime Branch Police Station in Guwahati.

Targeting Sarma as the campaign peaks for the April 9 election in Assam, Khera showed, at a press conference on Sunday, purported documents to support the allegations and demanded that the Election Commission cancel his nomination for allegedly concealing information in his poll affidavit.

ED attaches over Rs 39-cr assets of Al-Falah chairman, his charitable Trust

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 7: The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday said it has attached a house in Delhi's Jamia Nagar, agricultural land in Faridabad, and several bank deposits, worth more than Rs 39 crore, as part of a money laundering probe against Al-Falah Group chairman Jawad Ahmad Siddiqui and his charitable trust.

Al-Falah University, based in Haryana's Faridabad, came under the scanner of probe agencies during an investigation into a "white-collar" terror module linked to the November 10, 2025, Red Fort area blast in which 15 people were killed.

A provisional attachment order has been issued to freeze these properties under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the federal probe



agency said in a statement.

The attachment includes residential premises of Siddiqui in Jamia Nagar (Okhla) in Delhi, agricultural land at Dhauj village in Faridabad (adjacent to the Al-Falah University campus), demat holdings, bank balances and fixed deposits of him and Al-Falah Charitable Trust, it said.

According to the ED, the total value of these properties is Rs 39.45 crore. Siddiqui, 61, is currently lodged in jail. He was

first arrested in November 2025 by the ED in a money laundering case linked to the alleged cheating of students from his educational institutions by misrepresenting their accreditation and recognition.

He was again arrested last month by the agency in a second money laundering case linked to "fraudulent" acquisition of a plot of land worth Rs 45 crore in Delhi.

He is currently lodged in Tihar jail under judicial custody.

The latest attachment is part of the first money laundering case probe.

The ED filed a charge-sheet against Siddiqui and the Al-Falah Charitable Trust in court in January.

The probe detected, the agency said, the generation of Rs 493.24 crore proceeds of crime by the trust/university between financial years 2016-17 and 2024-25.

Siddiqui and his family members controlled entities to which these funds were diverted.

These entities included Karkun Construction and Developers, Amla Enterprises LLP and Diyala Construction and Developers. Some funds were allegedly siphoned off to a foreign destination, the ED claimed.

In January, the agency attached the Al-Falah University campus in Faridabad, valued at Rs 144.09 crore.

'Parivartan' inevitable in Bengal; infiltrators will be sent back once BJP comes to power: Shah



PTI

Patharkandi/Hailakandi/Silchar (Assam), Apr 7: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday asserted that a "parivartan" (change) is inevitable in West Bengal and claimed that once the BJP comes to power in the eastern state, infiltrators would be sent back to their countries.

Addressing election rallies in Assam's Barak Valley, including in Patharkandi, Sribhumi and Hailakandi, Shah alleged that the Congress gave shelter to illegal immigrants in the region, making them "predominant" in Sribhumi and Cachar districts.

He claimed that the party opposed the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) as it prevents infiltrators from remaining in the state.

"Persecuted Hindus from Bangladesh come within the ambit of this law...the Congress is opposed to this, but the party lays out a red carpet to welcome Muslim infiltrators", Shah alleged.

Claiming that India is not a 'dharma-shala' (guest house), the BJP leader said there is "no place for infiltrators" in the country.

"A 'parivartan' (change) is inevitable in West Bengal. Once the BJP comes to power in the state, all infiltrators from Assam, Tripura and Bengal will be sent back to their countries," Shah said.

He alleged that the Congress wants to return to power with the "help of infiltrators, but Rahul Baba must know that his three generations cannot make Assam a land of infiltrators".

Addressing another rally in Hailakandi, Shah claimed the Congress had built 700 madrasas for Muslim students in Assam, but the "BJP converted 402 of them into primary schools so that they can also have access to modern education."

In the final rally of his campaign at Silchar, he said that Assam's prosperity can be assured only by removing the infiltrators from the state.

The names of infiltrators are being removed from the electoral rolls by the Special Intensive Revision (SIR), but "Mamata didi aur Rahul Baba ke pet me dard ho raha hain (they are suffering from stomach ache). Let them cry and beat their chests as much as they want, but infiltrators have to go."

He claimed that due to infiltration, the population of Muslims have nearly doubled, but that of Hindus has come down since the 1950s.

"There has been a massive demographic change in Assam due to infiltration, and it is for this reason that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set up the High-powered Demography Mission to combat infiltration

and manage demographic imbalances in the country", Shah said.

Shah said his ministry will soon issue a notification in this regard.

He also said the task of the new BJP government in the state will be to take steps to implement the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in its first cabinet meeting, which will prevent anyone from having four wives.

The Union home minister alleged that Congress leaders have "stooped low in public life since Rahul Gandhi came to the forefront of the party".

"This was evident from Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's statement claiming Gujaratis are illiterate, as compared to voters in Kerala," he claimed.

Shah accused Kharge of calling the RSS and the BJP snakes.

"Ever since Rahul Gandhi became the leader of the Congress, the public stature of all Congress leaders has gone down", he said.

The BJP leader also accused the Congress of humiliating the country by its protest during the AI summit.

"Rahul Gandhi calling the protesters his 'babbar sher' (brave lions) shows the low level that the Congress has stooped to," he said.

Shah asserted that Modi declared both Assamese and Bengali as classical languages.

He claimed that the BJP has initiated several projects for the development of the Barak Valley, including the Silchar-Guwahati Expressway, a state secretariat in Silchar, and a centre of AIIMS in Sribhumi, among others.

Shah said voters in the constituencies of the three districts of the Barak Valley have always supported the BJP, but "this time they must ensure that the saffron party and its alliance partners win all 13 Assembly constituencies".

He asserted that the BJP is committed to "protecting 'Jaati' (community) 'Maati' (land) and 'Bheti' (foundation) in Assam".

Shah claimed that the BJP changed the name of Karimganj to Sribhumi, but "how will those with roots in Italy know what the significance of the name change is?"

He was alluding to Congress leader Sonia Gandhi.

The Union minister said the BJP is committed to protecting the security, identity and cultural traditions of the diverse population of the state.

He also asserted that the BJP's manifesto for Assam will be implemented in "letter and spirit".

Elections to all 126 Assembly constituencies in the state will be held on April 9, with counting of votes on May 4.

Silver declines Rs 2,000, gold falls Rs 600

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 7: Silver prices declined by Rs 2,000 to Rs 2.40 lakh per kilogram, while gold slipped to Rs 1.53 lakh per 10 grams in the national capital on Tuesday as investors turned cautious ahead of US President Donald Trump's deadline to Iran for reopening the Strait of Hormuz.

According to the All India Sarafa Association, the white metal depreciated by Rs 2,000, or nearly 1 per cent, to Rs 2,40,000 per kilogram (inclusive of all taxes) from Monday's closing level of Rs 2,42,000 per kg.

In the bullion market, gold of 99.9 per cent purity also slipped by Rs 600, or 0.4 per cent, to Rs 1,53,200

per 10 grams (inclusive of all taxes). It settled at Rs 1,53,800 per 10 grams in the previous market session.

Gold prices came under pressure after Trump issued a new ultimatum to Iran and warned of fresh military strikes on power plants and other civilian infrastructure if the Strait of Hormuz is not reopened, setting a deadline for Tuesday, Saumil Gandhi, Senior Analyst of Commodities at HDFC Securities, said.

Tehran rejected the ultimatum and continued its attacks on energy assets across the Middle East.

Globally, spot gold edged higher at USD 4,659.16 per ounce, while silver slipped nearly 1 per cent to USD 72.14 per ounce, reflecting cautious sentiment in overseas trade.

Meanwhile, geopolitical tensions have intensified after President Trump warned in a Truth Social post that "a whole civilization will die tonight" if Iran does not make a deal, triggering concerns of potential military escalation.

The remarks lifted crude oil prices, with West Texas Intermediate rising 3.08 per cent to USD 115.87 per barrel, and Brent crude gaining 1 per cent to USD 110.80 per barrel in New York.

According to analysts, bullion markets are expected to remain volatile as investors track developments in West Asia, movements in crude oil prices and upcoming US macroeconomic data for fresh cues.

Over 180 dead or missing in Mediterranean since March 28: UN

AFP

Geneva, Apr 07: More than 180 people are feared dead or missing in Mediterranean shipwrecks over the past 10 days, the United Nations said Tuesday, with nearly 1,000 deaths counted since the start of 2026.

The UN's International Organization for Migration said that so far this year, around 765 people had died in the Central Mediterranean — over 460 more than during the same period in 2025.

And "across the Mediterranean as a whole, at least 990 deaths have been recorded in 2026," IOM said, adding that it was "one of the deadliest starts to a year since 2014," when it began collecting this data.

The agency said that just since March 28, at least 181 people had died or gone missing in five separate shipwrecks.

In the latest incident on Sunday, the agency said more than 80 migrants had gone missing when their boat capsized in the Central Mediterranean after departing from Tajoura Libya, with around



120 people onboard.

"The vessel took on water in rough weather before overturning," IOM said.

Thirty-two survivors were rescued by a merchant vessel and a tugboat and later brought to Lampedusa by the Italian coast guard, it said, adding that two bodies had been recovered.

In an earlier shipwreck on April 1, at least 19 migrants were found

deteriorated," IOM said, adding that initial testimonies indicated "many victims died before rescue operations, possibly due to hypothermia."

Also on April 1, at least 19 other migrants died in the Aegean Sea near Bodrum, Turkey, after a rubber boat capsized en route to Greece, the agency said, adding that "several" people had been rescued in that case.

IOM also listed a shipwreck on March 30, near Sfax, Tunisia that left 19 dead and around 20 missing, and another on March 28, in which at least 22 people died off Crete after departing eastern Libya.

"These tragedies show, once again, that far too many people are still risking their lives on dangerous routes," IOM chief Amy Pope said in the statement.

"Saving lives must come first. But we also need stronger, unified efforts to stop traffickers and smugglers from exploiting vulnerable people, and to expand safe and regular pathways — so no one is ever forced into these deadly journeys."

PM Modi congratulates To Lam on his election as Vietnam president

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 7: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday congratulated To Lam on his election as Vietnam president and said he was confident that under his leadership, the time-tested friendship between the two countries will continue to grow from strength to strength.

Modi also said that he was looking forward to working closely together to further deepen India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership for the progress and prosperity of the people of the two countries and the region.

"Heartiest congratulations to Mr. To Lam on his election as President of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam. I am confident that under his leadership, the time-tested



friendship between our two countries will continue to grow from strength to strength," he said in a post on X.

Vietnam unanimously elected Communist Party General Secretary To Lam as president for a five-year term, consolidating his control over both the party and the state.

The move departs from Vietnam's tradition of shared

leadership, in which the jobs have typically been held by different people, and echoes power structures in China under Xi Jinping and neighbouring Laos.

After being sworn in, the 69-year-old told the National Assembly that his top priority was to maintain peace and stability, which were the foundation for fast and sustainable growth.

Extreme weather leaves 22 dead over past 24 hours in Afghanistan

AP

Kabul, Apr 7: Afghan authorities said Tuesday that extreme weather has left 22 people dead and 32 injured over the last 24 hours, including more than a dozen who were killed when torrential rainfall caused the roofs of houses to collapse overnight in eastern Afghanistan.

Storms and heavy rainfall that have caused landslides, flooding and lightning strikes across the country over the past two weeks have left more than 130 people dead and destroyed or damaged thousands of homes, authorities have said.

The latest casualty figures from the Afghanistan National Disaster Authority come on top of dozens of deaths caused by heavy snowfall and floods earlier this year in Afghanistan, an impoverished country that is highly vulnerable to extreme weather events. The



authority said the figures could increase further.

Large parts of the eastern city of Jalalabad were flooded overnight on Tuesday, with roof collapses killing 13 people and injuring another 19 in the city and surrounding districts, said Siddiquallah Quraishi, information director in the Information and Culture Directorate for the province of Nangarhar of which Jalalabad is the main city. Quraishi said 104 people had to be airlifted to safety by helicopter in various parts of the province

after they became stranded by floodwaters. Hundreds of kilometres of roads in various parts of the country have been destroyed by floods, landslides and rock-falls over the past two weeks, while major highways linking the capital Kabul with provinces in the north, east and west were closed.

Snow and heavy rain often trigger flash floods that kill scores, or even hundreds, of people at a time in Afghanistan. In 2024, more than 300 people died in springtime flash floods.

after they became stranded by floodwaters.

Hundreds of kilometres of roads in various parts of the country have been destroyed by floods, landslides and rock-falls over the past two weeks, while major highways linking the capital Kabul with provinces in the north, east and west were closed.

Snow and heavy rain often trigger flash floods that kill scores, or even hundreds, of people at a time in Afghanistan. In 2024, more than 300 people died in springtime flash floods.

Pak-Afghan talks to end conflict continue under China's mediation



PTI

Beijing, Apr 7: China-mediated talks between Pakistan and Afghanistan to end their current military conflict continued a week after they began, the Chinese Foreign Ministry said on Tuesday.

"China has been making active mediation efforts to facilitate dialogue between Pakistan and Afghanistan. The process for talks is being implemented and advanced steadily," Chinese Foreign Ministry

spokesperson Mao Ning told a media briefing here.

The China-facilitated talks are the first major diplomatic engagement between the two neighbours since Pakistan launched Operation Ghazab lil-Haq in late February to target terrorist "hideouts" in Afghanistan.

For Pakistan, the talks were complicated by a report of UN experts saying that Islamabad's allegations of the presence of militants in Afghanistan lacked "credible evidence".

Australia, China agree to seek regional energy security

AFP

Sydney, Apr 07: Australia and China agreed on Tuesday to back regional energy security as the world faced rising oil prices sparked by war in the Middle East, both governments said.

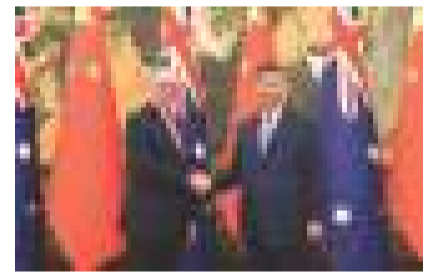
Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese held a telephone call with Chinese Premier Li Qiang to discuss the importance of energy security "in light of the current global challenges," according to a Canberra summary of their conversation.

"The Prime Minister and Premier Li agreed to increase government-to-government communication so that Australia and China are both working in support of regional energy security," it said.

The two sides agreed that high-level engagement was central to a "mature, stable and constructive relationship."

Li said that their economic cooperation has "enormous potential in the long run," adding that "both sides should accelerate the review and upgrading of the bilateral free trade agreement."

"China is willing to import more high-quality products from Australia" while there is "great potential" for



deeper cooperation on clean energy, Li said, according to a Chinese foreign ministry readout.

Australia relies on imports for an estimated 90 percent of its refined petroleum products, most of it coming from Asia.

China is a major source of aviation fuel for Australia while also being a big importer of Australian liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Albanese said he would travel to Singapore on Thursday to discuss trade in essential supplies such as diesel and LNG. Singapore is Australia's largest single supplier of refined petroleum products.

Last week, the Australian government halved its fuel tax on petrol for three months to help alleviate rising costs for motorists and truck drivers.

India face must-win Asian Cup clash against Chinese Taipei

PTI

Pathum Thani (Thailand), Apr 7: India will take on Chinese Taipei in their final Group C fixture of the AFC U20 Women's Asian Cup here on Wednesday, knowing that nothing short of a victory will keep their hopes of reaching the quarter-finals alive.

After defeats in their opening two matches against Japan and Australia, both India and Chinese Taipei find themselves in identical situations, chasing a result that could yet keep their tournament alive.

India's goal difference of -11 makes things a bit more complicated than Chinese Taipei's -7.

The Young Tigresses' hopes of reaching the knockout stage for the first time since 2004 rest on securing a place among the two best third-placed teams across all groups.

Their task will be simplified if either the Group A match between Vietnam and Bangladesh on Tuesday or the Group B match between Uzbekistan and Jordan on Wednesday ends in a draw.

In that case, the winner of India vs Chinese Taipei will qualify for the quarter-finals, regardless of goal difference. But if there is a winner in both those games, India would need to win by a handsome margin to avoid being the worst-ranked third-placed side in the three groups.

At the moment, the goal



differences of the other teams are - Bangladesh (-3), Vietnam (-6), Uzbekistan (-8) and Jordan (-9).

Across their first two matches, the Young Tigresses have shown glimpses of their ability, but have also been punished for lapses at key moments.

The emphasis on attacking efficiency, something India have worked on throughout their preparation, now becomes critical.

Forward Sulanjana Raul is also aware that the challenge will be equally fierce from the other side. The need for a strong start is another key factor.

At the other end of the pitch, defensive discipline will be just as crucial. Defender Cindy Colney

reflected on the lessons from the opening games and the responsibility of ensuring improvement.

The 19-year-old started out in the national team as a midfielder during her U17 days, but under Alexandersson, she has been converted into a solid centre-back.

The defensive unit has come under pressure in the first two matches.

Chinese Taipei head coach Hsieh Chih-chun acknowledged the challenge ahead and the balance between the two sides.

"India are a very attacking side, and their fighting spirit and defensive mentality are excellent, but I feel that both our teams are very evenly matched in terms of ability," he said.

OFFER PRICE
TICKETS STARTING AT
₹92

Movies Watchlist

Wednesday, 8th April

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

THE SUPER MARIO GALAXY MOVIE (U/A)
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
05:30 PM

PROJECT HAIL MARY (U/A)
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES
10:45 AM, 02:25 PM

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

CALL 95416 13868 FOR ASSISTANCE WITH TICKETS