

## PM Modi-led regime has taken dev to every doorstep: LG Manoj Sinha

» Crores of families now have their own homes » Roads have reached every village, airports doubled » Digital revolution connects every section of society » Marginalised sections have bank accounts, smart phones

Yogesh

Jammu, Apr 21: Asserting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi led regime has taken development beyond mere statistics and has carried it to every doorstep, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said that crores of families who once had no roof over their heads now have their own homes.

Speaking at the statue unveiling ceremony of Shri Vijay Bahadur Singh, a well-known social worker and the founder of Mahamandaleshwar Shri Bal Krishna Yati Inter College at Ghazipur, Uttar Pradesh, LG Sinha, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said that steps taken by the PM Modi led regime have brought dignity and security in society.

“Roads have reached every village, the number of airports



has doubled, the digital revolution has connected every section of society. Today the

marginalised section have bank accounts, they have an identity, they hold smart mobile phones

for financial transactions, and in my view this is not merely technological progress but social empowerment,” he said.

“In far-flung regions of the country, new schools, new universities and a new education policy together have begun to build an India in which the hands of the youth hold the reins of the future. The facilities now available particularly for girls are unprecedented in our history, and the purpose of education through innovation and research is no longer merely to pass exams but to create an aware and responsible citizen,” he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said, “We have to build an India which our freedom fighters once dreamed of. In which every section and every individual will be a part of the mainstream of progress.”

“India is moving decisively towards becoming a developed

nation. The goal of 2047 is not merely a date; it is a national resolve,” the Lieutenant Governor said.

Paying homage to Shri Vijay Bahadur Singh, the Lieutenant Governor that he discharged his duties without any expectation, served without any desire for fame, and built not for himself but for the coming generations.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasized that we must carry the ideals of Shri Vijay Bahadur Singh Ji, a true karma-yogi, to every segment of society.

“I feel particularly proud that Shri Vijay Bahadur Singh Ji did not ask what Bindraan could do for him; instead, he showed what Bindraan and the Jakhania region could do for themselves. This Inter College, born of a people’s movement, is just a small symbol of his transformative work.”

Shri Vijay Bahadur Singh Ji did not merely | More on P6

## LG, CM congratulate students on JKBOSE Class 10 Jammu Div results

KT News Desk

Srinagar, Apr 21: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah extended their best wishes to students who successfully passed the JKBOSE Class 10th Annual Regular Examinations for the Summer Zone of Jammu Division.

LG Sinha, in a post on X, expressed his congratulations to all the students, saying, “Heartiest congratulations to all the students who have successfully passed the JKBOSE Class 10th Annual Regular Examinations-2026 (Summer Zone, Jammu Division). Wishing each one of you a bright and promising future. My compliments to the teachers and parents.”

CM Abdullah also shared his felicitations through a press release, congratulating the students on their achievements. He urged



those who did not meet their expectations to stay motivated and continue their pursuit of excellence, emphasizing perseverance and resilience.

The JKBOSE announced the results on Tuesday, recording an overall pass percentage of 88.85 percent among 50,754 students who appeared for the exams. A total of 45,094 students successfully cleared the examination, with girls continuing their impressive performance—achieving a pass rate of 90.42 percent—outperforming

## Kashmir trips will go on, no terror attack will dampen spirits, say tourists

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 21: On the first anniversary of the Pahalgam terror attack that left 26 tourists, mostly tourists dead, visitors on Tuesday said no such incident would stop them from travelling to the Kashmir, asserting they would continue their visits without fear and that Pakistan would not be able to disrupt the prevailing peaceful atmosphere.

Pertinently, on April 22, 2025, a major terror attack took place in Baisaran Valley near Pahalgam in South Kashmir, where terrorists targeted tourists in the popular meadow known as “Mini Switzerland.” Victims included 25 tourists from across the

country, one from Nepal, and a local pony operator, Syed Adil Hussain Shah, who died while trying to disarm an attacker.

Speaking to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) from various tourist locations, visitors said, “Pakistan would not be able to disrupt peace in Jammu and Kashmir,” and asserted that tourists would not be deterred by fear, adding they would continue to visit and explore destinations across the Valley.

“We are not afraid of Pakistan or those trying to disrupt peace in Kashmir. India is a peace-loving country and we want peace. We will not tolerate any attempts to harm us.” | More on P6

## Year after Pahalgam attack, tourists return

Stakeholders report gradual rise in footfall; hoteliers, pony operators, traders pin hopeful

Jahangeer Ganaie

Pahalgam, Apr 21: A year after the tragic terror attack in the Baisaran meadows of Pahalgam that shook Kashmir’s tourism industry to its core, signs of revival are slowly emerging across the Valley, bringing a sense of cautious optimism among those whose livelihoods depend on the sector.

On April 22, 2025, at least 26 persons, mostly tourists were killed in a brutal attack that led to an abrupt decline in tourist arrivals, leaving hotels empty, businesses shut, and thousands grappling with



severe financial distress. The incident dealt a heavy blow not only economically

but also emotionally to the region, long known for its hospitality and | More on P6

## Awaiting terror-free India: Tourists pay tributes to victims

Gather at Razdan Top to pay homage, urge stronger security measures

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 21: Describing the Pahalgam terror attack as unfortunate, tourists on Wednesday paid tribute to the victims on the eve of its first anniversary at Razdan Top in North Kashmir’s Bandipora district.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) number of visitors gathered at the high-altitude pass, which connects the Kashmir Valley with the remote Gurez Valley, and observed a brief silence in memory of those killed in the April 22, 2025 attack in Baisaran Valley near Pahalgam. The attack had left 26

people dead and over 20 injured, including tourists from different parts of the country. Speaking to KNO, tourists said the incident had shocked the nation but asserted that such acts would not deter them from visiting Kashmir.

“While the attack was deeply unfortunate, we have come here to pay our respects to the victims. We also want to send a message that fear will not stop us from travelling,” said Rakesh Sharma, a tourist from Delhi.

Another visitor, Meena Gupta from Punjab, said Kashmir continues to remain a safe destination. “We feel secure here. The arrangements are good and people are welcoming.” | More on P6

## Maharashtra ministers inaugurate house for martyr Adil Hussain who saved tourists

Family thanks Shiv Sena, receives Rs 5 lakh financial assistance

Jahangeer Ganaie

Pahalgam, Apr 21: In a poignant gesture of remembrance and solidarity, Maharashtra ministers led by Sanjay Shirsat and Yogesh Kadam on Tuesday inaugurated a newly constructed house for Syed Adil Hussain Shah, who lost his life during the Pahalgam terror attack while bravely saving tourists last year.

The ceremony, held in the presence of residents and officials, was also joined virtually



by Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Eknath Shinde, whose party had pledged support to

the bereaved family soon after the tragic incident. Speaking on the occasion,

the ministers, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), underlined that while promises are often made in the aftermath of tragedies, they rarely materialise on the ground. “Many come and make announcements, but implementation is what truly matters. What was promised has been fulfilled promptly,” they said, adding that the initiative reflects commitment rather than symbolism. They said the | More on P6

## ‘India doesn’t forget’: Army says terror will face decisive action

Sajid Raina

New Delhi, Apr 21: Ahead of the first anniversary of the Pahalgam terror attack, the Indian Army on Tuesday reiterated its resolve to counter terrorism, warning that any breach of “the boundaries of humanity” would invite a decisive response.

In a post on X, the Army, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, “When boundaries of humanity are crossed, the response is decisive. Justice is served. India stands



coordinated strikes hit nine locations in Pakistan and Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (PoK), aimed at dismantling camps used by terror groups for training and logistics. More than 100 terrorists, including trainers, handlers and aides, were killed in the operation, officials said, adding that those targeted were linked to outfits such as Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba and Hizbul Mujahideen. Officials said the strikes were carried out with precision to minimise civilian casualties | More on P6

## A tale of women underrepresentation in Jammu & Kashmir Assembly

KNO Special Correspondent

Srinagar, Apr 21: Amid discussions over women reservation in politics, official data shows that the number of female candidates elected to the Jammu & Kashmir Assembly has remained abysmally low.

According to data accessed by news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), since 1967, when the Election Commission of India first conducted state election in Jammu and Kashmir, only a few female candidates have managed to win Assembly elections.

As per records, only one female contested the 1967 election, but she lost.

The data shows that four women were elected in 1972—the highest-ever number of female winners in a J&K Assembly election so far. The four winners were Zainab Begum (Amira Kadal), Hajra Begum (Banihal), Nirmal Devi (Tikri), and Shanta Bharti (Jandrah Gharota). All of them belonged to Congress.

In 1977, only one female candidate, Gurbachan Kumari, won from the Bari Brahmanan constituency. In 1983, no female candidate managed to win. In 1987, Swaran Lata was the lone woman elected, again from Bari Brahmanan.

In 1996, two women managed to win their seats, with Sakina Itoo (NC) and Mehbooba

Mufti (Congress) winning Noorabad and Bijbehara seats, respectively.

In 2002, two women—Suman Lata Bhagat (Congress, R.S. Pura) and Mehbooba Mufti (PDP, Pahalgam)—won their seats.

The number of female candidates in that Assembly rose to three when Kanta Andotra, wife of senior Congress leader Lal Singh, won a by-election from the Basholi constituency.

In 2008, three women—Mehbooba Mufti (Wachi), Shamima Firdous (Habba Kadal), and Sakina Itoo (Noorabad)—were elected, all from the Kashmir Valley. In 2014, the tally dropped to two, with Shamima Firdous (Habba Kadal) | More on P6

## CM unveils Shishur edition of 'Six Seasons'

Magazine features stories on prominent tourist destinations



KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 21: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday unveiled the January–March 2026 edition

of the ‘Six Seasons’ – Shishur (Severe Cold) magazine of the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department at the Civil Secretariat here. The issue, | More on P6

## MLAs, deputations call on CM

Raise key dev, relief concerns



KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 21: Several legislators and other deputations on Tuesday called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah and raised various issues about their respective areas.

MLA Gurez, Nazir Ahmed Khan (Gurezi), MLA Samba,

Surjit Singh Slathia, MLA Lolab Qayser Jamshed Lone and MLA Bani Dr Rameshwar Singh met the Chief Minister and highlighted a range of constituency-specific concerns.

MLA Gurez, representing one of the far-flung areas of Jammu and Kashmir, put forth several developmental | More on P6

## Domel-Katra-Reasi-Bambla road project

# Deputy CM calls for enhanced 4-lane connectivity



KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, APRIL 21: Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary on Tuesday emphasized the need to strengthen connectivity across Katra, Reasi and Pouni regions through the proposed Domel-Katra-Reasi-Bambla road project.

Chairing a high-level review meeting, the Deputy Chief Minister, as per an official statement, assessed the progress of the Detailed Project Report (DPR) preparation and examined the proposed alignment of the project.

He described the initiative as a vital infrastructure development, saying that the proposed four-lane

road will significantly improve connectivity, reduce travel time, and enhance overall mobility in the region.

The meeting was attended by Chief Engineer PMGSY, Purshotam Kumar, Director Planning and other senior officers.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the officials to ensure that approaches connecting the major populated habitations particularly at Reasi, Pouni, Katra are comprehensively included in the DPR.

"Our aim is to ensure improved road connectivity and deliver tangible benefits to the people," he stated.

During the meeting, the Consultant briefed him on various

aspects of the project, including alignment feasibility, land acquisition requirements, tunnel construction, projected travel time savings and potential cost implications.

He instructed the concerned departments to expedite the engagement of consultancy services and fast-track the DPR preparation to facilitate timely approval.

Reiterating the government's commitment, the Deputy Chief Minister said, "We are dedicated to ensuring seamless and enhanced road connectivity across all regions of Jammu and Kashmir, with a focus on inclusive and balanced development."

## Nasha Mukht J&K Campaign

# Sarmad Hafeez flags off Padyatra in Baramulla



KT NEWS DESK

BARAMULLA, APRIL 21: As part of the ongoing 100-day Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir campaign, the District Administration Baramulla on Tuesday organized a mega Padyatra to intensify awareness against drug abuse and promote a healthier, addiction-free society.

Padyatra was flagged off by Commissioner Secretary Social Welfare, Sarmad Hafeez who is also Distinct Mentor for 100 days NMBA campaign, from Dak Bunglow in presence of Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, S.F. Hamid, SSP Baramulla, Gurinderpal Singh, SSP Sopore, Iftikhar Talib, ADC Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain Musvi, ADC Sopore, S.A. Raina and saw enthusiastic participation from other

officers, officials, civil society members, youth and a large number of students.

The initiative, as per an official statement, aimed to sensitize people, especially the youth, about health consequences of drug addiction while encouraging them to adopt a positive and disciplined lifestyle.

The padyatra traversed through key areas of Baramulla town and culminated at Showkat Ali Stadium Baramulla. Throughout the march, participants carried placards and raised slogans, powerfully highlighting the harmful effects of substance abuse and reinforcing the message of a drug-free society.

Earlier, Sarmad Hafeez, chaired a comprehensive review meeting to assess the progress and enforcement of the Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir initiative in district Baramulla.

During the meeting, the commissioner secretary directed the district administration to intensify awareness campaigns at the grassroots level to penetrate every section of society, particularly targeting the youth, to educate them about the ill effects of substance abuse.

He further urged officers to adopt innovative and engaging methods to combat the drug menace, including the involvement of national figures, sportspersons, and local icons who can effectively influence and inspire the younger generation.

Highlighting the importance of impactful execution, Commissioner Secretary instructed that the campaign should not be reduced to a mere ritualistic exercise, but must bring about a tangible and meaningful change in society.

Stressing the need for collective responsibility, he called for a collaborative approach wherein all stakeholders, including government departments, law enforcement agencies, educational institutions, and civil society work in close coordination.

# 10th class Summer Zone results declared, 88.85% students declared qualified

## Sakeena Ito lauds students for outstanding results

KT NEWS DESK

JAMMU, APRIL 21: Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) declared the results of Annual/Regular 10th Class (Summer Zone) areas of Jammu division on Tuesday.

A total of 50,754 candidates appeared in the examination, out of which 45,094 candidates have qualified, making overall pass percentage of 88.85%, which is much better than the last year's percentage of 79.94.

Among the candidates, 27,486 boys and 23,268 girls appeared in the examination. Of these, 24,054 boys and 21,040 girls qualified. The pass percentage of boys stood at 87.51%, whereas girls have recorded a higher pass percentage of 90.42%. The examination, as per an official statement, was conducted smoothly across 527 centres.

Notably, 26,706 candidates from Government schools appeared in the examination with 22,283 qualifying, making pass percentage of 83.44%. From Private Schools, 24,048 candidates appeared with

22,811 qualifying, making pass percentage of 94.86%.

Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Ito extended her heartfelt greetings to the students of 10th Class (Summer Zone) for passing the examination with flying colours.

The Minister commended the students for their hard work, dedication, and perseverance, stating that the results are a testament to their commitment and the collective efforts of teachers, parents, and the education system at large. She added that the pass percentage of 83.44 for Government schools is very encouraging and highlights the improvement of educational standards in Government institutions.

"These outstanding results reflect the Government's sustained focus on strengthening the education sector and ensuring quality learning outcomes across Jammu and Kashmir," she stated.

Highlighting the achievements of girl students, the Minister lauded their outstanding performance

in the examinations. She noted with pride that girls have once again outshined boys, showcasing their determination, resilience, and academic excellence.

"This achievement is not only a matter of pride but also a clear indication of the positive impact of various government initiatives aimed at empowering girls through education," she said.

Encouraging students to remain focused and motivated, the Minister urged them to pursue their future academic and career goals with confidence and determination. She also advised those who could not perform as expected to remain hopeful and work harder, emphasizing that success is a continuous journey.

The Minister further reiterated the Government's commitment to providing an inclusive, equitable, and high-quality education system. She assured that continuous efforts are being made to improve infrastructure, enhance teaching standards, and create a conducive learning environment for all students.

# Thunder Kashmir



IS AVAILABLE AT ALL LEADING STALLS

## IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Khurshheed Ahmad S/o: Ab Ahad Magray R/o: Yunisoo Tehsil Langate

Versus

C.E.O Municipal Council Sopore/BDO Sangrama/BDO Sopore

(Registrar of Birth and Death)

...Non Applicant

NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE

Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of **Birth** event of the applicant's Son namely Moomin Ahmad Magray S/o:Khurshheed Ahmad as 13-12-2018 at Mother & Child Hospital Sopore.

Whereas through the medium of this proclamation the public at large is informed that in case any one has any objection for issuance of direction with respect to the registration of aforementioned **Birth** event he /she shall file the same before this court in person or through counsel within 7 days from the date of the publication of this proclamation.If the date fixed is declared holiday,the matter will be taken on the next working day.

Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

## IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Aisha Begum D/o: Abdul Rehman Lala R/o: Nowhamam Sopore

Versus

C.E.O Municipal Council Sopore/BDO Sangrama/BDO Sopore

(Registrar of Birth and Death)

...Non Applicant

NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE

Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of **Birth** event of the applicant's Applicant namely Aisha Begum S/o:Abdul Rehman Lala as 01-01-1945 at Home (Nowhamam Sopore)

Whereas through the medium of this proclamation the public at large is informed that in case any one has any objection for issuance of direction with respect to the registration of aforementioned **Birth** event he /she shall file the same before this court in person or through counsel within 7 days from the date of the publication of this proclamation.If the date fixed is declared holiday,the matter will be taken on the next working day.

Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

## IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1<sup>st</sup> CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Ruksana Begum S/o: Nisar Ahmad Bhat R/o: Gund Jahangir Tehsil Hajin

Versus

C.E.O Municipal Council Sopore/BDO Sangrama/BDO Sopore

(Registrar of Birth and Death)

...Non Applicant

NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE

Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of **Birth** event of the applicant's Son namely Akash Ahmad Bhat S/o:Nisar Ahmad Bhat as 05-06-2021 at Mother & Child Hospital Sopore.

Whereas through the medium of this proclamation the public at large is informed that in case any one has any objection for issuance of direction with respect to the registration of aforementioned **Birth** event he /she shall file the same before this court in person or through counsel within 7 days from the date of the publication of this proclamation.If the date fixed is declared holiday,the matter will be taken on the next working day.

Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR (U.T)

### OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MACHINERY DIVISION KASHMIR

Email: xenmds-kmr@jk.gov.in

#### Cancellation Notice

Subject: - SITC of snow mobile Polaris 550 Voyager LXT 144 for Gulmarg development Authority...  
..... cancellation of eNIT thereof.

References: -

1. This office eNIT No: MDSK/TS/2025-26/105 Dated: 16.03.2026.
2. TOC decision No: 02 of 2026-27 Dated: 16.04.2026.

In view of directions conveyed by the Chief engineer MHED Kashmir vide ToC decision No: 02 of 2026-27 Dated: 16.04.2026 the above referred eNIT is hereby canceled due to technical reasons.

No: MDK/TS/309-II  
Dt: 21-04-2026

DIPK-630/26  
DATED: 21-04-2026  
Executive Engineer  
Machinery Division Kashmir

## GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER KULGAM

Mail ID: [cmokulgam@jk.gov.in](mailto:cmokulgam@jk.gov.in)

Mini Secretariat Kulgam Room No. 131 Phone/Fax: 01931-260388

#### SELECTION LIST

Sub: List of candidates selected for Jan Aushadhi Kendras as Managers in district Kulgam

Following is the list of candidates who have been provisionally selected as Managers on profit sharing basis in the PHCs shown against each under PMJAY.

Block Kulgam

S. No	Name	S/O, D/O, W/O	Residence	Medical Block	Total aggregate points out of 100	Final Result
1	Afag Hassan Naik	Gulam Hassan Naik	Chatripora	Kulgam	78.6	Selected for PHC Bugam
2	Insha Farooq	Farooq Ahmad Lone	H C Gam	Kulgam	76.72	Selected for PHC Nehama

Waiting List

S. No	Name	S/O, D/O, W/O	Residence	Medical Block	Total aggregate points out of 100	Final Result
1	Umar Gulzar	Gulzar Ahmad Ganie	Tamiloo Kulgam	Kulgam	74.83	Waiting
2	Thoker Muneer Bashir	Bashir Ahmad Thoker	Jadipora	Kulgam	73.55	Waiting

Block Qazigund

S. No	Name	S/O, D/O, W/O	Residence	Medical Block	Total aggregate points out of 100	Final Result
1	Mehvish Mohi ud Din	Gh Mohi ud Din Bhat	Hablishi	Qazigund	70.75	Selected for PHC Qazigund

Waiting List

S. No	Name	S/O, D/O, W/O	Residence	Medical Block	Total aggregate points out of 100	Final Result
1	Muzamil Rafique Bhat	Mohamad Rafique Bhat	Manzmoh	Qazigund	62.25	Waiting

Block Qaimoh

S. No	Name	S/O, D/O, W/O	Residence	Medical Block	Total aggregate points out of 100	Final Result
1	Mehraj Ahmad Dar	Riyaz Ahmad Dar	Khudwani	Qaimoh	74.4	Selected for PHC Qaimoh

Waiting List

S. No	Name	S/O, D/O, W/O	Residence	Medical Block	Total aggregate points out of 100	Final Result
1	Tanvir Ahmad Lone	Nazir Ahmad Lone	Tulinowpora	Qaimoh	64.81	Waiting

Terms and Conditions:

1. The selection list is purely provisional subject to the verification of original documents.
2. Any objection will be entertained within 7 (seven) days from the publication of this list.
3. The selected candidates have to work on profit sharing basis.
4. The selected candidates shall not claim for regularization.
5. The waiting list shall be operational for a period of six months. The provisionally selected candidates shall have no claim for the monthly honorarium.
6. In case of deficiency with reference to eligibility etc. proved at any time of the selection process, the candidate shall forfeit his/her selection.
7. In case, at any time it is found that any candidate has used any fraudulent means/certificate (PR, Marital Status, etc.) to avail local criteria, his/her candidature/hiring will be canceled.

No: CMOK/Plg/2026-27/59-64

Date: 21/04/2026

DIPK-624/26  
DATED: 21-04-2026

Chief Medical Officer Kulgam

## J&K braces for 7 GW winter load by 2030

■ Emergency Power Supply load projected to reach 4,211 MW

RIYAZ BHAT

Srinagar, Apr 21: In a stark warning, Jammu and Kashmir has indicated that a power load requirement of up to 7 Gigawatts (GWs) by the coming five years needs to be considered in the winter season—signaling major infrastructure upgrades to avoid seasonal blackouts.

However, the officials have conservatively trimmed the load requirement to 5 GW by the financial year 2029-30.

The statutory body Northern Regional Power Committee (NRPC) in a joint study meeting has said that "J&K indicated that a load of 6-7GW needs to be considered in the winter season by 2029-30."

"However, on conservative side load is considered to the tune of 5 GW," it reads.



Stating the details of Northern Region states load considered in Power System Simulator for Engineering (PSSE) for

2029-2030, the committee has projected 4211 Megawatts (MWs) of Emergency Power Supply (EPS) load in J&K by

2029-2030 timeframe.

However, the load considered in the revised PSSE file is 5000 MWs.

Pertinently, as already reported by KNO, Jammu and Kashmir was importing more than 95 percent of its electricity in the month of December.

The officials earlier in the month had informed that Jammu and Kashmir is importing electricity ranging from 2900 MWs to 3100 MWs during the peak hours. It also said that during the other hours, the region is importing electricity ranging from 2400 MWs to 2800 MWs.

The official however had clarified that the power import includes all the sources including the power allocated from the center and other Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs). Earlier the

news agency reported that Jammu and Kashmir is likely to face a four percent Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) increase in electricity requirement and six percent increase in peak electricity demand for the period of 2025-26 to 2035-36.

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

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

## CM Omar flags off ambulances, healthcare equipment



KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 21: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday flagged off seven ambulances and other healthcare equipment from Civil Secretariat, Jammu for multiple districts across Jammu and Kashmir, provided by Jammu and Kashmir State Power Development Corporation under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative.

The ambulances have been distributed across Jammu and Kashmir at a total cost of 144.73 lakh.

In addition, JKSPDC has provided 07 TruNat machines at a cost of Rs 58.80 lakh and 02 handheld X-ray machines costing Rs 35.96 lakh.

For the Thalassemia Day Care Centre at SMGS Hospital, Jammu, essential medical

equipment and medicines have been provided at a cost of Rs 29.09 lakh to support treatment and patient care.

Essential items have been provided to Child Care Institutions at Palaash/Parisha/SAA Udhampur at a cost of Rs 3.11 lakh to improve living conditions and support the needs of children.

Further, various Braille items have been provided to the Blind School, Roop Nagar, Jammu at a cost of 2.90 lakh.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister said, "Strengthening emergency healthcare access, especially in underserved areas, remains a top priority. These ambulances and medical equipment will significantly improve timely medical response and save precious lives."

Minister for Health & Medical

Education Sakina Itoo, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Managing Director JKSPDC Rahul Yadav, Director Health Services Jammu, and other senior officers were present on the occasion.

The Chief Minister was also briefed about civil construction works undertaken by JKSPDC during the financial year 2025-26 across multiple districts, amounting to Rs 237.28 lakh.

The total cost of all CSR initiatives, including procurement and construction works, stands at 523 lakh for the last financial year.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to inclusive development, the Chief Minister appreciated the role of JKSPDC in extending support to vital sectors through its CSR initiatives.

## Pahalgam attack a major setback for J&K: Dr Farooq



UMAISAR GULL GANIE

Srinagar, Apr 21: National Conference president Farooq Abdullah on Tuesday Pahalgam attack was a major setback for Jammu and Kashmir as he paid tributes to those who lost their lives in the terror incident last year.

Speaking to reporters in Bijbeharam, Abdullah said he wants pay tribute to those who lost their lives, especially to those who stood against the terrorists.

On the proposed second round of US-Iran talks, he expressed hope that the ongoing dialogue between would ultimately lead to peace, asserting that "there is no alternative" to it.

"Many rounds are going to be held, but peace will prevail. There is no other alternative to peace. The world would be saved through peace," he added.

On Women Reservation Bill, he said his party is not against reservation, noting that when the bill was introduced in 2023, it was passed with a majority—(KNO)

## CM releases biography 'Mitti se Mukam Tak'

Lauds Dr Roop Lal Sharma's contributions to education



KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 21: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday released a biography of Dr. Roop Lal Sharma, authored by his daughter, Dr. Sakshi Sharma.

The book, titled "Mitti se Mukam Tak,"

chronicles the life journey, struggles, and achievements of the founder chairman of the Jammu Institute of Ayurveda and Research.

The Chief Minister appreciated the author for documenting her father's inspiring journey and lauded Dr. Sharma's contributions to the field of education.

## MP Mian Altaf announces major works on Mughal Road

RAJA SYED RATHER

Srinagar, Apr 21: Member of Parliament (MP) Mian Altaf Ahmad on Tuesday said major improvement works on the historic Mughal Road will be undertaken this year.

He said that blacktopping work from Peer Ki Gali to Buzliaz has already been completed, while further upgrades are planned to enhance road connectivity.

The MP said he had urged the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) to keep the Mughal Road open during winters,



drawing comparisons with roads leading to Ladakh that remain operational despite

harsh conditions. "There is no justification for keeping Mughal Road closed if other difficult routes can be managed," he said, adding that the authorities have responded positively.

Regarding the proposed tunnel project, Mian Altaf said it has already been sanctioned and the process, including survey, DPR preparation and tendering, is progressing smoothly. "There are no obstacles at present, and I expect the tendering process to be completed within this year," he added—(KNO)

## SSP Ganderbal inspects Baltal base camp, reviews preparations

RAJA SYED RATHER

Ganderbal, Apr 21: Senior Superintendent of Police Ganderbal, Sudhanshu Dhama, on Tuesday conducted a comprehensive inspection of the Baltal Base Camp to review preparations for the forthcoming Amarnath Yatra 2026.

According to the details available during the visit, the SSP assessed the pace and quality of arrangements, including accommodation facilities, traffic management, security deployment, emergency response mechanisms, and inter-agency coordination.

Continued on [www.kashmirthunder.in](http://www.kashmirthunder.in)

## Bandipora Admin conducts mock drill to strengthen emergency preparedness

KT NEWS DESK

Bandipora, Apr 21: In a proactive move to enhance disaster preparedness and response mechanisms, the District Administration Bandipora on Tuesday conducted a comprehensive mock drill at the Conference Hall, Mini Secretariat, with active involvement of the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF).

The drill was held in the presence of senior district officers, including Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR), Shabir Ahmad Wani, Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD), Bashir Ahmad Paddar, and Deputy Superintendent of Police (DySP) Headquarters Bandipora, Ahmad Shafee, besides officers and officials from various line departments.

Continued on [www.kashmirthunder.in](http://www.kashmirthunder.in)

## Foolproof security in place for Darbar Move: SSP Srinagar

REHAN QAYOUM MIR

Srinagar, Apr 21: Assuring that all necessary security arrangements have been put in place, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar Dr G.V. Sundeeep Chakravathy on Tuesday said that Jammu and Kashmir Police are fully prepared to ensure a safe, smooth and peaceful Darbar Move from Jammu to Srinagar.

Speaking on the sidelines of an event held at Tagore Hall here, the SSP said the annual Darbar Move is being



meticulously planned to ensure uninterrupted and secure movement of the civil

secretariat and officials. "We are preparing every year. A detailed plan has been formulated for the safe shifting of the Secretariat from Jammu to Srinagar. Adequate security arrangements will be in place, and the movement will remain peaceful and secure," he said.

The SSP added that police deployment and protection measures around key officials and convoy routes are being strengthened to ensure foolproof arrangements during the exercise.

Continued on [www.kashmirthunder.in](http://www.kashmirthunder.in)

## Cybercrimes rising rapidly: SSP CICE Says awareness key to remain secure

NAVEED UL HAQ GANAIEE

Budgam, Apr 21: Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP), Cybercrime Investigation Centre for Excellence (CICE), J&K, Ramnish Gupta (JKPS) on Tuesday said cybercrime cases are increasing with each passing day. He called for greater public awareness and timely reporting.

Talking to media persons during an awareness programme about cybercrime at Government Degree College (GDC) Chararisharif, Gupta (JKPS) said that with widespread internet usage, people are increasingly vulnerable to online frauds and must understand both the methods used by fraudsters and ways

to safeguard themselves. "Everyone is using the internet and is susceptible to cyber fraud. People must stay informed about different types of fraud and adopt preventive measures," he said.

The officer stressed the importance of reporting cyber financial frauds immediately on the national helpline 1930, saying that early reporting enables authorities to trace transactions and prevent financial losses.

"The sooner a fraud is reported, the faster our system can act to place a lien on the money and possibly save the victim's hard-earned income," he said.

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## Kashmir wetlands host over 15 lakh migratory birds

WARIS FAYAZ

Sopore, Apr 21: Kashmir's wetlands have become a paradise for migratory birds this season, attracting over 15 lakh feathered visitors, with the Ramsar-designated Hygam wetland in Sopore hosting the lion's share of more than 4 lakh birds.

Regional Wildlife Warden Kashmir, Tawheed Ahmed Deva said the Hygam wetland in Sopore accounted for the highest share, with over four lakh birds recorded during the annual census.

He said Hygam, a designated Ramsar site spread over 7.62 square kilometres, remains fully demarcated and free from encroachment. "The entire wetland area is intact. There is no encroachment, and the water level is being maintained," he said.

Deva said the wetland has effectively served its ecological purpose this season, reflected in the unprecedented arrival of migratory birds. He said the counting was carried out under the Asian Waterbird Census programme, and the final report is being compiled and will be



released within two months.

Highlighting conservation efforts, he said the department remains committed to preserving wetlands across Kashmir. "We are taking sustained measures to conserve these habitats and ensure they continue to support biodiversity," he said.

Continued on [www.kashmirthunder.in](http://www.kashmirthunder.in)

EDITORIAL

## It's Time For Health Awareness And Action

The revelation that 23 to 30 per cent of Kashmir's population suffers from fatty liver disease is a public health emergency unfolding silently across the Valley. Unlike infectious outbreaks that demand immediate attention, this epidemic creeps in unnoticed, driven by the very habits of modern living, and only reveals its devastation when irreversible damage has already occurred. The time for awareness and action is now. The primary drivers of this crisis are metabolic syndrome and

poor dietary habits. The Valley's traditional diet, once rich in whole grains, seasonal vegetables, and moderate portions, has increasingly given way to processed foods, refined carbohydrates, and unhealthy fats. Sedentary lifestyles, reduced physical activity, and rising obesity rates have created the perfect storm for fat accumulation in the liver. What makes this particularly alarming is that fatty liver is no longer an adult disease; it is affecting children as well, with prevalence rates often as high as

30 per cent in young populations. The good news, however, is that fatty liver is reversible, but only in its early stages. Lifestyle modifications, including a balanced diet, regular exercise, weight management, and complete avoidance of alcohol, can significantly reduce fat buildup and restore liver health. This reversibility window is a precious opportunity that must not be wasted. Yet the warning signs are often ignored. What is lacking is public awareness and the discipline of regular health check-ups. The

government must launch a comprehensive public awareness campaign targeting schools, workplaces, and community centres. Nutritional guidelines must be promoted aggressively, and access to healthy food options must be improved. Regular screening camps, particularly in high-risk populations such as those with obesity, diabetes, or a family history of liver disease, should be institutionalised. For individuals, the message is simple: your liver is your lifeline. Solid habits build a strong liver. Reduce

sugar and processed foods. Exercise daily. Avoid alcohol completely. Get an annual liver function test. If diagnosed with fatty liver, do not wait—act. The disease is reversible, but only if you take the first step today. This silent epidemic will not announce itself with drums and alarms. It will manifest in exhausted bodies, swollen abdomens, and yellowed eyes when reversal is no longer possible. Let us not wait for that stage. Let us choose solid habits. Let us choose a strong liver. Let us choose life.

# Strengthening India's Food Processing Ecosystem

## Production linked incentive scheme for the food processing industry

Press Information Bureau

India's food processing sector has emerged as a critical pillar of the agricultural and manufacturing ecosystem, driving value addition, strengthening market linkages, and enhancing the availability of processed foods. The sector has witnessed steady growth in recent years, with Gross Value Added (GVA) increasing from 1.34 lakh crore in 2014-15 to 2.24 lakh crore in 2023-24 as per the first revised estimates. Its rising global footprint is reflected in the share of processed food exports in agricultural exports, which grew from 13.7 percent in 2014-15 to 20.4 percent in 2024-25.

With its strong resource base as the world's second-largest producer of fruits and vegetables, India holds significant potential to emerge as a global hub for food processing. However, realizing this potential requires enhanced competitiveness in terms of scale of production, productivity, value addition, and integration with global value chains. Recognizing these imperatives, the Government introduced the Production-Linked Incentive Scheme for the Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI) to catalyse growth and position India more strongly in global markets.

Understanding the Conceptual and Policy Framework of PLISFPI

The Production-Linked Incentive Scheme for the Food Processing Industry, approved by the Union Cabinet on 31 March 2021, falls within the broader Production-Linked Incentive Scheme.

The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme was launched in April 2020 to boost domestic manufacturing capabilities by offering financial incentives to eligible companies based on their incremental sales. It was introduced to enable the country to achieve more balanced and resilient progress by strengthening the manufacturing sector.

Aligned with the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat and the broader Make in India initiative, the PLI Scheme was initially introduced for sectors such as Mobile Manufacturing and

Specified Electronic Components, Critical Key Starting materials/Drug Intermediaries and Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients, and Manufacturing of Medical Devices. Over time, the PLI framework has been expanded to cover 14 strategic sectors, with an



incentive outlay of 1.97 lakh crore, with food processing among the key sectors.

With an outlay of 10,900 crore, PLISFPI is being implemented from 2021-22 to 2026-27. The scheme seeks to generate processed food output of 33,494 crore and create employment for nearly 2.5 lakh persons by the year 2026-27.

From Production to Branding: The Integrated Framework of PLISFPI

The Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI) is structured around three core components designed to promote manufacturing, encourage innovation among SMEs, and support the global branding of Indian food products.

First component (Category I): Incentivising the manufacturing of four major food product segments, viz. Ready-to-Cook/Ready-to-Eat (RTC/RTE) foods, including millet-based products, Processed Fruits & Vegetables, Marine Products, and Mozzarella Cheese.

Second component (Category II): Incentivising Innovative/ Organic products of SMEs across all four food product segments, including Free Range- Eggs, Poultry Meat & Egg Products.

Third component (Category III): Support for branding and marketing activities to incentivise the emergence of strong Indian brands, including in-store branding, shelf space rental, and marketing.

Additionally, from the savings under PLISFPI, a new component- the Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Millet-Based Products (PLISMBP)- was carved out in FY 2022-23 with an outlay of 800 crore. It

aims to encourage the use of millets in RTC/ RTE products and to incentivize their use under the scheme to promote their production, value addition, and sale.

Rewarding Growth: The Incentive Structure of PLISFPI

Under the Production Linked Incentive Scheme for Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI), the manufacturing components of the scheme (Category I and Category II) provide incentives to eligible food processing companies based on incremental sales of specified food products. Under these components, applicants must meet minimum sales thresholds in the base year (2019-20) and undertake prescribed investments in plant and machinery, technical civil works, and associated infrastructure in segments such as ready-to-eat/ready-to-cook foods, processed fruits and vegetables, marine products, and mozzarella cheese.

Under Category III, the government provides financial incentives to support branding and marketing activities for Indian-branded consumer food products in global markets. Applicants are reimbursed 50% of their branding and marketing expenses abroad, capped at 3% of their annual food product sales or 50 crore per year, whichever is lower. Only Indian brands selling food products that are entirely manufactured in India are covered under this component. To qualify, applicants must spend a minimum of 5 crore over a period of five years.

Institutional Mechanism and Implementation Framework of PLISFPI

The scheme is implemented through a Project Management Agency (PMA). The

Industrial Finance Corporation of India Limited (IFCI), a Government of India undertaking, has been appointed by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries as the PMA. Applications under PLISFPI are invited through an Expression of Interest (EOI) mechanism and submitted on an online portal (<https://plimofpi.ifcilt.com>), where they are examined and appraised by the PMA within a defined timeline. Upon successful submission, a unique Application ID is issued for all future correspondence. A web-based MIS system is used for continuous online monitoring of project progress and for taking interim corrective measures, where required.

Transformational Impact of PLISFPI: Strengthening Manufacturing, MSMEs, and Global Competitiveness

The scheme has facilitated the adoption of advanced technologies and the establishment of multiple production lines. It has resulted in the creation of 34 lakh MT per annum of processing and preservation capacity as of February 2026.

PLISFPI has also attracted strong industry participation and investment:

A total of 165 applications has been approved by the Ministry of Food Processing Industries across various categories.

These approvals correspond to 274 project locations.

Beneficiaries have reported investments amounting to 9,207 crore under the scheme.

Incentives worth 2,162.55 crore have been disbursed as of February 2026.

Overall, these outcomes underscore the scheme's effectiveness in catalysing capacity expansion, mobilising private investment, and strengthening the technological and operational capabilities of India's food processing sector.

The scheme has also played a significant role in promoting MSMEs. Out of the 165 approved applications, 69 applicants are MSMEs (as of February 2026). Additionally, 40 contract manufacturing units associated with the main approved applicants fall within the MSME category, indicating their integration across the value chain. Furthermore, incentives amounting to 13,266 crore have been disbursed to 20 eligible MSMEs as of 28 February 2025.

This expansion in capacity and investment has translated into substantial employment generation. Around 3.39 lakh direct and indirect jobs have been created by

Key Takeaways

- PLISFPI (outlay 10,900 crore; 2021-22 to 2026-27) aims to create global Indian food manufacturing champions by incentivising incremental sales and brand promotion.
- Under the scheme (as of Feb 2026):
- 165 applications have been approved, corresponding to 274 project locations.
- Beneficiaries have received an incentive of 2,162.55 crore
- ~3.39 lakh jobs have been created, outperforming employment target of 2.5 lakh.
- Food processing and preservation capacity has grown by 34 lakh MT per annum
- Total export of agricultural processed food products has grown at a CAGR of 13.23% (2024-25 compared to 2019-20).

February 2026, far surpassing the scheme's target of 2.5 lakh jobs by 2026-27.

In addition, PLISFPI has contributed to strengthening India's presence in global processed food markets:

Exports of agricultural processed food products approved under the scheme have grown at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 13.23% as on 2024-25, with reference to 2019-20.

The cumulative export sales of PLISFPI beneficiaries reached 89,053.44 crore during the period from FY April, 2021 to FY September, 2025.

Conclusion

The Production-Linked Incentive Scheme for the Food Processing Industry (PLISFPI) has emerged as a key driver of growth in India's food processing sector. By linking incentives to increased sales, it has encouraged investment, expanded production capacity, and strengthened the global presence of Indian food products. Its emphasis on value addition, MSME participation, and millet-based products has contributed to inclusive growth.

The scheme has also strengthened the connection between agriculture and industry and generated employment across the value chain. Collectively, these outcomes position PLISFPI as a strong foundation for building a more competitive, resilient, and inclusive food processing ecosystem in the country.

# The Cost Of Being The Person Everyone Likes

## How to know if you're overly agreeable

Karyn Hall

You are known as someone who remembers things about people. You ask good questions and listen to the answers. You make people feel comfortable, say yes a lot, and smooth things over when things get tense. You are viewed by most who meet you as a pleasure to know.

And privately, you are exhausted. The specific, sustained effort of being the version of yourself that everyone finds so easy to be around takes a lot of energy. Though you genuinely care about people, you spend energy and time preparing for conversations and events. You may even rehearse them in your head. And in almost every interpersonal interaction, you are hyper-alert for disapproval or upset, so you can smooth it over.

If that resonates, you may be what RO DBT calls overly agreeable.

What Is Overcontrol?

Before getting to the overly agreeable subtype specifically, it helps to understand the broader category it belongs to. Most people are familiar with the idea of being

undercontrolled, impulsive, emotionally reactive, and struggling to regulate feelings and behavior. Therapies like dialectical behavior therapy (DBT) were originally developed for exactly this kind of presentation.

But there is an equally significant and far less discussed pattern called overcontrol that runs in the opposite direction. Overcontrolled individuals are exceptionally self-disciplined. They manage emotions almost too well—suppressing, inhibiting, and carefully regulating their emotional expression to a degree that comes at a high cost personally and in their relationships. If no one knows how you truly feel, how can they be close to you? They are typically high-functioning, conscientious, and perfectionistic. They hold themselves to demanding standards. They are deeply uncomfortable with uncertainty, making mistakes, and genuine vulnerability.

Overcontrolled and undercontrolled are temperaments, not diagnoses. RO DBT, developed by clinical psychologist Thomas Lynch, identifies two distinct subtypes within the overcontrolled pattern. One is the overly agreeable subtype,

which expresses overcontrol through performed warmth and ongoing social accommodation.

What People See vs. What Is Actually Happening

Underneath the agreeable exterior, overly agreeable people typically experience significant anger, resentment, and envy that they work hard to conceal. The person who volunteered for the project nobody wanted is often quietly furious about it. The person who absorbed criticism graciously in front of the group is often privately building a detailed case about whose fault the problem actually was. The colleague who praised your presentation warmly may have catalogued everything wrong with it on the drive home.

None of this surfaces directly. It goes underground instead, where it accumulates over months and years of unspoken disagreement, unacknowledged effort, and unchecked interpretation.

The rumination that accompanies this is significant. People with this pattern can spend days or weeks turning over a perceived slight or interpersonal betrayal

without raising any of it directly or checking whether their interpretation is even accurate. They are conducting elaborate internal investigations into events the other parties have probably long forgotten.

The Intimacy Problem

Overly agreeable people are skilled at creating the feeling of closeness without actually letting people in. People leave conversations feeling connected and understood, while the overly agreeable person has maintained almost complete control over what was actually shared. The other person believes they know you. But what they know is the version that you felt safe to show them.

The Public and Private Split

The person who was the warmest and most engaged at the dinner party is often angry, irritable, and sharp at home or in settings they consider private. The people closest to them sometimes get what they don't show to other people.

The overly agreeable person is typically aware of this gap and carries significant shame about it. It feeds their persistent sense of feeling like a fraud—being liked as a version of themselves that doesn't match

who they actually are. That only fuels the loneliness they feel, as they believe no one truly knows them.

What Drives This Pattern

The overly agreeable pattern develops for understandable reasons. At some point, being warm and cooperative and never difficult was an effective way to navigate the world. It kept people close. It prevented disapproval that felt genuinely threatening.

How This Pattern Affects Relationships

The warmth is real, and so is the caring for other people. The problem is, the strategy becomes so automatic that it can no longer be switched off. The agreeableness is constant to the point that you can't access your own honest experience, and maybe you aren't even sure what you actually think and feel. The build-up of resentment and anger then leaks out with those you love.

Karyn Hall, Ph.D., is the author of The Emotionally Sensitive Person, Mindfulness Exercises, and co-author of The Power of Validation.

Source: Psychology Today

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## Govt committed to ensure women receive adequate support to expand their enterprises: Javid Dar Meets delegation of FICCI Ladies Organisation



KT News Desk

JAMMU, APRIL 21: Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar on Tuesday met a delegation of the FICCI Ladies Organisation at the Civil Secretariat here.

The delegation, as per an official statement, raised a range of issues concerning promotion of women-led enterprises, skill development and greater economic participation

of women across Jammu and Kashmir. They also suggested measures to enhance the institutional support and improve market access for women entrepreneurs.

The Minister assured the delegation that their concerns would be addressed in a time-bound manner. He said the government is focused on creating an enabling environment for women entrepreneurs through the targeted initiatives, improved access to finance and capacity-building programmes.

Emphasising inclusive growth, Javid Dar said women are key drivers of economic development and their active participation is essential for sustainable progress, particularly in rural areas.

He also highlighted the ongoing efforts aimed at boosting the entrepreneurship and livelihood opportunities adding that the Omar Abdullah government is committed to ensure that women receive adequate support to expand and sustain their enterprises.

## Satish Sharma releases Coffee Table Book on IEC activities

KT News Desk

JAMMU, APRIL 21: Minister for Food, Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Transport, Science & Technology, Information Technology, Youth Services & Sports, Satish Sharma, on Tuesday released the Coffee Table Book on Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Activities and unveiled the annual IEC Calendar 2026 of the Department of Science & Technology, Jammu & Kashmir government, at a formal function held here.

The Coffee Table Book, as per an official statement, offers a comprehensive documentation of IEC initiatives undertaken across Jammu & Kashmir, showcasing the outreach, impact and diversity of science and technology interventions at the grassroots level. It reflects the department's sustained efforts to promote scientific temper, strengthen innovation ecosystems and foster meaningful engagement between institutions and communities.

The annual IEC Calendar 2026 outlines a detailed, month-wise roadmap of awareness campaigns, outreach programmes and thematic activities aimed at ensuring continuous public engagement with science and technology. By integrating key observances, innovation-driven events and awareness drives, the calendar institutionalises a structured and sustained approach to science communication across the Union Territory.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister emphasized that



science and technology must act as catalyst for inclusive growth and social transformation. He stated that the real measure of scientific progress lies in its ability to positively impact the lives of common citizens. He highlighted that IEC initiatives play a crucial role in bridging the gap between laboratories and society, ensuring that innovations are effectively communicated, understood and adopted at the grassroots level.

Satish Sharma observed that Jammu & Kashmir is steadily progressing towards becoming a knowledge-driven and innovation-oriented Union Territory, where scientific awareness and technological interventions are increasingly integrated into governance and development frameworks. He appreciated the department's efforts in making science accessible, relevant and

people-centric and stressed the need to further expand outreach in rural and remote areas, particularly among youth, students and marginalized communities.

Underscoring the importance of strategic communication, the Minister noted that the annual IEC Calendar would serve as an effective tool for planning, coordination and implementation of outreach initiatives. He expressed confidence that such structured efforts would contribute significantly towards fostering innovation, enhancing awareness of government programmes and promoting sustainable practices in areas such as renewable energy, digital technologies and scientific research.

Speaking on the occasion, Commissioner Secretary, Science & Technology, Babila Rakwal, stated that the Coffee Table Book reflects the

Department's evolving approach towards inclusive and impact-driven science communication. She highlighted that IEC activities have emerged as a core pillar of the Department's mandate, enabling the translation of scientific knowledge into tangible societal benefits.

She further elaborated that through key institutions such as JKSTIC and JAKEDA, the Department has successfully implemented outreach programmes addressing real-world challenges while building awareness and capacity among citizens. She reiterated the department's commitment to strengthening institutional linkages, promoting interdisciplinary collaboration and aligning scientific advancements with developmental priorities.

The Commissioner Secretary added that the Annual IEC Calendar will enhance coordination among stakeholders and ensure a systematic and sustained outreach strategy. She emphasized that the department will continue to expand its programmes, particularly in underserved and remote areas, to ensure inclusive access to the benefits of science and technology.

Among others present on the occasion were Special Secretary Riyaz Ahmad Wani; Additional Secretaries Anshuman Singh and Neelam Khajuria; Deputy Secretary Dr. Abdul Khabir; Asif Amin; CEO, JAKEDA, Dr. P. K. Dhar; Additional Director, JKSTIC, Mushtaq Ahmed; and other senior officers and officials of the Department.

## Nasha Mukh J&K Abhiyan

### DIPR's Cultural Unit Srinagar organizes awareness programme at BHS Theed



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, APRIL 21: As part of the ongoing Nasha Mukh Abhiyan, the Cultural Unit Kashmir of the Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) organized an awareness programme at Government Boys High School (BHS) Theed, Harwan.

The event, as per an official statement, featured a thematic short play and a series of folk songs aimed at highlighting the harmful effects of drug abuse and promoting a healthy, substance-free lifestyle. The performances were well received and widely applauded by the students and staff, who appreciated the engaging and impactful medium of communication.

Addressing the gathering, AECO, Cultural Unit Srinagar,

Syed Shakeel Shan delivered a strong message to the youth, urging them to stay away from drugs and contribute positively to society.

Principal BHS Theed and other speakers also emphasized the importance of awareness, community participation, and early intervention in combating substance abuse.

The Principal expressed gratitude to the Cultural Unit Kashmir, for organizing such meaningful programmes across the Valley, stating that these initiatives play a vital role in educating and guiding young minds.

The programme concluded with a renewed commitment among students to uphold the values of a drug-free society and to act as ambassadors of positive change within their communities.

## Shantmanu inspects Special Revision camps in Kathua

KT News Desk

KATHUA, APRIL 21: State Election Commissioner, Jammu and Kashmir, Shantmanu, on Tuesday conducted an extensive tour of Kathua district to inspect the Special Summary Revision camps being organised for updation of Panchayat Electoral Rolls-2026.

District Panchayat Election Officer (Deputy Commissioner) Kathua, Rajesh Sharma and Secretary, State Election Commission J&K, Susheel Kumar also accompanied the State Election Commissioner during the visit.

The visit, as per an official statement, was aimed at reviewing the progress of the revision exercise on the ground and ensuring that the electoral rolls are comprehensive, accurate and inclusive.

The ongoing revision process, which commenced on March 27, 2026, provides for filing of claims and objections pertaining to new enrolments, deletions and transposition of voters across the Union Territory.

During the inspection of special camps at GDC Hiranagar and GMS Badala, the State Election Commissioner reviewed the functioning of special camps and assessed the



pace of enrolment of newly eligible voters. He examined the status of forms received for inclusion, deletion, correction and transposition in the Panchayat electoral rolls.

Interacting with the Panchayat Secretaries and field functionaries, he emphasised the need for expeditious disposal of claims and objections and called for ensuring 100 percent registration of all eligible voters. He also sought identification of bottlenecks, if any, in the enrolment process and directed for their timely redressal.

The State Election Commissioner stressed the importance of transparency and accessibility in the revision process and directed the concerned officers to intensify awareness

campaigns across all Panchayat Halqas so that every eligible citizen is facilitated to get enrolled without any hindrance.

DEPO (DC) Kathua, Rajesh Sharma, assured that the District Election Cell, along with field functionaries, will strive to make Kathua the best performing district in the ongoing revision exercise. He emphasised the crucial role of BLOs and Panchayat Secretaries in achieving this objective and informed that special camps are being organised in colleges and across all Panchayats, including on Saturdays and Sundays, to maximise outreach. He also urged all eligible but unregistered citizens to visit these camps and ensure their inclusion in the electoral rolls.

## NZATI, RIHFW organise training session on BLS for JKAS probationers

KT News Desk

JAMMU, APRIL 21: Northern Zonal Accountancy Training Institute (NZATI), Jammu in collaboration with Regional Institute of Health and Family Welfare (RIHFW), Nagrota organized a training session on Basic Life Support (BLS) for JKAS (Accounts) probationers of Phase-II training programme (SAC-II).

The programme, as per an official statement, was presided over by Director General Accounts & Treasuries, Fayaz Ahmad Lone and conducted under the able guidance of Director Finance/ Principal, NZATI, Jammu, Rajesh Talwar.

Among others Principal, Regional Institute of Health and Family Welfare, Dr. Manoj Bhagat; Master Trainer, Dr. Shelly Mahajan; Dr. Kapil Sharma (Public Health), In-charge Skill Lab Coordinator at RIHFW Nagrota, Rajeev Gupta; Director, Accounts & Treasuries, Jammu, Rajesh Kotwal and Joint Director (Central), Directorate General of Accounts & Treasuries, J&K, Ishaq Ahmad Pandith were also present.

Addressing the gathering, Fayaz Ahmad Lone emphasized the importance of such capacity-building initiatives, stating

that officers must be equipped not only with domain knowledge but also with essential emergency response skills.

The session was organized with the objective to equip the probationers with essential life-saving skills and enhancing their preparedness to respond effectively in emergency situations. The technical and practical sessions were conducted by Dr. Shelly Mahajan, Dr. Kapil Sharma and Rajeev Gupta.

The team provided hands-on practice sessions where-in participants performed Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and airway management techniques for both adult and neonatal resuscitation under Basic Life Support protocols, aimed at saving lives during emergency situations. They emphasized on the importance of such training programmes in building first-response capabilities among officers.

The training was delivered through a simulation-based and interactive approach, enabling participants to gain practical exposure and confidence in handling real-life emergencies.

The session witnessed active participation and was highly appreciated by the probationers for its practical relevance and importance.

## NMBA: Kulgam reviews implementation of ongoing 100-day campaign

KT News Desk

KULGAM, APRIL 21: Mentor to District Kulgam for Nasha Mukh Bharat Abhiyan (NMBA) and Chairman JKSSRB, Vikas Kundal, Tuesday visited Kulgam where he reviewed the implementation of the ongoing 100-day campaign and presided over a mega awareness programme organised under the initiative.

During the programme, Vikas Kundal led a pledge ceremony in which participants collectively pledged to work towards building a drug-free society and actively support the fight against substance abuse. He also participated in a plantation drive.

A signature campaign, as per an official statement, was also conducted on the occasion, with participants expressing their commitment to spreading awareness and encouraging people to stay away from drugs.

Speaking on the occasion, Vikas Kundal emphasized that eliminating drug abuse requires collective and sustained efforts from all sections of society, including government agencies, community leaders and youth.

He urged the participants to actively contribute towards making Kulgam a drug-free district and to continue spreading awareness about the harmful



effects of substance abuse.

He added that youth are the future of the country and that drug abuse poses a serious challenge that can destroy their potential.

He stressed the need for a collective fight against drugs and urged people to inform the police and administration about individuals involved in drug peddling. He further emphasized that the ongoing campaign must yield tangible results in the fight against substance abuse.

Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, Shahzad Alam, while speaking on the occasion, highlighted that the focus is

on demand reduction, supply reduction and rehabilitation as key pillars to tackle drug abuse.

He said that a comprehensive activity calendar has been prepared under the 100-day campaign to intensify awareness programmes across the district.

The DC further stated that a significant number of drug seizures and arrests have been made in Kulgam, adding that strict action against drug peddlers will continue.

He also noted that the District De-Addiction Centre is functioning effectively and that the administration is focusing on continuous counselling, skill training and a comprehensive

rehabilitation plan for victims of substance abuse.

Showkat Ahmad Rather, Member JKSSRB, and other officers also spoke on the occasion.

While presenting a brief on the activities, actions and achievements in the district, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Viaqar Ahmad Giri informed that several measures have been undertaken to curb drug abuse. He stated that no cultivation of poppy has been recorded in the district, while 100 percent CCTV surveillance has been ensured in pharmacies to monitor the sale of medicines.

It was also informed that 752 victims of substance abuse have been treated and rehabilitated at the District De-Addiction Centre (DDAC) so far.

Officials further apprised that under the 100-day campaign, extensive awareness drives, counselling sessions and preventive initiatives are being carried out across the district to discourage drug abuse, particularly among youth.

A felicitation ceremony was also held on the occasion to honour participants who excelled in various competitions organised under the campaign, including essay writing, painting, speech and slogan writing competitions.

## PAG organizes Workshop on Accounting Procedures in Budgam

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, APRIL 21: District Level Workshop on capacity building and awareness regarding accounting procedures conducted Tuesday at the Auditorium of SAM Degree College Budgam.

The workshop was organized by the Office of the Principal Accountant General (PAG) (A&E), Jammu & Kashmir with the objective of strengthening financial management practices and enhancing awareness among stakeholders on various accounting-related issues.

The workshop witnessed the participation of all Drawing and Disbursing Officers (DDOs) of District Budgam, along with treasury officials and other concerned functionaries.

The programme focused on sensitizing officers about financial discipline, compliance requirements, and best practices in government accounting systems.

On the occasion, as per an official statement, the District Treasury Officer Budgam, Dr. Showkat Ali Rather delivered the welcome address, highlighting the importance of

capacity building for financial officers and the need for strict adherence to accounting norms.

During the workshop, expert resource persons from the office of the Principal Accountant General delivered comprehensive presentations covering key areas such as preparation of budget estimates, classification checks, accounting, implementation of the e-voucher system, and clearance of pending audit paras. The sessions also addressed common accounting discrepancies and provided practical guidance for improving financial accuracy and transparency in departmental transactions.

Interactive discussions were held throughout the programme, allowing participants to raise queries and share field-level challenges related to accounting procedures. The experts provided detailed clarifications and emphasized adherence to prescribed financial rules and timely reconciliation of accounts to ensure effective public financial management.

Senior Accounts Officers, Mukesh Kumar Dayal and Arvind Sinha from the

Accountant General's Office delivered detailed presentations, elaborating on modern accounting practices, digital financial systems, and compliance mechanisms.

The technical sessions were followed by a concluding address by Senior Accounts Officer, Vikas Bhagat, who summarized the deliberations and stressed coordinated efforts for strengthening financial governance.

The participating officers appreciated the initiative, stating that the workshop proved highly informative and beneficial in enhancing their understanding of evolving accounting practices and digital financial systems. The programme also highlighted the importance of accountability, transparency, and efficient utilization of government resources.

The workshop concluded successfully with active participation from all DDOs of District Budgam, reaffirming the administration's commitment to capacity building and strengthening financial governance across departments.

## DC Baramulla stresses stakeholders' coordination to curb drug menace

KT News Desk

Baramulla, Apr 21: Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, S.F. Hamid on Tuesday chaired the 27th District Level Narco Coordination (NCORD) Committee meeting at Dak Bungalow to review measures taken by various departments and law enforcement agencies to combat drug abuse and trafficking in Baramulla.

At the outset, the DC conducted a comprehensive review of the actions taken based on the directives from the 26th meeting of the NCORD Committee, assessing the effectiveness of deterrence measures and the progress made towards eradicating drug abuse in the district.

During the meeting, the concerned implementing agencies were directed to expedite the installation of CCTV cameras in government middle schools to strengthen monitoring for a safer, drug-free



environment for students.

Meanwhile, the DC directed the Assistant Drug Controller

to take strict action by sealing premises and initiating cancellation of licenses of druggists

found involved in the sale of psychotropic drugs without valid prescriptions. The DC further issued strict directions to the ARTO to take firm and immediate action against any vehicle owners found involved in drug trafficking, including the cancellation of their licenses as per the relevant legal provisions.

Reviewing the enforcement of directives under the newly launched 100-Day Nasha Mukta Jammu and Kashmir campaign, the DC called for a unified and result-oriented approach, directing all officers to ensure close coordination and collective efforts towards eliminating the drug menace from society.

The meeting was attended by the Senior Superintendent of Police Baramulla, Gurinderpal Singh, SSP Sopore, Ifkhar Talib, ADC Baramulla, Syed Altaf Hussain Musvi, ADC Sopore, S.A. Raina, and other district and sectoral officers.

## Training for Census 2027 field trainers begins in Ganderbal

KT News Desk

Ganderbal, Apr 21: The training programme for Field Trainers for the upcoming Census 2027 was formally inaugurated on Tuesday at the Conference Hall of Mini Secretariat Ganderbal, marking a key step towards strengthening district-level preparedness for the national exercise.

The programme is being conducted under the overall supervision of the Additional Deputy Commissioner, Syed Faheem Bihagi, who is also serving as District Census Officer, Ganderbal.

Speaking on the occasion, Joint Director Census, Arun underscored the significance of accuracy, dedication and strict adherence to prescribed guidelines during census operations. He highlighted the pivotal role of Field Trainers in ensuring



effective dissemination of training to enumerators and other field-level functionaries, thereby laying the groundwork for smooth execution of the exercise.

The training sessions, being conducted by experienced Master Trainers, focus on essential aspects of census operations, including enumeration procedures, data collection practices, use of technology and handling of field-level challenges.

The programme is designed to equip participants with practical knowledge and clarity on their roles and responsibilities.

The initiative reflects the district administration's proactive approach towards ensuring a well-coordinated and efficient Census process. It also reaffirms the commitment to uphold high standards of data quality and operational excellence, recognising the Census as a vital tool for evidence-based planning and inclusive development.

## Strait of Hormuz disruptions not distant events, have direct implications for India: Rajnath in Germany

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 21: In the backdrop of the ongoing West Asian conflict, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz are not distant events, they are stark realities with direct implications for India's security and economic stability.

Addressing the German Parliamentary Standing Committee on Defence and Security on day one of his three-day visit to the country, he also asserted that the world today is faced with new security threats, and the technological transformation has made the situation highly complex and intricately connected.

A new approach with the willingness to adapt to the changing environment is the need of the hour, the minister said.

Singh also made a strong



pitch for enhanced collaboration between the defence industrial ecosystems of India and Germany.

His visit to Germany also comes amid the West Asia conflict that has stretched for over 50 days, with global

ramifications.

"For a developing country like India, which relies on the West Asian region for a significant share of its energy requirements, disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz are not distant events, they are stark realities

with direct implications for our security and economic stability," Singh said.

He highlighted that in view of these challenges and their direct implications, India has adopted a proactive and coordinated strategy.

To deal with modern-day global challenges, Singh underscored the need for coordinated responses and trusted strategic partnerships.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz have placed strong emphasis on advancing this strategic partnership, he said.

"We also see a clear convergence of views at the European Union level, reflected in the growing momentum to engage with India, including through the India-EU Defence and Strategic Partnership," Singh said.

He also asserted that Aatmanirbhar Bharat is not merely a procurement programme for India, but "an invitation to co-create, co-develop, and co-innovate".

"We recognise the established strengths of Germany's leading industrial enterprises, while also admiring the vigour and dynamism of the renowned German Mittelstand (small and medium-sized companies) in advanced and emerging technologies.

"In India too, our start-ups and enterprising private companies are rapidly enhancing and complementing the capabilities of our larger and established defence enterprises. This is an area where India and Germany naturally complement each other, and our partnership can deepen further," Singh said.

He reiterated that the two nations are not only strategic partners, but also consequential

voices in shaping the global discourse of the present times.

"We are established democracies bound by shared values and dynamic economies driven by resilience, innovation and a determined industrial spirit. As lawmakers and esteemed members of the Committee, your guidance, voice and support can further strengthen and enrich the future course of our defence and strategic cooperation," the minister said.

"When the chronicles of this era are penned, the India-Germany partnership will stand as a paragon of diplomacy, crafted not in response to crisis, but through the steady resolve of two mature democracies choosing to walk this path together," he said.

Singh pointed out that the current geopolitical instability can no longer be viewed as regional matters.

Their consequences are global in scope, he said, describing them as not localised disturbances, but serious developments with far-reaching implications for energy security, food security and global economic stability, apart from the immense humanitarian cost they entail.

Upon his arrival, Singh was welcomed at the Berlin Airport with military honours. He was flown in a Special German Air Force aircraft, escorted by fighter jets, during his flight from Munich to Berlin, the Defence Ministry said in a statement.

Earlier, Singh paid floral tribute to Nobel laureate Rabinranath Tagore at the premises of the Humboldt University in Berlin, underscoring the enduring cultural and intellectual ties between India and Germany, it said.

### CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

#### PM Modi-led regime

establish a college; he made a pledge, a promise to the future. In 1974, when he laid the foundation of this institution, there was no major financial support and no assurance of success. All he had was an unshakeable belief that education is the power which can change society," the Lieutenant Governor said. (KNO)

#### LG, CM congratulate

boys, who recorded 87.51 percent. This trend highlights the ongoing emphasis on gender parity in academic achievements within the region.

#### Kashmir trips will

said Sunil Kumar, a retired Army officer from Himachal Pradesh, at Razdan Top in Bandipora.

He said the nation is paying tributes to the Pahalgam terror attack victims and that they will always be remembered. At several places, including Pahalgam, Gulmarg and Gurez Valley, tourists paid tribute to the victims.

"Kashmir is a peaceful place and its people are peace-loving. We see them as our family members and there is no fear at all. We are visiting Kashmir and will continue to come again and again because it is a paradise in India," said Abhishekh.

Describing the Pahalgam attack as an unfortunate incident, he said it would not deter tourist footfall in Kashmir and that visitors would continue to arrive.

Another group of tourists from Haryana said they would continue to explore the Valley, describing Kashmiris as peace-loving and asserting that Pakistan would not be able to harm the region or carry out attacks like Pahalgam.

"Kashmir is like a mini Switzerland and its beauty is unmatched anywhere else in the country," they said, urging tourists to continue visiting and exploring the Valley.

Tourists said they love Kashmir's hospitality and prayed for peace to prevail in the Valley.

Ganesh Kumar, a tourist from Chhattisgarh who recently visited Pahalgam, said he felt encouraged by the security arrangements in place. He added that visitors should make the most of their trip and explore the region, describing it as a part of India worth experiencing.

Meanwhile, authorities introduced a QR code-based identification system for all tourism service providers and intensified patrols across the valley to restore tourist confidence.

Abdul Waheed, president of the Ponywalla Association in Pahalgam, said all service providers have been verified by the police and registered with the authorities, with each issued a unique QR code carrying personal details such as Aadhaar and driving licence information.

He added that the code can be scanned on a

mobile phone by tourists or security personnel to access complete identification details of the individual.

Security has been tightened across major hubs, with intensified patrols and drone surveillance marking the anniversary of the attack.

Seventeen major destinations that were closed after the attack, including parts of Betaab Valley, have been reopened to restore normalcy. (KNO)

#### Year after Pahalgam

scenic charm.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) with the onset of spring season this year Pahalgam and other popular destinations are witnessing a gradual but steady return of visitors. Tourists in Pahalgam say they feel safe and welcomed, countering the fears that had gripped the region following last year's attack.

"We have not seen such hospitable people anywhere else. Kashmir is peaceful and safe, and we have not faced any security concerns during our visit," said a group of tourists in Pahalgam, reflecting a growing confidence among travellers.

Local stakeholders, who bore the brunt of last year's downturn, say the recent uptick in tourist flow has revived hope for recovery.

Hotelier Zakir Ahmad said that while the numbers are still below pre-attack levels, the improvement over the past few weeks is encouraging. "There has been a gradual increase in tourist arrivals over the last few weeks. After what we went through last year, even this modest rise feels significant. We are hopeful that the coming months, especially the peak summer season, will be much better," he said.

Echoing similar sentiments, pony operator Aadil Ahmad, whose earnings depend entirely on tourist activity, said the return of visitors has brought much-needed relief. "Last year was extremely difficult for us. There was hardly any work, and many of us struggled to make ends meet. Now we are seeing more tourists coming in, and we hope this trend continues so that we can recover our losses," he said.

Handicraft dealer Ghulam Rasool Malik also expressed optimism, noting that business has started picking up after months of stagnation. "Tourism is the backbone of our economy. When tourists come, everyone benefits—from shopkeepers to transporters. We are hopeful that this year will bring stability and growth after the setbacks we faced," he said.

Officials and stakeholders alike believe that sustained peace and positive word-of-mouth from tourists will play a crucial role in restoring Kashmir's image as a safe and welcoming destination.

Data from last year highlights the severe

impact of the April 2025 attack. While the first four months of 2025 saw strong tourist inflows—April alone recording over 2 lakh visitors—the numbers plummeted drastically in the months immediately following the attack, particularly in May and June, reflecting the sudden loss of confidence among travellers.

Over the course of 2025, Pahalgam recorded a total footfall of over 10 lakh visitors, including domestic and foreign tourists as well as locals.

However, stakeholders point out that the distribution was uneven, with peak months disrupted and the overall season falling short of expectations.

With early signs of recovery visible, the local economy—deeply intertwined with tourism—is pinning both financial and emotional hopes on a sustained revival.

"We just want people to come and see for themselves that Kashmir is safe and welcoming," said a local stakeholder. "Tourism is not just our livelihood, it is our identity. We believe better days are ahead."

As summer approaches, all eyes are on whether this gradual recovery will gather momentum, offering much-needed relief to thousands dependent on the Valley's tourism industry. (KNO)

#### Awaiting terror-free

Incidents like that should never happen again," she said.

A female tourist, Meenakshi, said the country stands united with the victims' families and called for stronger measures to prevent such attacks in future. "The government understood the pain of the people and responded firmly. We hope such incidents never happen again," she said.

She added that justice for the victims would be realised when the country becomes free from terrorism.

Several tourists urged the authorities to maintain a strong security grid across the Valley, especially at major tourist destinations.

"The attack last year was shocking, but the response since then has been reassuring. Security forces must remain vigilant so that such incidents are not repeated," said Amit Verma, a visitor from Haryana.

Another group of tourists said their presence in Kashmir was also a gesture of solidarity with the people of the region.

"We are here not just as tourists, but also to stand with Kashmiris and the families affected by the attack. Peace must prevail," said Neha Singh, a visitor from Uttar Pradesh.

Tourists also praised the hospitality of locals and said they felt safe while travelling across different parts of the Valley.

Officials have stepped up security across key tourist hubs ahead of the anniversary, with

intensified patrols and surveillance measures in place to ensure safety of visitors. (KNO)

#### 'India doesn't

while maximising damage to militant infrastructure. (KNO)

#### Maharashtra ministers

gesture was not merely about honouring a martyr but about reinforcing the spirit of communal harmony and shared humanity. "This is about standing together as one, irrespective of religion, and recognising the courage of a young man who sacrificed his life to save others," they added.

Reiterating confidence in the improving situation in Jammu and Kashmir, the ministers described Kashmir as a peaceful region and encouraged tourists from across the country to visit the Valley. "Kashmir remains a paradise on earth, and such incidents cannot define its essence. People should continue to visit and experience its beauty and hospitality," the ministers said.

Speaking to KNO, Adil's father expressed a mix of grief and pride. "We have lost our son, and that pain will never fade. But we are proud that he sacrificed his life while saving others," he said.

He extended heartfelt gratitude to the Shiv Sena leadership, especially Eknath Shinde, for constructing the house, providing household essentials, and extending financial assistance of Rs 5 lakh.

Adil's sister also conveyed her appreciation, thanking the party for not only building the house but also for honouring her brother's sacrifice in a meaningful way.

Meanwhile, locals used the occasion to highlight the need for development in the area.

They demanded that Hapatnrad, the native village of the slain youth, be brought onto the tourism map to boost local livelihood opportunities.

Responding to the demand, the visiting ministers assured that they would take up the matter with the concerned authorities. They further suggested that if the proposal materialises, the area could be developed and named in memory of Adil.

The J&K administration has already extended support to the family. The Lieutenant Governor's administration has provided a government job to Adil's wife in the fisheries department, while the Waqf Board has offered employment to his brother. (KNO)

#### MLAs, deputations

issues and other constituency-specific demands.

A deputation representing private power companies also called on the Chief Minister and discussed issues related to new independent

power producers in Jammu and Kashmir.

Meanwhile, a deputation from the Chishoti-Paddar area of Kishtwar district apprised the CM of issues arising from the cloudburst in the Chishoti area, including the rehabilitation of affected families.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing to all the deputations and assured them that their genuine concerns would be examined on priority and appropriate action taken for their early redressal.

#### CM unveils Shishur

themed Shishur, captures the winter essence of J&K and highlights a range of tourism initiatives undertaken during the period. The magazine has been compiled by the Directorate of Tourism, Kashmir.

The event was attended by Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Additional Chief Secretary Tourism Ashish Chandra Verma, Director Information Shreya Singhal, Directors Tourism Kashmir Syed Qamar Sajjad and Director Tourism Jammu Vikas Gupta, besides other senior officers.

The magazine features curated stories on prominent tourist destinations, coverage of international events organised by the department, annual conventions of travel, trade and hospitality bodies, participation in major travel marts, and outreach programmes led by the Chief Minister.

Appreciating the efforts of the Tourism Department, the Chief Minister commended the initiative, noting that such publications play an important role in showcasing the rich tourism potential of Jammu and Kashmir and strengthening its global outreach.

#### A tale of women

and Asia Naqash (Eidgah) winning their constituencies.

The tally went up to three in 2016 when Mehbooba Mufti, who was then Chief Minister, won a by-election from the Anantnag seat.

In the last Assembly election, three female candidates won: Shamima Firdous (Habba Kadal), Sakina Itoo (D.H. Pora), and Shagun Parihar (Kishtwar). Shagun Parihar is the first female from the BJP to get elected to the J&K Assembly.

The number of female MLAs in the current Assembly went up to four when Devani Rana, daughter of the late Devinder Singh Rana, won a by-election in November 2025.

It is worth mentioning that two females were also nominated as MLAs by the Governor of J&K before 2019 in line with the provisions of J&K's Constitution.

The provision of nominating two females to the Assembly was also retained in the J&K Reorganisation Act enacted by Parliament in 2019. (KNO)

## Will Constitution not come to rescue of believer who is not allowed to touch deity: SC

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 21: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the chief priest of the Sabarimala Ayyappa Temple if the Constitution will not come to the rescue of a believer who is not allowed to touch the deity.

The remark by the top court came after the chief priest said that when a devotee goes to a temple for worship, it can't be in antagonism to the characteristics of a deity.

The nine-judge Constitution bench is hearing petitions related to discrimination against women at religious places, including the Sabarimala Temple in Kerala, and on the ambit and scope of the religious freedom practised by multiple faiths.

The bench comprises Chief Justice Surya Kant and justices B V Nagarathna, M M Sundresh, Ahsanuddin Amanullah, Aravind Kumar, Augustine George Masih, Prasanna B Varale, R Mahadevan, and Joyimala Bagchi.

Appearing for the 'thanthri', senior advocate V Giri submitted that the nature of ceremonies and rituals followed in any temple forms the integral part of the religion and therefore is a religious practice.

He said continuance of such practice, which is an essential religious practice, would be a part of the right to worship that is for every member who believes in the religion or religious denomination.

"When a devotee goes to a temple for worship, it can't be in antagonism to the characteristics of



a deity because its for the purpose of worshipping the deity. The devotee surrenders to the divine spirit contained in the deity. He/she has to accept the essential characteristics of the deity," Giri said.

Posing a question, Justice Amanullah asked, "When I go to a temple, my fundamental belief is that he is the Lord, he is my creator, he has created me, right?"

"I go there with one hundred percent belief. I am totally devoted, absolutely nothing impure in my heart. And there, I am told that because of a birth, a lineage, a certain situation, permanently you are not allowed to touch the deity. Now, will the Constitution not come to the rescue? Justice Amanullah remarked, adding that there cannot be a difference between the creator and creation.

Giri replied that if there is a

complete ban on anybody becoming a priest, then that will be taken care of either by a Article 25(2)(b) legislation or it will be taken care of by the State itself.

"If priest means the person who is instructed in the 'Shastras' as to how to conduct worship and how to worship the deity, if there is a complete ban on any person becoming a priest and then doing the 'seva', as we call it, only by reason of birth, that will be taken care of either by a Article 25(2)(b) legislation or it will be taken care of by the State itself," he said.

The senior lawyer said "Naishtika Brahmachari" (perennial celibate) can be considered as an essential characteristic to the deity and the ceremonies and rituals performed in Sabarimala are in synchronisation with the concept.

"I have a right to practice my

religion under Article 25 of the Constitution...If the characteristics of the deity are as such that its not possible for me to go there, if I am a woman, it has to be in sync with the characteristics of the religion. The characteristic of the deity insofar as Sabarimala is concerned contemplates that the deity is a permanent celibate," Giri said.

He contended there is a total lack of material on the part of the writ petitioners to show that the concept of "Naishtika Brahmachari" pleaded by the petitioner are either ill founded, misconceived, or doesn't form the essential form of the religion.

The hearing is underway. Observing that denomination-al practices can be subject matter of judicial scrutiny, the top court on April 17 had said that judges must rise above personal religious beliefs and be guided by freedom of conscience and the broader constitutional framework while adjudicating matters of faith.

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

Later, on November 14, 2019, another five-judge bench headed by the then CJI Ranjan Gogoi, by a majority of 3:2, referred the issue of discrimination against women at various places of worship to a larger bench.

## Attempts being made to divide people on religious, linguistic lines: Bhagwat



PTI

Agartala, Apr 21: RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Tuesday alleged that attempts were being made to create divisions among people on religious and linguistic lines, asserting that India's strength lay in its unity amid diversity.

Addressing a gathering after the consecration ceremony of Maa Chinmayi Soundarya Temple at Fakrimura, around 23 km from Agartala, Bhagwat said certain "evil forces" were worried that their "shops" would shut down if India progressed by drawing on its centuries-old civilisational strength.

"They are trying to engineer a quarrel among people along the lines of religions and languages. I don't need to give examples," he said. Tripura Governor Indrasena Reddy, Telangana Governor Jishnu Dev Varma and Chief Minister Manik Saha were among those present at the event. Emphasising that diversity has long been

India's defining feature, Bhagwat said the country had advanced through centuries despite having multiple languages, faiths, traditions and cultures.

"Nations that do not have a history of more than 4,000 or 5,000 years can have one religion and one language, but India is completely different, possessing a long history, tradition and culture," he said.

He urged people to remain united and defeat attempts to sow discord.

"There should be no reason for fear, whatever situation may arise," he said.

The RSS chief also said that in the present world order, power often overshadows what is right.

"If you have power, your might will be proven, and no one will pay heed if you are on the right path. Therefore, acquire knowledge and power," he said.

Bhagwat said temples were not merely places of worship but had historically served as centres of social life and enlightenment.

## Mamata's associate Kabir wants to build Babri Masjid in Bengal, we won't allow it: Shah

PTI

Salboni (West Bengal), Apr 21: Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of seeking to "protect infiltrators" and alleged that her "associate" Humayun Kabir wants to build a Babri Masjid in West Bengal, which the BJP would not allow.

Addressing an election rally at Salboni in Paschim Medinipur district, he said the West Bengal assembly polls this time were about "freeing Bengal from infiltrators" and corruption.

"Mamata Didi wants to protect the infiltrators, but we will remove them," he said.

Stepping up his attack on the ruling Trinamool Congress, Shah referred to suspended TMC MLA



and Aam Janata Nayan Party founder Humayun Kabir and accused him of trying to rake up the Babri Masjid issue in the state.

"Modi ji built the Ram Temple in Ayodhya. It came up at a place where Babri Masjid stood. Now, Mamata Didi, through her associate Humayun Kabir, wants to build a Babri Masjid in Bengal," he said.

"Bengal is in India, and we will not

allow anyone to build a Babri Masjid in Bengal."

The senior BJP leader also promised that a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) would be implemented in the state if his party came to power.

"We will bring the Uniform Civil Code in Bengal. Some people marry four times. Should that be stopped or not? No one will be able to marry four times," Shah told the gathering.

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 21: The BJP on Tuesday condemned Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge for referring to Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "terrorist", saying this reflects the mindset of the main opposition party and people will give them a befitting reply.

The ruling party claimed that Kharge has made such disparaging remarks against Modi at the behest of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi because the prime minister wanted to provide 33 per cent reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

The BJP's reaction came after Kharge accused Prime Minister Modi of terrorising political parties and people by misusing government machinery and central agencies to stifle the opposition.

Addressing a press

## Congress abusing PM Modi because he wants women's quota: BJP



conference in Chennai alongside AICC general secretary (organisation) K C Venugopal, Kharge initially referred to the prime minister as a "terrorist" while criticising the AIADMK's alliance with the BJP.

However, when pressed by reporters to clarify the context of the remark, the Congress chief said he meant the prime minister was "terrorising" the democratic

fabric of the country.

"He is terrorising people and political parties. I never said he is a terrorist (in the literal sense). Terrorising this... he is misusing his power and government machinery and abusing opposition parties," the Congress president said.

Reacting sharply to Kharge's remarks, BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra said, "The kind of words Congress president Mallikarjun

Kharge has chosen for Prime Minister Narendra Modi today is not only condemnable but reflects the mindset of the Congress party. Kharge called him a terrorist."

Patra rejected Kharge's clarification and alleged that the Congress president deliberately called the prime minister a terrorist at the behest of Rahul Gandhi.

"This is not a slip of tongue. It's deliberate. Even though they are giving any clarification, it is a deliberate conspiracy of the Congress," the BJP MP said in a video message.

"You must be observing that for the last few days how Rahul Gandhi and other Congress leaders are making indecent remarks against the prime minister. Every day Rahul Gandhi in his speech refers to the prime minister in a disrespectful manner," the BJP leader said.

Patra also alleged that

the Congress leaders keep abusing the prime minister because his government is providing water to every household, houses and free ration to people under various schemes. They have also been abusing PM Modi because his government is implementing various other welfare schemes like Mudra Yojna, the BJP leader said.

He said that the Congress president has now called the prime minister a "terrorist" just because he wanted 33 per cent reservation for women in the Lok Sabha and state assemblies.

"This is the same Congress party which used to address Osama bin Laden as Osama ji and is seen standing with big terrorists but calls Prime Minister Narendra Modi a terrorist. This the same Congress party which had described Zakir Naik 'apostle of peace' but calls the prime minister a terrorist," Patra said

## SC agrees to hear plea challenging validity of National Investigation Agency Act, 2008

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 21: The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought responses from the Centre and others on a plea challenging the validity of the National Investigation Agency Act, 2008.

A bench of Justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta issued notice to the Centre, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and others seeking their responses on the plea.

"Issue notice," the bench said, noting that the questions raised before it were of vital importance.

The plea has sought the setting aside of the 2008 Act, claiming it was "violative" of Article 14 (equality before law) of the Constitution and beyond the legislative competence of the Centre.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) was set up under the Act as a central counter-terrorism law enforcement agency in the wake of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks.

The court directed that a counter affidavit be filed by the respondents within four weeks and the petitioner would thereafter have two weeks to file the rejoinder affidavit.

Senior advocate Siddharth Dave, appearing for the petitioner, said "police" falls under the State List.

He referred to various provisions of the 2008 Act, including Section 3 which deals with the constitution of the NIA.

## Sensex jumps 753 points to settle at 79,273; Nifty tops 24,550

PTI

Mumbai, Apr 21: Stock markets advanced for the third consecutive day on Tuesday, with Sensex jumping by 753 points and broader Nifty closing above 24,550 following a drop in crude oil prices and hopes for progress on peace talks between Iran and the US.

The 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 753.03 points or 0.96 per cent to settle at 79,273.33. During the day, it surged 846.78 points or 1.07 per cent to 79,367.08.

The 50-share NSE Nifty climbed 211.75 points or 0.87 per cent to end at 24,576.60.

Among the 30-Sensex firms, Trent rose the most by 3.55 per cent. Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank and Axis Bank were the major winners.

Bharat Electronics, Titan, Reliance Industries and NTPC were among the laggards.

Brent crude, the global oil benchmark, traded 0.75 per cent lower at USD 94.76 per



barrel.

"Indian equity markets traded on a positive note, as investors positioned for a potential near-term de-escalation in the Middle East. Energy markets remained in a consolidation phase, as traders balanced hopes of a near-term resolution and a potential reopening of the Strait of Hormuz

against ongoing uncertainty around ceasefire negotiations," Ponnudi R, CEO of Enrich Money, an online trading and wealth tech firm, said.

Broader markets also advanced with the BSE MidCap Select index jumping 0.73 per cent and SmallCap Select index by 0.29 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, FMCG rallied the most by 2.23 per cent, followed by Realty (2.17 per cent), MidSmall Private Banks Quality Tilt (1.71 per cent), Private Banks index (1.67 per cent), Top 10 Banks (1.66 per cent) and Bankex (1.46 per cent). Capital Goods emerged as the only laggard.

"With the ceasefire deadline arriving tomorrow, all eyes turn to the second round of US-Iran talks — while markets remain hopeful of progress, elevated tensions and uncertain participation make any negative surprise a key downside risk," Siddhartha Khemka - Head of Research, Wealth Management, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, said. A

total of 2,531 stocks advanced, while 1,760 declined and 162 remained unchanged on the BSE.

In Asian markets, South Korea's benchmark KOSPI, Japan's Nikkei 225 index, Shanghai's SSE Composite index and Hong Kong's Hang Seng index ended higher.

Markets in Europe were trading in positive territory. US markets ended marginally lower on Monday.

"The bullish momentum was largely driven by a combination of macro and market-specific triggers. Easing geopolitical concerns, particularly around the US-Iran situation, played a central role in improving risk appetite.

"This was further supported by a cooling in crude oil prices, which helped ease inflation concerns for an oil-import-dependent economy like India and improved margin visibility across sectors," Hariprasad K, Research Analyst and Founder, Live-long Wealth, said.

## How gut bacteria diversity impacts stress reactivity

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 21: A higher diversity of the gut bacteria could be associated with a greater hormonal and stress reactivity, a study has found.

Comprising microorganisms living in the gut, the gut microbiome contributes towards metabolism and function of the immune system, with research suggesting that it can modulate the body's stress response.

A greater microbial diversity is often associated with a more stable and resilient microbial ecosystem and with a higher functional flexibility, which may contribute to an appropriate regulation of stress responses.

However, "A stronger acute stress response is not necessarily detrimental. (An) appropriate activation of the stress system enables (a) flexible adaptation to challenges and threats. A greater diversity of gut bacteria,

as well as certain metabolic products, could play a supportive role in this process," lead researcher Thomas Karner, psychologist at the University of Vienna in Austria, said.

Researchers said it has remained unclear until now whether differences in the human gut microbiome are actually associated with acute stress reactivity.

They showed for the first time that in healthy adults, the diversity of gut bacteria and their capacity to produce metabolites, including short chain fatty acids, are associated with an acute stress response — particularly stress reactivity, the team said.

A higher microbial diversity was associated with a stronger hormonal and subjectively perceived stress reactivity, with the results, published in the journal *Neurobiology of Stress*, suggesting that the gut microbiome may play a role in regulating the acute stress response.

## India bats for greater Global South representation in UNSC

PTI

United Nations, Apr 21: India has underscored the need for greater representation in the permanent membership of the UN Security Council, particularly of countries from the Global South, and called for a fair and inclusive global financial system.

Secretary (West), Ministry of External Affairs Sibi George delivered India's statements at key meetings here. At the Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN) meeting on UN Security Council reforms, he highlighted the "need for greater representation of the Global South, particularly in the permanent category," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a post on X.

George also underlined the "similarities between India's approach to UN Security Council reforms and the African model." He also delivered India's national statement at the General Debate of the 2026 Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Forum on Financing for Development Follow-up at UN Headquarters.

He "underscored the need for a fair, inclusive & development-oriented global financial system" to bridge



the USD 4 trillion Sustainable Development Goals financing gap.

He also highlighted that reforming international financial institutions, enhancing the voice of the Global South, and deploying digital public infrastructure are key to delivering on the Sevilla Commitment, a 2025 global agreement to scale up developing financing.

George commenced his official visit to the UN on Monday by paying floral tributes at the bust of Mahatma Gandhi in the UN Headquarters.

During the day, he had a series of engagements and interactions, including with the Assistant

Secretary-General for the Middle East, Asia and the Pacific in the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations, Khaled Khari. Both had a productive discussion on various topics, with particular focus on UN Peacekeeping, the Permanent Mission of India to the UN said in a post on X.

George also had a wide-ranging discussion with Under-Secretary-General for the UN Department of Operational Support Atul Khare, reaffirming India's "steadfast commitment to multilateralism and its remarkable contributions to UN peacekeeping."

## EU divided on suspension of Israel pact as Spain pushes for action

REUTERS

Brussels, Apr 21: European countries including Spain and Ireland pushed on Tuesday for suspending a European Union pact governing its relationship with Israel, but the bloc remained divided on whether to take action.

Arriving at an EU foreign ministers meeting in Luxembourg, a number of ministers called for suspending or partially suspending the pact over concerns about settlements in the West Bank, the humanitarian situation in Gaza and a new death penalty law.

"Today, Europe's credibility is at stake," Spain's Foreign Minister Jose Manuel Albares told reporters, calling for a discussion on suspending the association agreement, which came into force in 2000.

Diplomats nevertheless do not expect a decision at the meeting, as countries retain diverging positions as to whether — and how — to shift the bloc's policies on Israel.

GERMANY CALLING FOR DIALOGUE

The European Commission proposed in September suspending some trade-related provisions of the association agreement, an arrangement affecting about 5.8 billion euros of Israeli exports. Israel said at the time the proposals were "morally and politically distorted."

Suspending the trade arrangement would require a qualified majority vote among EU governments — the support of 15 out of 27 EU members representing



65 percent of the EU population. A full suspension of the association agreement would require a unanimous decision from all member countries.

Thus far, the European Commission's proposal has not garnered sufficient support to meet this threshold. Officials are especially watching Berlin and Rome's positions, but on Tuesday Germany indicated that it was sticking to its existing position, stressing the need for dialogue rather than action against Israel.

"We have expressed our criticism regarding the introduction of the death penalty. We warned against taking this step beforehand. We also have a very clear position on settler violence," German Foreign Minister Johann Wadepuhl told reporters.

## Sony bags Asian Games broadcast rights

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 21: Sony Pictures Networks India has secured the exclusive broadcast rights for the 20th Asian Games Aichi-Nagoya 2026, scheduled to be held in Japan from September 19-October 4.

As per the deal, the continental showpiece will be telecast on Sony Sports Network channels and streamed on Sony LIV across India and the subcontinent.

India will head into the Games on the back of a historic campaign in the previous edition, where it secured a record 107 medals. "We are proud to bring this continental multi-sport event back to Sony Pictures Networks for the third time," Rajesh Kaul, Chief Revenue Officer and Business Head — Sports and International, SPNI said in a release.

The Asian Games, one of the biggest multi-sport events globally, will feature 41 disciplines, including 32 Olympic sports, with new additions such as mixed martial arts and surfing.

Traditional events like cricket, tennis, esports, kabaddi, sepak takraw and kurash will also be part of the programme.

## US waiver set to keep Russian oil exports to India near record high

REUTERS

Moscow/London, Apr 21: Russian oil sales to India are set to remain near record highs in April and May following a new US sanctions waiver, and refiners have already secured much of their supply needs via non-sanctioned entities and vessels, traders said and data showed on Tuesday.

The robust exports to India — the second-largest buyer of Russian crude after China and largest importer of its flagship Urals grade — will likely help Moscow replenish state coffers under pressure due to military spending for the war in Ukraine.

India shipped in a record 2.25 million barrels per day of oil from Russia in March, nearly double February's volumes, making Russian oil 50 percent of its imports.

Russian crude arrivals at Indian ports are set to reach 2.1 million bpd for the week of April 20 to 27, up from 1.67 million



bpd the previous week, data from shipping analytics firm Kpler showed.

The mid-April dip in Russian oil supplies was likely caused by export disruptions resulting from Ukrainian drone attacks on Russian ports at the end of March, two sources said.

However, Russian supplies are expected to average more than 2 million bpd for the full month and will likely remain around that level, or possibly increase, in May, three sources involved in the trade said.

US extends sanctions waiver

amid Iran war disruptions

Washington issued a 30-day waiver in mid-March for countries to buy sanctioned Russian oil and petroleum products to help stabilize global energy markets roiled by its war with Iran. It renewed the waiver last week.

Despite the sanctions, which are intended to pressure Moscow to negotiate a peace deal with Kyiv, Russian oil deliveries to India have continued via non-sanctioned enterprises in the supply chain, traders and analysts said.

## Pope Leo XIV pays tribute to Pope Francis

AP

Aboard The Papal Plane, Apr 21: Pope Leo XIV paid tribute to Pope Francis on Tuesday on the first anniversary of his death, recalling his preaching about God's mercy and his gestures of solidarity with poor people.

"We thank the Lord for the great gift of the life of Francis, to the church and the world," Leo said.

The American pope delivered the tribute in Italian while speaking with reporters aboard the papal plane heading from Angola to Equatorial Guinea, the final leg of his four-nation African trip.

Francis died on Easter Monday last year after suffering a stroke. He had been at the Vatican recovering from a five-week hospital stay for double pneumonia, and had managed to deliver a final Easter salute to the crowd with a popemobile romp through St. Peter's Square.

His death, at 88, set the stage for the conclave that elected Leo a few weeks later. It was an outcome for which Francis had laid the groundwork by promoting the former missionary priest, Robert Prevost, whom he considered "a saint."

In his tribute, Leo recalled with precision



some of Francis' most memorable homilies and messages, saying he "gave so much to the church with his life, with his witness, with his word and with his gestures."

"So many times what he did was live truly being close to the poorest, the smallest, the sick, children, the elderly," he said.

He cited Francis' preaching promoting human fraternity and "authentic respect" among all people, as well as a special Holy Year he called in 2015 to emphasize God's mercy and forgiveness. Francis famously opened the year in the Central African Republic, and Leo delivered his tribute just as his plane was flying over that part of Africa.

## A 99-run loss is unacceptable: Hayden blames batting horror

PTI

Ahmedabad, Apr 21: Gujarat Titans' batting coach Matthew Hayden was scathing about their 99-run defeat to Mumbai Indians, blaming a "horror" batting display and poor death bowling for the heavy loss in the IPL.

From being 44/3 in 5.5 overs, MI hammered 73 runs in the last four overs to post a challenging 199/5 here on Monday. In reply, GT were bundled out for 100.

"I expect our margins to be a lot smaller than 100 (99). That is an unacceptable scorecard for our batting unit," the legendary Australian opener told media in the post-match interaction.

"It was just a horrible day for us today. Truth be told, there was nothing good about this day, really, apart from Rabada's performance with the ball, so we've got some work to do, definitely."

GT boast a strong batting lineup in Sai Sudharsan (759 runs), Shubman Gill (717), and Jos Buttler (538). They have also added New Zealand's explosive Glenn Phillips in the middle order alongside Shahrukh Khan and Rahul Tewatia.

"When you look down at our batting line-up, we've got wonderful players that have to be in a better mindset and better position to take their opportunities.



That is our expectations and has been since the conception of this Gujarat Titans franchise...

"So you can't be sitting here and being happy about, a 100-run (99) margin game in a 20-over game. I mean, back in my day, 100 runs was almost a winning total in 50-over cricket!"

The 54-year-old said GT lost the game in the powerplay.

"Well, middle order was undoubtedly exposed today. When they're coming in with six overs, you know that you're in deep trouble. The thing about the power plays is that you can't win it from there, especially in a run chase, but you can definitely lose it, and we lost it in the power play," he said.

Shahrukh (35 off 25 balls) and

Tewatia (49 off 42) have not fared well this season and Hayden feels the duo along with Phillips (67 off 54 balls) have been struggling because the top order has been below its best.

"The relevance behind balls faced when you look at, for example, someone like Glenn Phillips -- his record in T20 cricket is an impressive strike rate and you'll take that all day long in the majority of games," Hayden said.

"However, you need an upfront batting effort where you consistently taking the lion's share of the batting. We shouldn't be allowing, Tiwu (Tewatia) or Shahrukh or these guys lots of balls. That's not their role. That's not what they train for."

### Movie Watchlist

Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> April

**Dhurandhar: The Revenge (A)**  
HINDI - 11:00 AM, 03:45 PM

**BHOOTH BANGLA (U/A16+)**  
HINDI ATMOS - 12:00 PM, 03:15 PM, 06:30 PM  
HINDI - 10:30 AM, 01:45 PM

**THE MUMMY (A)**  
ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES  
05:15 PM

Call 95416 13868 For assistance with tickets