



## Nation pays tribute to Pahalgam terror attack victims, expresses solidarity with families

Victims will never be forgotten: PM Modi | Terror humanity's enemy: Amit Shah | India won't bow to terror: Rajnath Singh

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 22: Leaders across the country on Wednesday paid homage to the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack on its first anniversary and expressed solidarity with their families, with several blaming Pakistan for backing terrorism in Kashmir.

In a post on X, PM Modi, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said the victims “will never be forgotten,” describing the April 22, 2025 attack as a tragedy that continues to weigh on the nation's conscience and asserted that the country will not bow to any form of terror.

“Remembering the innocent lives lost in the gruesome Pahalgam terror attack on this day last year. They will never

be forgotten. My thoughts are also with the bereaved families as they cope with this loss,” he said in a post on X.

“As a nation, we stand united in grief and resolve. India will never bow to any form of terror. The heinous designs of terrorists will never succeed,” the Prime Minister added.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh also paid tribute to the victims, describing it as a “cowardly” act that claimed innocent lives.

In a post on social media, he said: “Remembering and paying my heartfelt tributes to the innocent people who lost their lives in the cowardly terror attack at Pahalgam in Jammu and Kashmir on 22 April 2025. We share the enduring pain of their loved ones and families. We will never forget



those wounds inflicted on our nation.”

Singh added that India has faced decades of cross-border terrorism, but its response has now become “firm, decisive

and unwavering”.

He said the country's actions have demonstrated that any attempt to harm citizens or disrupt national unity will be met with “strength and

clarity”.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah also paid tributes to the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack, saying the nation continues to share the grief of the

families who lost their loved ones in the incident.

In a post on X, HM Shah said, “On this day, we solemnly remember the innocent lives we lost in the horrific Pahalgam terror attack last year. The grief and pain of losing our people still remain in the hearts of every Indian.”

“Terrorism is the greatest enemy of humanity, against which we must stand united to fight and defeat. India will continue its zero-tolerance policy against terrorism and those who harbour it,” he said.

President Droupadi Murmu also expressed her deepest condolences to the families of the victims on the first anniversary of the Pahalgam terror attack, asserting that such acts of violence would not weaken India's commitment to peace.

President Murmu, in a post on X, said, “I pay heartfelt tribute to the victims of the Pahalgam terror attack. The tragic loss of innocent lives in that heinous act remains etched in our collective memory. I express my deepest condolences to the bereaved families. The entire nation stands with them. Such acts of terror cannot deter our unwavering commitment to peace and unity. We remain resolute in our determination to defeat terrorism everywhere in all its forms.”

Vice-President CP Radhakrishnan reaffirmed the country's resolve to fight terrorism in all its forms, marking one year since the deadly incident that claimed 26 lives.

Meanwhile, Leader of the Opposition Rahul Gandhi while paying | More on P6

### Centre, state must ensure no repeat of Pahalgam attack: CM Omar

- » Pays tribute to victims, calls for joint Centre-state efforts to prevent such incidents
- » Driver negligence behind Udhampur bus accident, probe ordered

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 22: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said negligence by the bus owner and driver was responsible for the recent road accident in Udhampur district and asserted that strict action would follow after completion of an ongoing inquiry.

The Chief Minister, who visited the injured from the accident that occurred in the Ramnagar area a few days ago, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said the vehicle was being driven by a

person who was not a regular driver.

“It is unfortunate that this accident occurred due to the negligence of the bus owner. The regular driver was on leave, and the vehicle was handed over to someone who had recently been driving a truck,” CM Omar told reporters at GMC Udhampur.

He said records have shown that the bus had a history of violations. “More than 15 challans had already been issued against the vehicle,” he said, adding that this indicated a pattern of disregard for rules.

The Chief Minister said an inquiry has | More on P6

### CM directs best medical care for Udhampur accident victims

Calls for strict enforcement of traffic regulations



KT NEWS DESK

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday visited Government Medical College Udhampur to enquire about the health of

those injured in the tragic road accident that occurred earlier this week. He interacted with the injured and their families, directing officials to ensure the best possible medical care with round-the-clock | More on P6

### PM Modi has written J&K's new destiny: LG Sinha

- » His vision turned dream of a prosperous Jammu & Kashmir into reality
- » Industrial revolution living symbol of new era for region

Yogesh

Samba, Apr 22: Asserting that PM Modi's vision has turned the dream of a prosperous Jammu Kashmir into reality, Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha on Wednesday said that he (the Prime Minister) has written Jammu and Kashmir's new destiny.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of ‘Eveready Industries India Limited's new industrial unit here, LG Sinha, according to the



news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) said, “Inauguration of Eveready's

plant, along with the changed atmosphere in the Union Territory, reflects the sustained efforts of PM Modi, under whose leadership a new destiny has been written for Jammu Kashmir. His vision has turned the dream of a prosperous Jammu Kashmir into reality.”

He said, “The plant established with an investment of Rs 200 crore, will create local jobs, boost ancillary units, suppliers, and service providers, promote | More on P6

### LG visits Udhampur accident victims at GMC Jammu

‘Ensure speedy recovery for injured’



KT News Desk

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday visited Government Medical College in Jammu to inquire about the health of citizens who were critically injured in an unfortunate road accident | More on P6

### LoC areas witness anti-terror protests, locals pay tributes to victims

Students, residents march across Karnah, Gurez, Poonch

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 22: Students and residents in several areas along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday held marches, protests and tribute events to mark the first anniversary of the Pahalgam terror attack, expressing solidarity with the victims and calling for peace.

According to the details available with the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) in North Kashmir's Karnah sub-division, more than 2,000 students from government and private schools participated in anti-terror marches at multiple locations, including Hajinar, Kandi and Tithwal.

Students raised slogans against terrorism and carried placards expressing support for the victims and their families.

“Our youth stand firmly against violence | More on P6

### Year after Pahalgam terror attack, tourism picks up amid beefed up security in Kashmir

- » QR system rolled out to verify tourist service providers
- » Army signals strong retaliation against future terror acts

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 22: A year after the Pahalgam terror attack that left 26 civilians, mostly tourists dead, authorities have stepped up security measures and introduced digital verification systems as Kashmir's tourism sector shows signs of recovery, while the Army on Wednesday reaffirmed its resolve to respond firmly to terrorism.

Marking the first anniversary of the April 22, 2025 attack in South Kashmir, the



Indian Army, according to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), reiterated

that any act targeting India would invite a decisive response. “For | More on P6

### ‘No shortage of fuel, LPG, fertilizers in J&K’

KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 22: As part of a periodic review a high-level meeting was on Wednesday convened by Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo to take stock of the availability and distribution of essential commodities across the districts of J&K in the aftermath of the recent West Asia crisis that had initially given rise to the apprehensions of impacting the supply chains.

The meeting was attended by senior officers including Commissioner Secretary, FCS&CA; Commissioner Secretary, | More on P6

### CM discusses dev issues with public representatives

KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 22: Several public representatives on Wednesday called on Chief Minister Omar Abdullah here and discussed a range of developmental and governance-related matters.

Among those who called on the Chief Minister were Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha) Sajad Ahmad Kichloo, MLA Inderwal Payare Lal Sharma and former Minister Abdul Ghani Kohli.

During the interactions, the visiting public representatives appraised the Chief

Minister of various issues and demands concerning their respective constituencies and areas of responsibility.

Chief Executive Councillor of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil, Dr. Mohd. Jaffer Akhoun also called on the Chief Minister and discussed issues concerning Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh.

Discussions largely focused on strengthening infrastructure, improving public service delivery, and addressing region-specific concerns.

The Chief Minister gave a patient hearing | More on P6

### Earth Day: Experts warn of ecological crisis as wetlands decline in J&K

Call for urgent protection of fragile ecosystems amid rapid urbanisation in Srinagar & Jammu

Jahangeer Ganaie

Srinagar, Apr 22: On the occasion of World Earth Day, environmental experts and legal professionals in Jammu and Kashmir have sounded a strong alarm over the rapid degradation of wetlands and green spaces, warning that unchecked urban expansion is pushing the region toward an ecological crisis.

Prominent environmental



lawyer Nadeem Qadri, speaking to the news agency—Kashmir

News Observer (KNO), said that the fast-paced | More on P6

### ‘Tourists our honour’: Gulmarg stakeholders hold candlelight march

Waris Fayaz

Gulmarg, Apr 22: Stakeholders in Gulmarg on Wednesday held a candlelight march in solidarity with victims of last year's Pahalgam tragedy, saying “tourists are our honour”.

The march, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), was organised in Tangmarg area, where traders, locals and civil society members gathered to express grief and unity. Participants carried candles and observed silence to pay | More on P6

Academic Session 2026-27

## Sakeena Itoo launches DSEJ's Uniform Academic Calendar

■ Reviews implementation of key academic, student welfare initiatives

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 22: Minister for Education, Sakeena Itoo, on Wednesday chaired a meeting at Directorate of School Education Jammu (DSEJ) to review performance of the department as well as assess implementation of key initiatives related to academic planning and student welfare.

Director School Education Jammu, Naseem Javid Choudhary; senior officers of the DSEJ and other concerned officers were also present on the occasion.

During the meeting, the Education Minister, as per an official statement, held comprehensive assessment of all the ongoing initiatives of DSEJ and also reviewed the finalisation of BPL students for availing free coaching in



registered and reputed coaching centres for competitive exams.

Sakeena Itoo endorsed the recommendation of 445 BPL students for availing free coaching facilities for the Academic Session 2026-27 in registered coaching centres, highlighting the Omar Abdullah led Government's commitment to inclusive and equitable education.

She highlighted that the initiative aims to bridge the opportunity

gap and empower deserving students to compete effectively in various competitive examinations, ensuring equitable access to quality education, particularly for students from economically weaker sections.

The Minister on the occasion also launched the Uniform Academic Calendar for the Academic Session 2026-27, aimed at streamlining academic activities, ensuring institutional consistency, and improving the quality of

education delivery.

She issued directions for effective policy implementation, adherence to academic calendar and timely service delivery, emphasizing coordinated efforts to strengthen the education system and ensure that benefits reach deserving students.

The Minister also appreciated the Director School Education, Jammu, for improving the Class 10th result to 89%, as compared to the previous year 79%.

## Mining Leases: DC Anantnag chairs meeting of single window committee



KT NEWS DESK

ANANTNAG, APRIL 22: Deputy Commissioner Anantnag Dr Bilal Mohiuddin Bhat Wednesday chaired a meeting of the District Level Single Window Committee at his office chambers, to review and facilitate the execution of mining leases in the district.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by ADC, SE Hydraulics, ACR, Wildlife Warden South Kashmir, DFOs Anantnag and Lidder Divisions, Chief Agriculture Officer, District Horticulture Officer, District Soil Conservation Officer, District Mineral Officer, Executive Engineers of Irrigation/Flood Control, PHE, PWD and KPDC, Assistant Directors of Fisheries and Tourism, and District Officer Pollution Control Committee, among others.

During the meeting, elaborate deliberations were held on issuance of no objection certificates post obtaining clearances from all stakeholder departments and on issues related to the execution of mining leases with respect to 34 major mineral blocks identified in the district. Various procedural and departmental aspects were discussed to ensure timely and smooth processing of cases.

The ADC briefed the chair that NOCs from all concerned departments have been received while certain queries have been raised by the Forest Department and some cases have been flagged by the Irrigation and R&B Departments.

The DC stressed the importance of inter-departmental coordination and timely disposal of cases to facilitate transparent and efficient execution of mining leases. He directed the concerned officers to strictly adhere to the prescribed rules and guidelines and ensure that all necessary formalities are completed within set timelines.

The DC further instructed that the process should be carried out in a transparent and accountable manner, while ensuring environmental safeguards and regulatory compliance.

After thorough deliberations, it was decided that the concerned departments shall address the queries raised, at the earliest for further processing of the cases.

## PM Surya Ghar-Muft Bijli Yojana DC Srinagar presides over registration camp at Kashmir Haat

■ 'Over 5,000 rooftop solar installations in Srinagar'

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 22: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo Wednesday presided over a mega Awareness-cum-Registration Camp on the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana here at Kashmir Haat (Numaish Gah) aimed at sensitizing citizens about the scheme benefits and facilitating on-the-spot registrations.

The programme was organized by Kashmir Power Distribution Corporation Limited (KPDCL) to spread awareness about rooftop solar installations and encourage residents to avail benefits under the scheme.

The event, as per an official statement, witnessed enthusiastic participation from citizens, reflecting growing interest in sustainable energy solutions under



PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

The mega awareness camp was attended by Chief Planning Officer Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Superintending Engineer KPDC, Syed Ahmad Wani, Superintending Engineer KPDC, Mohammad Amin Shah Executive Engineers of all four divisions of KPDC including Syed Abrar, Tasaduq Nabi, Nissar Ahmad, other KPDC Officers,

scheme vendors and technical experts.

Speaking at the event, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the advantages of the scheme, noting that Rooftop Solar installations can significantly reduce electricity bills while contributing to environmental sustainability. He emphasized that the initiative provides subsidies to households, making clean energy solutions more

affordable and accessible.

Highlighting the purpose of the event, Akshay Labroo said the programme was aimed at informing residents about the benefits of the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana and facilitating on-the-spot registrations. He noted that the scheme is demand-driven and voluntary in nature, and urged people to enroll and take advantage of the opportunity to reduce energy costs while contributing to environmental conservation.

The DC emphasized further intensifying outreach efforts and organize similar awareness camps across the district to ensure wider coverage under the scheme so that maximum households are benefited with less electricity bills and promoting renewable energy to contribute to the environment.

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

In the case of: Ateeqa Hameed S/o: Abdul Hameed Dar R/o: Mehrajpora 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 Ateeqa Hameed D/o: Abdul Hameed Dar as 05-04-1997 at Home (Mahrajpora 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: Firdous Shusha S/o: Abdul Ahad Shusha R/o: Khusrul Mattoo 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 Daughter namely Kaneez Fatima Firdous Tanveer Wani D/o: Firdous Ahmad Shusha as 07-05-2009 at Home Khushal Matoo 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: Shaista Qayoom S/o: Ab Qayoom Rather R/o: Shallpora 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 Daughter namely Anam Jan S/o: Abdul Qayoom Rather as 10-06-2021 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

### UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY COMMISSIONER ANANTNAG

Ph: 01932-222337 (0) email: dc-anantnagjk@gov.in  
Subject: Assignment of Panchayats/Wards to Empanelled Motivators under Mission YUVA District Anantnag.

ORDER  
In pursuance to the Mission YUVA Communication issued vide No. ED/Plan/YUVA/2025-26/941-50 dated 13-09-2025, and in continuation of this office Advertisement Notice No. ADDCA/2025-26/902-903 dated: 26-09-2025 followed by Various re-advertisement notices and Interaction cum Document Assessment Notice vide No: AADC/ANG/2025-26/1417-18 dated: 31-12-2025 & AADC/ANG/2025-26/1494-96 dated: 14-02-2026 and Temporary Empanelment of Motivators vide No DCA/PA/2025-26/1437-43 dated 06-03-2026. A total of 85 applicants alongwith a candidate from waiting list were Empanelled vide above quoted reference No. Consequently the posting and assignment of panchayats/wards are hereby ordered against each candidate.

S.No	Name	Address	Panchayats / Wards Assigned
1	UMRAT RASHID RAYOO	UTTERS00	Uttersoo, Sheirgund, Sheikhpora, Shangus A, Shangus B, Ranipora, Pudhroo, Ougjibalan, Kreeeri
2	MAHMOODA AKHTER	AKINGAM	Akingam A, Akingam B, Badoora Sahiabad, BB Nowgam, BB Nowgam A
3	Abdul Raqib Sheikh	Hillier Arhama	Arhama, Bahie Buchoo, Geebum, Kandiwara
4	ZAMROODA MANZOOOR	Mathindoo	Mathindoo, Mathindoo A, Arthur, Mati Bidhard, Mati Gowran B, Narsanger, Nowbugh, Pindobal
5	Aasif ul rahman reshi	Nanil reshi mohalla	Bunpora Nanil, Herpora Nanil, Hugam, Khairibugh, Poshkri
6	ZAHOOR SHABAN GANIE	HUSSANPORA BAGH Bijbehara	Housing Colony A, Baba Mohalla, Vaid Mohalla, Ahanger Mohalla, Darbari Mohalla, Tak Mohalla
7	SAHEEL AHMAD KOKA	KOKAGUND	Bonagund, Pathikhas, Malikpora,
8	Sayima Jan	Nowpora	Nowpora A, Nowpora B
9	MOHAMMAD SHAHID IM AT	NARUPORA KOKERNAG	Narupora A, Narupora B, Narupora C, Narupora D,
10	Rozy Jan	Hassanpora Tawalla	Hassanpora Bagh, Hassanpora Tawalla, Rakhi Hassanpora, Locktpora Hafizabad, Pazalpora
11	Nelofar Rehman	Bumthan mir bazar	Bumthan, Furrah, Zadoora, Malpora
12	SURIYA GANI	Hutmurah	Hutmurah, Khayar, Maniqam, Nowgam A, Nowgam B
13	Afroza Akhter	Hillier Arhama	Hillier, Liser chawalgam, Sagam A, Voy bumdoora
14	Nusrat Ali	Larkipora	Larkipora A, Larkipora B
15	Pakeeza Malik	Traili Srigufwara Anantnag	Traili A, Traili B, Srigufwara, Viddy, Adlash Magam, Sofipora
16	Shugufa akhter	sadoora	Sadoora, Sadoora A, Nipora, Vessu
17	GH QADIR BHAT	KHALHAR	Khalhar, Sagam B, Sagam C
18	Muzamil Qadir	Nowgam shangus Anantnag	Nowgam A, Nowgam B, Brarangan A, Brarangan B, Krad A, Krad B, Khanpora, Khulchohar, Kothair
19	Sumi Jan	Tumburipora	Tumburipora, Arabal A,
20	Nazima Jan	Nowpora	Mehmoodabad A, Mehmoodabad B,
21	Zahid Hussain Sofi	New chowk zyart road	Grend, Saqqa Mohalla, Haji Mohalla, Bazar Mohalla, Khadam Mohalla, Bazar Mohall, Godinder Mohalla, Peer Mohalla, Magray Mohalla, Adabal, Bus Stand, Latroo Upper & Lower, Tulhard
22	Mohmad Iqbal Hajam	Fathepora	Lalchowk, Dangeerpore
23	Ulfat Jan	Gundi I Umer	Hardu Tooru, Gopalpora A, Gopalpora B
24	Najmeen Jan	Nowpora	AK Pora, AR Dehrua
25	Aroja parvaiz	Sirhama	Sirhama A, Sirhama B, Mahind, Nowshara, Khiram Bala, Khiram Gujrat, Khiram Dargah, K Kafan
26	MOHD YAWAR BHAT	SOAF SHALI	Soaf A, Soaf B, Soaf C, Sundbrari A, Sundbrari B
27	Zahidul hamid zargar	NAGAM	Nagam, Panggam, Magraypora, Senzi B, Loher, Magam Bund B
28	Taseer Hussain Rather	Issoo Tailwani	Issoo, Kadipora, Kawarigam, Magraypora, Mohripora Achabal Anantnag
29	Muneeb Mohi Ud Din	Nowgam anantnag Ulbugh	Brakpora, Brenty A, Brenty B, C.S Pora, Damhall
30	Asif Iqbal siraj anantnag	Mehandi kadal	SK Colony, Anchidora A, Anchidora B, Saranal Bala, Kadipora, Pehroo, Krangsoo
31	TAWSEEF AHMAD GANIE	GANIE MOHALLA	Ganiepora A, Ganiepora B, Lonopora, Kralpora, Bongam
32	Junaid Ahmad Mir	sadar bazar mattan	Sadar Bazar, Sikh Mohalla, Pranbawan A, Pranbawan B, Bumzoo/New Colony, Khanawari, Kundpora
33	SUHAIL AHAMAD SHAH	BUCHOO KOKERNAG	Upper Bindoo A, Upper Bindoo B, Lower Bindoo A, Lower Bindoo B, Kokernag
34	Sayed Basit Farooq	Aho Paisan	Aho Paisan, Brah A, Brah B, Brimmer,
35	Sheikh Masroor	Shelipora	Shelipora, Sundoo, Tailwani, Tailwani A, Thajiwara, Trapoo, Khundoora
36	MUZAFAR AHMAD KOKA	mantipora	Chaklipora, Cheerpore, Chittergul A, Chowgam
37	Ishaq ahmad sheikh	mantipora	Chittergul B, Deethu A, Deethu B, Panchalthan
38	IRFAN KHURSHED	MUKDAMPORA	Jogigund, Magray Mohalla A, Magray Mohalla B, Guri Mohalla, Sofi Mohalla, Khazir Shah Mohalla,
39	Asifa Jan	Hardu Akad	Hardu Akad, Hassan Noor, Hapatnard A, hapatnard B, Panzmulla, HangalPawa,
40	SHEIKH NASIR AHMAD	Badasgam	Naibasti A, Nai Basti B
41	SAYIMA KHURSHED	MUKDAMPORA	Mohripora, Imooh, Hardpora, Mir Mohalla, Check Achabal
42	ANJUM GULL	KOKAGUND	Bagwanpora, Chontipora, Kanlipora, Koidger
43	Shakir hussain hajam	Narupora	Harjayee, Dramdalaw, Panditpora Bidder, Teelipora Bidder,
44	Shaista amin	Nowpora	Fatehpore A, Fatehpore B
45	Rafiq Ahmad Mir	Irkumoo, Kokernag, District -Anantnag	Hadpora Bidder, Wanipora Bidder, Hangalgund A, Hangalgund B.
46	Imtiyaz Ahmad Raiooz	Hakura Badasgam	Danter, Banoidar
47	Nelofar Jan	Nowpora	Mirmaidan A, Mirmaidan B,
48	Saif ul Ajaz	Qasba Devsar	Kewa, Sangran, Srunsoo, Nussu, Drenen
49	Gh Rasool Mir	Halkha	Chittergul C, Poshnari, Rakhi Brah
50	Aamir farooq bhat	Hassanpora tawila bijbehara	Goriwan A, Setari Mohalla, Khashteng, Zirpara A, Zirpara B,
51	Ruqaya ali	Gundi I Umer	Arapora, Nadoora Chinigund
52	Nusrat Ali	Gundi I Umer	Schichen, Mantpora,
53	Chesfeeda Bashir	Nowpora	Zaldoora, Bragam
54	Nadeem Rehman parrey	Humshali Bugh	Feroze Shah Mohalla, Bagi Gaffar Mohalla, Ustad Mohalla.
55	Kaiser Jehan	Lok bawan	Pethbugh, Lukbawan
56	Shabeena Hassan	Larkipora	Shankerpore, Badasgam
57	Rohi Jan	Nowpora	Hakura A, Khudamam
58	Zahida shameem	Larkipora	Mandipora, Hakura 13
59	Sartaj U Rehman	Yanner Sallar	Yanner A, Yanner B, Wahadan, Veerseran, Oweera, Kuller Bala, Kuller Payeen, Dehwatoo, Batakoot
60	MUDASIR AHMAD MAGRAY	Ahlan Gadool	Adhall, Adigam, Ahlan Bala, Ahlan Gadole B, Ahlan Payeen, Gadole A, Gadole B, Gadole C.
61	Zahid Hussain Bhat	Siligam Anantnag	Chan Mohalla, Muqdam Mohalla, Gard Mohalla, Astan Mohalla, Kral Mohalla
62	Junaid Hassan Shaikh	Dalwaich Qazigund	YK Pora A, YK Pora B, Panzath A, Panzath B
63	Bushra Rafiq	Kheribal	Ranipora A, Ranipora B, Rampora,
64	Simren Nazir	Kransoo Shampora	Damjan, LG Pora A, LG Pora B, LG Pora C
65	Tasleema Jan	Arigohal	Seligam, Paibugh, Gund Bagh, Lone Mohalla, Malik Mohalla
66	Ishfaq Majeed	Ranipora	Salia A, Salia B, Shumhall, Vail Nagbal A, Vail Nagbal B
67	Wajidah Jan	Guridraman	Guridraman A, Guridraman B, Hallan, Kharpora, Khretti, LB Nard, Larnoo A, Rein
68	Mohammad Umer Khanday	Dandipora	Dandipora, Dandipora A, Batpora, Larnoo B, Dessu A, Dessu B, Draway, Gadvail
69	TAJAMUL ALJAZ	MANZMOH	Changoo, Checki Wangund, Dalwatch, Dingowari
70	Rafia Jan	Humshali Bugh	Goriwan B, Setari Mohalla B, Housing Colony B
71	AADI MANZOOOR	Darpora Hakura	Kreeeri, Arabal B
72	Mukhtar Ahmad Hajam	Fathepora	Muniwara, Kamad
73	Aalia Jan	Nowpora	Sehpore, Mirgund Wanihama
74	Saliqna Rafiqe	Manzoh	Hillier, Lowermunda, Manzmoh, Polia
75	Nageena Akhtar	Checki Manigam Kulgam	Ganiepora Kurigam, Mugdampora Kurigam, Shampora, Kulibagh, Gousia Colony, Qazi Mohalla, Dardekoot.
76	Nelofar Jan	Lok bawan	Peth Dialgam, Bon Dialgam

All other terms and conditions shall remain governed strictly under "Conceptual Framework of Motivators" under Mission Yuva.

Deputy Commissioner  
Chariman Mission Yuva Anantnag  
DIPK-667/26  
DATED: 22-04-2026  
No: DCA/PA/2026-27/08-13 Dated: 22/04/2026

## Pahalgam Terror Attack Anniversary Tourists, operators pay tribute to victims at Razdan Pass

SAJID RAINA

Bandipora, Apr 22: Tourists visiting Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday paid tributes to the victims of last year's Pahalgam terror attack at Razdan Pass in North Kashmir's Gurez sector, marking the first anniversary of the incident that left 26 persons, mostly tourists dead.

According to the details available, visitors, along with local tour operators and drivers, gathered at the high-altitude pass and observed a moment of silence in memory of those killed in one of the deadliest attacks targeting tourists in the Valley.

Several tourists said the tragedy had left a deep impact but asserted that such incidents would not weaken the spirit of unity or deter people from visiting Kashmir.

"We are deeply saddened by what happened last year. Such incidents leave a mark on everyone, but they cannot break our resolve. We feel safe here and have received immense warmth from locals," said Ritika Sharma, a tourist from Mumbai.

Another visitor, Aamir Khan from Delhi, said the gathering was meant to send out a message of unity. "No power can



divide Kashmir from the rest of the country. What we see here is togetherness, and that will always remain stronger," he said.

Neha Gupta, a tourist from Jaipur, echoed similar sentiments. "Terror cannot divide us. The bond between people here is stronger than fear. We have come here not just to travel, but to stand in solidarity," she said.

Local tourist guides also joined the tribute, saying Kashmir has always welcomed visitors and will continue to do so despite attempts to disrupt

normalcy. "Kashmir has always opened its doors to guests. No incident can change that spirit," said Ghulam Nabi, a local guide in Gurez.

Another guide, Yasir Ahmad, said the presence of tourists on the anniversary reflected resilience. "This itself is a message that fear will not prevail and unity will remain intact," he said.

The event concluded with prayers for peace and a pledge to uphold unity. On April 22 last year, 26

people, mostly tourists, were killed when terrorists attacked Pahalgam in south Kashmir, triggering widespread outrage.

In the aftermath of the attack, India launched a military operation in May targeting terror infrastructure across the border and destroyed nine terrorist camps.

Meanwhile, the Army reiterated its resolve to counter terrorism, stating that any attempt to target civilians or destabilise peace would be met with a firm response—(KNO)

## Mock drills, blackout exercises to be held in Kashmir districts

SAJID RAINA

Srinagar, Apr 22: District administrations across Kashmir have announced civil defence mock drills, including simulated air raid and blackout exercises, as part of efforts to strengthen emergency preparedness and public safety.

According to the details available, in Anantnag district a civil defence air raid mock drill will be conducted on April 23, with a blackout exercise scheduled from 8:00 pm to 8:10 pm.

The drill, including a daytime simulation, is aimed at familiarising residents with emergency response protocols and assessing preparedness of both the public and administration.

Officials have advised people to switch off all lights and sources of illumination, including inverters, mobile lights and vehicle lights, immediately after sirens sound at 8 pm.

Residents have also been asked to draw curtains to prevent light emissions and avoid panic, as the exercise is only a drill.

A similar mock drill has been scheduled in Kupwara district on April 24, where authorities will conduct a civil defence air raid simulation in the afternoon followed by a 10-minute blackout exercise in the evening.

The district administration



has issued detailed guidelines, asking residents to cooperate, ensure vulnerable groups such as elderly and children are prepared, and follow instructions during the drill. Emergency and critical services will remain operational.

Meanwhile, in Ganderbal district, the administration has finalised arrangements for a large-scale mock drill scheduled for Thursday. The exercise will simulate an air raid and district-wide blackout at Government Degree College (GDC) Ganderbal. Officials said multiple agencies, including the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF), first

response teams, medical units, NCC cadets and traffic police, will participate in the drill.

The exercise aims to evaluate coordination among agencies and improve readiness to respond to emergencies, officials said.

Authorities across districts have emphasised that the drills are part of routine preparedness measures and urged the public not to panic.

They said public cooperation is essential to ensure the success of the exercises and to build a more alert and resilient response system in the region—(KNO)

## Delegation calls on LG Manoj Sinha



KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 22: A delegation led by S Tarlok Singh Bajwa, former Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj

Sinha on Wednesday and put forth various welfare issues of the community.

He was accompanied by S Manjit Singh, former Minister; Dwarka Choudhary and Choudhary Jarnail Singh.

## 89% qualify 12th exams in Jammu division

Improved results indicate positive impact of ongoing educational reforms: Sakeena Itoo

REHAAN QAYOUM MIR

Srinagar, Apr 22: The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education (JKBOSE) Wednesday announced annual regular results of 12th standard in summer zone areas of Jammu division with at least 89% percent qualifying the exams.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), JKBOSE has informed that a total of 89.80% percent students qualify the exams.

The board official also said that the pass percentage of girls is 91% percent and 89% percent among the male students.

According to the BOSE, a total of 39,309 students had appeared in the examination including 20,376 male students and 18,933 girl students.

Among the total number of students who appeared for the exams at 35,299 successfully qualified the exams that includes 18,117 male and 17,182 female students.

It also said that there has been a notable improvement in 12th class results in comparison pass percentage of previous year that stood at 75.95 percent.

Meanwhile, the government in a statement said that congratulating students on remarkable performance in 12th class examination, Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo said that these remarkable

results demonstrate a strong commitment to quality education and competitive performance. "The improved results compared to previous years, indicate the positive impact of ongoing educational reforms initiated by the Government, enhanced teaching methodologies, and better student support systems," she stated.

The Minister also noted with appreciation that girls outperformed boys, achieving a pass percentage of 90.75% compared to 88.91% among boys.

Commending the efforts of the teaching community, she said that their dedication, especially in ensuring continuity of learning, has played a crucial role in achieving these outcomes.

Encouraging students who could not qualify, the Minister urged them to remain determined and make use of continuing opportunities, assuring them of continued institutional support.

"The results are not just numbers but a testament to the hard work of our students and the collective efforts of educators and families. We remain committed to further improving the quality of education and providing every student with the opportunity to succeed," she added.

The Minister extended her best wishes to all successful candidates for their future endeavours and encouraged them to continue striving for excellence in their chosen fields.—(KNO)

## Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya to inaugurate 30-bedded ESIC hospital in Ompora

PIB

New Delhi, Apr 22: Union Minister of Labour & Employment and Youth Affairs & Sports, Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya, will inaugurate the newly constructed 30-bedded ESIC Hospital (expandable upto 100 Bedded) at Ompora, District Budgam, UT of Jammu & Kashmir on 24.04.2026. The facility, which is extendable up to 100 beds, marks a major milestone in enhancing healthcare delivery under the Employees' State Insurance (ESI) scheme in the region.

In a special gesture, Dr. Mandaviya will honour the construction workers who contributed to the development of the hospital. The facility will serve over 50,000 workers and their families of the region, improving healthcare access for residents of Budgam and surrounding districts.

The hospital project is constructed on a sprawling area of 5 acres with a project cost of around Rs. 165 Crore. The hospital project includes the Hospital building, Service building and 32 residential quarters covering the plinth area of around 24,500 sq. mtrs. Initially, the hospital will begin with 30-beds and gradually, the bed strength will be increased to 100-beds.

The facility includes three



modular operation theatres and one dedicated emergency OT for both planned and critical procedures. It is equipped with four patient lifts for efficient movement and a modern HVAC system to ensure optimal air quality and comfort. The infrastructure features eco-friendly systems such as solar water heating and sewage and effluent treatment plants.

The ESI Scheme was introduced in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir on 16th October 1989, covering about 7,000 workers in Jammu, Kathua, and Srinagar. At present, the ESI Scheme is implemented across all districts of J&K UT serving approximately 1,83,119 insured persons and about 7,00,000 beneficiaries and is administered through the ESIC Regional Office at Jammu and

the Jammu-Kashmir Employees' State Insurance Society (JKESIS).

The Medical Benefit Delivery System in the UT of J&K provides primary healthcare through five Dispensary Cum Branch Offices at Srinagar, Kathua, Katra, Samba, and Udhampur, and eight Employees' State Insurance Scheme (ESIS) Dispensaries—03 in Srinagar, 02 in Jammu, and one each in Budgam, Kathua, and Samba under the JKESI Society. Secondary care is available at the 50-bedded ESIC Model Hospital, Bari-Brahmana, Samba, with additional tie-up arrangements with 15 private nursing homes, hospitals, and diagnostic centres for secondary and super-specialty treatment. Cash benefits are delivered through a Branch Office at Jammu and 05 DCBOs located at Kathua, Samba, Udhampur, Katra, and Srinagar.

## Police arrest 4 drug peddlers

KNO

Srinagar, Apr 22: Continuing its sustained crackdown on drug trafficking under the ongoing Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan, Police have arrested four drug peddlers in Handwara, Kupwara and Budgam.

According to a statement issued, a Police team at a checkpoint established at Gundhobutra Crossing, arrested a drug peddler identified as Umar Hamid Malla son of Ab Hamid Malla resident of Malbagh Kralgund. During search, a substantial quantity of charas-like substance was recovered from his possession.

Meanwhile in Kupwara, a police team of PS Kupwara at a checkpoint established at Wayen, Kupwara, apprehended two drug peddlers. They have been identified as Shaqeeq Ahmad Khan son of Mohd Ibrahim Khan and Mumtaz Ahmad Khan son of Ab Rashid Khan, both residents of Halmatpora, Kupwara.

During search, a substantial quantity of heroin-like substance was recovered from their possession. Preliminary enquiry revealed that the accused were engaged in illicit drug trafficking activities.

In Budgam, Police have apprehended a drug peddler in the Magam area of the district and recovered a charas-like contraband substance from his possession. The operation was carried out by a police party of Police Station Magam near Eidgah Road, Bachipora Mazhama. The accused has been identified as Nazir Ahmed Bhat son of Ghulam Ahmed Bhat resident of Hardusuresh Khag. During search, approximately 155 grams of charas-like substance, concealed in corn husks, was recovered from his possession. The vehicle used in the commission of the crime, bearing registration number JK04H-5489, has also been seized.

Continued on  
www.kashmirthunder.in

## Sonamarg logs 2 lakh tourists in Q1 of 2026



RAJA SYED RATHER

Ganderbal, Apr 22: The renowned health resort of Sonamarg recorded an impressive tourist influx during the first quarter of 2026, with a total of 1,98,425 domestic, foreign, and local visitors exploring the scenic destination from January to March.

According to official data, January witnessed the highest footfall, with 98,216 tourists visiting Sonamarg between 1 and 31 January.

Of these, 86,523 were domestic tourists from various states across India, 1,379 were foreign nationals, and 10,314 were local visitors.

In February, the resort attracted 61,128 tourists, including 48,594 domestic travellers, 1,633 foreign tourists, and 10,901 local visitors. In March, a total of 39,081 tourists visited Sonamarg. However, officials noted that the detailed category-wise breakdown for the month remains either incomplete or inconsistent—(KNO)

## Govt aims to make J&K hub of education, innovation: Sakeena Itoo

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 22: Minister for Education, Social Welfare, Health and Medical Education, Sakeena Itoo on Wednesday laid e-foundation stone for Classroom Block for Innovative learning under Design Your Own Degree (DYOD) and Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP) frameworks at Islamic University of Science and Technology (IUST) Awantipora.

Vice Chancellor, IUST, Prof. Shakeel Ahmad Ramshoo; Dean Academic Affairs, Prof Ayaz Hassan Moon; Registrar IUST, HoDs of various departments, senior faculty members and other concerned officers were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the officers virtually, the Education Minister said that this unique initiative marks a major stride in strengthening higher education infrastructure and promoting flexible, multidisciplinary learning and skill-oriented education in this prestigious University.



She added that this initiative reflects the government's focused commitment to transform Jammu and Kashmir into a hub of quality education and innovation. She noted that the proposed infrastructure will play a pivotal role in fostering experiential learning, critical thinking, and research-driven academic engagement among students.

"The foundation of this innovative classroom facility signifies our resolve to align higher education with global standards and empower students with

choice-based, future-ready learning opportunities," she said.

The Minister highlighted that the project is being developed under the progressive Design Your Own Degree (DYOD) and Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUGP) frameworks, which are central to building a knowledge-driven and skill-oriented society.

She added that this foundation marks another milestone in the Omar Abdullah led Government's sustained efforts to modernize higher education institutions and create an enabling environment for holistic student development.

On the occasion, Vice Chancellor Shakil Ahmad Ramshoo underscored the university's commitment to academic innovation and institutional growth. He stated that the upcoming facility will significantly enhance IUST's capacity to deliver high-quality, outcome-based education and provide students with a dynamic and engaging learning environment.

Continued on  
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## EDITORIAL

### Eradicating Drug Menace: Move Beyond Ritualistic Exercises

It is time to move beyond ritualistic exercises and adopt innovative and engaging methods in the fight against drug addiction. Conventional awareness campaigns, however well-intentioned, have failed to stem the rising tide of substance abuse. With the 100-day Nasha Mukht J&K campaign underway, the time has come to ask a difficult question: why, despite decades of rallies, marches, and speeches, does the drug menace continue to tighten its grip on our youth? The answer lies in the gap between intent and impact. Traditional awareness

methods—posters, seminars, and periodic walks—reach the already aware. The vulnerable youth, the experimenting teenager, the peer-pressured student often remain untouched. The drug peddler, meanwhile, adapts constantly, using new technologies, new delivery methods, and new psychological hooks. Our strategies must be equally adaptive, equally innovative, and far more penetrative. The suggestion to involve national figures, sportspersons, and local icons is a vital first step. Young people are inspired by those they admire. A cricketer

speaking candidly about lost careers due to drugs, a musician sharing a recovery story, a local athlete leading an anti-drug challenge—these messages carry emotional resonance that official circulars lack. The administration must proactively identify and empower such icons at every district and block level. Technology offers powerful tools that remain underutilised. Social media platforms, where drug glorification often finds space, must be actively countered with targeted positive messaging, recovery testimonials, and easily accessible helpline

information. Gamification—digital quizzes, neighbourhood challenges, reward systems for drug-free zones—can transform a serious issue into engaging community action. Grassroots outreach cannot be generic. The approach for a school-going child must differ from that for a college student; the message for a rural farming family must differ from that for an urban household. Peer-led education programmes, where trained youth volunteers engage with their own circles, have proven effective globally and must be adopted here. Schools should integrate anti-drug

messaging not as a one-hour lecture but as a continuous thread woven into the curriculum. Law enforcement must be ruthless with traffickers but compassionate with users. Arresting a young addict without providing a pathway to recovery solves nothing. The 100-day campaign is an opportunity, not an endpoint. It must launch a sustained, multi-front war against drugs. Let us move beyond slogans. Let us innovate, adapt, and execute. The youth of Jammu and Kashmir are watching. Their future depends on whether we are willing to do what it takes.

# Protection And Conservation Of Monuments In India

## India's Approach to Monument Conservation

India's cultural landscape is shaped by monuments, antiquities, manuscripts and historic sites that together reflect thousands of years of civilisational evolution. These structures and objects are not merely remnants of the past; they represent collective memory, inherited knowledge and a sense of continuity that binds generations.

Recognising this, the past decade has seen a renewed emphasis on strengthening the systems that safeguard India's cultural assets. Heritage conservation has been increasingly integrated with tourism development, local livelihoods, and cultural diplomacy. This shift reflects a broader recognition of heritage as both a developmental asset and a source of India's soft power on the global stage.

Tangible and Intangible Cultural Heritage Cultural heritage in India encompasses both tangible and intangible forms, reflecting the country's rich and diverse traditions.

According to UNESCO, Tangible Cultural Heritage includes heritage of "outstanding universal value," such as historic structures and cultural landscapes. Examples include the Taj Mahal, Sanchi Stupa, and ancient temple architecture. In India, such heritage is protected under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, which empowers the government, through the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), to declare monuments as protected, regulate construction in surrounding areas, and ensure their conservation.

Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) refers to living traditions and practices passed down through generations, including performing arts, rituals, festivals, oral traditions, and traditional knowledge. UNESCO defines it as practices recognised by communities as part of their cultural identity and continuously recreated. Examples include Yoga, Vedic chanting, and Buddhist chanting of Ladakh. In India, Intangible Heritage is safeguarded through the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, 2003, supported by national schemes and constitutional provisions such as Article 29.

Legislative and Institutional Framework for Ancient Monuments

India's heritage conservation is guided by a legislative and institutional framework that brings together dedicated organisations, legal safeguards, and policy mechanisms to ensure systematic protection and management of cultural assets.

## Legislative Framework

India's approach to monument conservation has evolved into a structured and continuous process, combining institutional mechanisms, legal safeguards, and participatory models. The key legislations on Protection and Conservation of Ancient Monuments are:

Article 49 – Protection of Monuments of National Importance

Article 49 of the Constitution places a duty on the State to protect monuments, places, and objects of artistic or historic interest declared to be of national importance. This provision forms the constitutional basis for legislative measures such as the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, and guides the State in ensuring preservation of cultural heritage.

Seventh Schedule – Division of Responsibilities

The Seventh Schedule of the Constitution provides a clear division of responsibilities between the Centre and the States in matters of heritage protection.

Union List (Entry 67): Monuments and archaeological sites of national importance fall under the jurisdiction of the Central Government.

State List (Entry 12): Monuments not declared of national importance are the responsibility of State Governments.

This division ensures coordinated governance and management of heritage across different levels of government.

## Article 51A(f) – Fundamental Duty of Citizens

Article 51A(f) of the Constitution enshrines the fundamental duty of every citizen to value and preserve the rich heritage of India's composite culture. This provision reinforces that heritage conservation is not only a State responsibility but also a collective societal obligation, encouraging public participation in preservation efforts.

National Policy for Conservation of Ancient Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Remains (2014)

It is a Government of India framework that guides the scientific preservation and management of monuments of national importance. Implemented primarily by the Archaeological Survey of India under the provisions of the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains (AMASR) Act, 1958, the policy establishes principles for maintaining the authenticity, integrity, and longevity of heritage structures. It emphasises the use of scientific conservation methods, minimal intervention, and the integration of traditional materials and skills with modern techniques. The policy also recognises conservation as a continuous process, supported by documentation, research, capacity building, and community participation, while balancing the need for protection with public access and sustainable use of heritage sites.

## Institutional Framework

India's institutional framework for heritage conservation is anchored in specialised government bodies responsible for the protection, preservation, and management of cultural assets. These institutions ensure effective implementation of laws and policies through coordinated, decentralised, and technically driven mechanisms.

## The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)

Established in 1861 and functioning under the Ministry of Culture, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is the country's principal organisation for archaeological research and the protection of ancient monuments and sites of national importance. Operating under the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958, it safeguards 3,686 centrally protected monuments across India. Its mandate includes structural and chemical conservation, archaeological exploration and excavation, epigraphy, and maintenance of site museums.

ASI carries out its functions through a network of around 38 Circles, which serve as regional administrative units. Each Circle, headed by a Superintending Archaeologist, is responsible for conservation, site management, inspections, and coordination with local authorities within its jurisdiction, ensuring decentralised implementation.

The ASI undertakes annual conservation programmes focusing on structural repairs, use of traditional materials, chemical treatment of monuments, and preventive conservation to address environmental and ageing-related deterioration.

The conservation of centrally protected monuments is undertaken through annual programmes and site-specific projects, and the conservation works are carried out regularly based on priority and the existing condition of the monument. For 2024–25 expenditure on conservation of monuments was 374 crores.

## National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA)

Established in 2007, the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities (NMMA) is implemented under ASI. It plays a crucial role in supporting conservation by building a reliable national database of India's built heritage and antiquities. The Mission aims to document and create an inventory of all monuments and antiquities in the country—information that directly informs planning, prioritisation and monitoring of conservation work. It has so far documented 11,406 Built Heritage and Sites and 12.48 Lakhs antiquities of this country.

## Emerging Frameworks for Monument Conservation

India's approach to monument conservation is evolving through the integration of technology, collaborative models, and digital knowledge systems.

## Comprehensive Conservation

Government of India has reimagined tangible heritage as a living engine of economic opportunity. By linking the conservation of physical heritage with livelihood generation and local development, India is charting a course where preservation and prosperity go hand in hand.

A standout example of this philosophy in action is the Adopt a Heritage 2.0 programme, which brings together government and private partners to upgrade visitor amenities at iconic monuments. Sites such as Agra Fort, Qutub Minar, Ajanta Caves, Red Fort, and Mehrauli Archaeological Park have benefited from improved infrastructure, better facilities, and enhanced site management. The results have been tangible: increased tourist footfall, a boost to local businesses, and new employment avenues in guiding, hospitality, transport, site maintenance, and the sale of handicrafts and souvenirs. These are not incidental benefits but deliberate outcomes of a policy that treats monuments as community assets.

The Government promotes the organisation of dance, music, and cultural festivals at heritage sites as a means of integrating monumental conservation with tourism and local economic development. Notable examples include the Konark Dance Festival, held annually against the backdrop of the Sun Temple in Odisha, and the Khajuraho Dance Festival, organised at the Khajuraho Group of Monuments in Madhya Pradesh. These festivals attract large numbers of tourists, artists, and cultural practitioners, thereby generating livelihood opportunities for local communities through hospitality services, handicrafts, transport, and cultural industries. For instance, the Konark Festival, held in an open-air setting near the monument, draws national and international visitors and is often accompanied by craft fairs and related cultural activities, further boosting local economies. Other heritage-linked festivals include the Modhera Dance Festival (Gujarat) and temple-based cultural events like Natyanjali festivals at Chidambaram.

The Government is also strengthening museums as key institutional tools for the scientific conservation, preservation, and dissemination of tangible cultural heritage. The Museum Grant Scheme supports the establishment, modernisation, and digitisation of museums, strengthening infrastructure and preservation of artefacts. It emphasises capacity building of museum professionals through training and skill development, while promoting technology-driven upgrades such as improved displays, lighting, and digital tools. The scheme also enables digitisation of collections, creation of online catalogues, and development of conservation facilities, enhancing both preservation and public access.

## Technology-Supported Conservation

Technology has become an increasingly important pillar in India's conservation ecosystem, complementing ASI's traditional practices with tools that improve documentation, diagnostics and long-term preservation. Modern technologies/tools such as LIDAR scanning, GIS based mapping and drone-based surveys etc. are used as per requirement for proper documentation. There has been a growing use of scientific laboratory techniques to study heritage materials, understand patterns of deterioration and determine the most suitable conservation treatments.

In parallel, India has expanded the application of digital and spatial technologies that support accurate recording and proactive conservation planning. Key tools now used across heritage documentation and assessment include:

3D laser scanning – for high-precision

mapping and digital documentation of complex structures

Photogrammetry – to capture detailed architectural features and condition changes

Drone-based surveys – for aerial mapping, structural monitoring and studying inaccessible or large sites

Geographic Information Systems or GIS-based mapping – to analyse environmental pressures, track development around protected zones and inform long-term planning

In addition to these technologies, the Government of India has begun integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI) within the broader cultural and heritage ecosystem, particularly in areas such as digitisation, documentation, and accessibility of cultural assets. AI-enabled platforms are being used to process and organise large volumes of heritage data, including manuscripts and cultural knowledge systems, and to enhance public access through digital interfaces and language technologies.

Additionally, drone-based surveys have been undertaken in collaboration with institutions such as the National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER), demonstrating the integration of scientific institutions in heritage conservation efforts.

The Conservation and Restoration of the Kedarnath Temple

The Kedarnath Temple represents a significant example of the use of advanced scientific techniques and institutional collaboration in heritage preservation. Following the 2013 disaster in Uttarakhand, the Government of India, through the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), undertook structural and chemical conservation of the temple, including debris removal, stone resetting using original architectural profiles, and preservation of stone surfaces. Importantly, a geotechnical team from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Chennai collaborated with ASI to carry out scientific structural assessment and foundation analysis of the monument. This included the use of geophysical testing methods such as Multi-Channel Analysis of Spectral Waves (MASW) to evaluate the stability of the temple structure and underlying foundation.

The IIT team's assessment enabled evidence-based decisions regarding foundation strengthening and conservation strategy, ensuring that interventions remained non-invasive and structurally appropriate. This collaboration highlights how the Government has integrated engineering expertise with traditional conservation practices, combining modern scientific diagnostics with the use of locally sourced materials and traditional craftsmanship in restoration.

## Public-Private Partnership

In recent years, heritage conservation has increasingly incorporated public-private partnership (PPP) models to complement government-led efforts. The "Adopt a Heritage: Apni Dharohar, Apni Pehchaan" initiative, launched in 2017 by the Government of India under the Ministry of Tourism in collaboration with the Ministry of Culture and the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), is one such initiative. The scheme was further revamped as "Adopt a Heritage 2.0" in 2023, to strengthen corporate participation through a structured CSR-based framework. Under this initiative, entities designated as "Monument Mitras" develop and maintain facilities such as cleanliness, accessibility, illumination, signage, and visitor services, while conservation and preservation remain the exclusive mandate of the ASI. By combining government oversight with private sector efficiency, the programme improves visitor experience, promotes sustainable tourism, and fosters a shared sense of responsibility towards safeguarding India's cultural heritage.

The initiative also reflects a broader shift towards participatory heritage management, where private sector involvement and citizen engagement complement government-led conservation efforts.

Flagship National Platforms for Cultural

## Key Takeaways

- Archaeological Survey of India safeguards 3,686 centrally protected monuments, supported by strengthened conservation systems and scientific restoration methods.
- Heritage and monument preservation has advanced through large-scale digitisation, creation of national heritage databases, and wider adoption of scientific and digital tools for documentation and conservation.
- India's global heritage profile has expanded, with 44 UNESCO World Heritage Sites, including the recent addition of the Maratha Military Landscapes.

## Heritage

A key initiative in this direction is the Indian Culture Portal, a comprehensive digital platform that aggregates content from museums, libraries, archives and cultural institutions onto a single interface – <https://www.indianculture.gov.in/3d-explorations>.

This platform allows users to experience monuments remotely through two formats—Virtual Walkthroughs and 360-degree Virtual Tours—thereby enhancing accessibility and public engagement with cultural heritage.

Virtual Walkthroughs enable users to move through heritage sites in a guided, step-by-step manner, simulating a real visit. Examples include monuments such as:

Katarmal Sun Temple at Almora (Uttarakhand)

Shaniwarwada, Pune (Maharashtra)

360-degree Virtual Tours provide panoramic, interactive views where users can explore monuments in all directions. The Qutub Minar Complex being one.

It also supports interactive learning through curated thematic sections, games and educational content, making cultural knowledge more engaging for a wider audience.

## Global Heritage Recognition (UNESCO)

India's presence on the global heritage map has strengthened considerably, with UNESCO inscriptions reflecting both the diversity and depth of the country's civilisational legacy. The most recent addition—the Maratha Military Landscapes, inscribed in July 2024 marks India's 44th UNESCO World Heritage Site, reaffirming the nation's position among countries with the highest number of globally recognised heritage sites.

India's expanding UNESCO footprint comprising 36 Cultural, 7 Natural, and 1 Mixed sites demonstrates how its historic monuments, archaeological landscapes and living traditions collectively contribute to global heritage.

## Conclusion

India's heritage-preservation landscape today reflects a maturing national commitment – one that recognises cultural heritage not merely as inherited wealth, but as an active, dynamic asset shaping the country's collective future. Over the past decade, conservation practices have expanded in scale and sophistication, supported by a strengthened Archaeological Survey of India, modern scientific tools and structured protocols that ensure the long-term care of over 3600 protected monuments. Parallel investments in digitisation, including the documentation of manuscripts and the creation of integrated heritage databases, signal a shift towards knowledge-led preservation where accessibility, research and transparency reinforce physical conservation on the ground.

At the same time, India's growing presence on the global heritage map demonstrates the country's ability to present its cultural legacy with renewed confidence. Together, these advancements reveal a holistic approach to heritage management: conserving what time has tested, restoring what history entrusted, and digitising what must endure.

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

## Sensitise communities about water conservation: Javed Rana

### Calls for comprehensive strategy to address water scarcity in Kandi areas

KT News Desk

JAMMU, APRIL 22: Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs, Javed Ahmed Rana, on Wednesday emphasised the need for a comprehensive and result-oriented strategy to tackle the growing water scarcity in Kandi areas, stating that the challenge requires coordinated and long-term interventions.

The Minister, as per an official statement, made these remarks while interacting with the public delegations at Gurjar Desh Charitable Trust (GDCT), where the people from various parts of Jammu highlighted their concerns, with water supply emerging as the key issue.

Stressing sustainable solutions, the Minister underscored the importance of creating water harvesting tanks across Kandi belts to capture rainwater that otherwise goes unused. He said such infrastructure can serve as dependable local water sources during the dry spells and reduce dependence on distant supply lines. He also called for intensified awareness drives to sensitise the communities about water conservation and the limited nature of ground-water reserves in these areas.



Rana stressed the need for effective dovetailing of efforts among the Jal Shakti, Rural Development, Forest and other line departments to ensure efficient water conservation and management. He highlighted that behavioural change among communities is as vital as infrastructure, urging judicious use of water in domestic consumption, agriculture and livestock rearing to prevent further depletion of already stressed sources.

The Minister directed the field officers to strengthen

ground-level monitoring to detect and plug leakages in the water supply network, noting that such losses deprive end users of their rightful share. He instructed the officers to conduct regular inspections of pipelines, storage tanks and distribution points to ensure optimal utilisation of available resources.

To ensure equitable distribution in water-stressed areas like Bathindi, the Minister directed the officials to implement alternate-day water supply and held field officers accountable for the quality and regularity of

monitoring reports.

Earlier, a delegation from Bathindi raised the issue of irregular water supply and demanded drilling of a borewell in Sagri Mohalla. Another delegation from Chowadhi highlighted water scarcity and the poor condition of roads.

Delegations from Samba, Akhnoor and other areas of Jammu division also presented their grievances and sought early redressal.

The officers informed the Minister that work on six borewells in Bathindi and adjoining

areas is underway and nearing completion, which is expected to significantly ease water scarcity and ensure a reliable supply.

Rana reiterated that coordinated planning, community participation and efficient resource management form the three pillars of a lasting solution to water scarcity in Kandi areas.

Later, the Minister held a detailed interaction with the officers and trustees regarding establishment of a Tribal Museum at GDCT. The proposed museum is envisioned as a dedicated space to preserve and showcase the rich cultural heritage, traditions and history of the tribal communities of Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Chief Engineer I&FC, Jammu, Manoj Gupta, Chief Conservator of Forests, Jammu, Dr V S Senthil Kumar; Director Tribal Affairs Department, Mohd Mumtaz Ali, Chief Engineer PHE, Mohd Hanief; Director Tribal Research Institute Dr Abdul Khair and other officers. Trustees of GDCT including Patron in Chief Abdul Hamid Coudhary, Chairman Arshad Ali Choudhary Showkat Choudhary and General Secretary Er. M. Sadiq Azad also attended the meeting.

## JKEDI conducts training programmes in Shopian, Ganderbal



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, APRIL 22: Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) on Wednesday inaugurated three-day/ 24 hours Training Programmes under the Pradhan Mantri Formalisation of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) Scheme at Shopian and Ganderbal District Centres. The programmes saw the participation from candidates, officers from the Department of Horticulture and officials of JKEDI.

At Shopian, the PMFME programme was inaugurated at District Employment and Counselling Centre, Shopian where Zia U Din, Technical Officer, Department of Horticulture gave a detailed outlook of the scheme.

At Ganderbal, the programme, as per an official statement, was inaugurated at the Vikalp Centre, Government Degree College, Ganderbal. A total of 51 candidates have enrolled for the programmes.

These training programmes

aim to enhance the entrepreneurial capabilities of aspiring and existing entrepreneurs in the micro food processing sector. Over the course of three days, participants will receive comprehensive training on key aspects of capacity building, including business planning, financial management, market linkages, and awareness about the various schemes of the Government and access to credit facilities.

The initiative is designed to equip participants with the essential skills and knowledge required to establish and sustain micro food processing enterprises. By fostering entrepreneurship and strengthening local enterprise ecosystems, the programme seeks to promote self-employment opportunities and contribute to local economic development.

JKEDI continues to play a pivotal role in nurturing entrepreneurship across Jammu and Kashmir through targeted training and capacity-building initiatives under various government schemes.

## LADC team inspects Central Jail Srinagar to facilitate early release of eligible inmates

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, APRIL 22: In a coordinated initiative aimed at strengthening access to justice and ensuring timely relief to deserving inmates, the Legal Aid Defence Counsels (LADC) of Shopian and Pulwama carried out a joint inspection of Central Jail Srinagar Wednesday.

The inspection, as per an official statement, was undertaken to identify cases eligible for early release in accordance with the categories defined under the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the forthcoming Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC) meeting.

The joint team was led by Secretary DLSA Shopian/Pulwama, Mudasar Farooq, and comprised Chief LADC Shopian, Rafie Ahmad Ganie, Chief LADC Pulwama, Mehrajuddin Wani, and Junior Assistant DLSA Pulwama, Shakir Ahmad.

The team was facilitated by Senior Superintendent of Jail, Saba Shawl, who provided detailed insights into the inmate population and administrative framework of the jail.

During the visit, the LADC teams conducted a thorough and systematic review of individual inmate cases.

The assessment focused on identifying prisoners eligible for release under various SOP categories, including undertrials



who have completed half of the maximum prescribed sentence, first-time offenders involved in minor offences, elderly or infirm inmates, and those granted bail but unable to furnish surety, among others as specified under UTRC guidelines.

The team also interacted with inmates across different barracks to verify legal records,

assess the status of cases, and ensure that no eligible individual is deprived of legal aid or relief due to lack of awareness or assistance.

Following the inspection, a consolidated list of eligible cases has been prepared and will be placed before the upcoming UTRC meeting for appropriate consideration and necessary orders.

## Ganderbal gears up for Civil Defence mock drill

KT News Desk

GANDERBAL, APRIL 22: In preparation for the Civil Defence Air Raid and Blackout Mock Exercise scheduled for Thursday, the Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Ganderbal, Syed Faheem Bihagi, on Wednesday chaired a comprehensive review meeting to finalise arrangements for the upcoming drill.

The meeting, as per an official statement, brought together senior officers from various departments to coordinate logistics, personnel deployment, and emergency response protocols.

During the deliberations, it was decided that the mock drill, simulating an air raid scenario, will be conducted at Government Degree College Ganderbal as the primary target site.

The exercise will include a simulated blackout across the district. The Executive Engineer, KPDCL, has been directed to ensure shutdown of electricity supply upon the designated signal to be issued

by the PCR.

The State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) has been tasked with leading the air raid simulation and will deploy necessary equipment. First Responder Teams (FRTs) will manage on-ground operations, while ambulances will facilitate the evacuation of simulated casualties to the District Hospital.

The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) has been directed to deploy an ambulance at the venue along with necessary staff and to oversee all medical arrangements. Doctors and paramedical staff will be stationed at the District Hospital to ensure prompt response.

Volunteers trained by SDRF, along with NCC cadets, will also be mobilised to support the exercise. The District Youth Services and Sports Officer has been tasked with ensuring their participation.

Traffic Police have been instructed to keep the designated corridor clear to facilitate smooth movement during the drill.

Later, the ADC also reviewed

arrangements for a cyclotron scheduled to be held on April 24, from Clock Tower to GCOPE Gadoora. The event will be flagged off at 7:00 AM and is expected to witness participation from a large number of people.

The District Youth Services and Sports Officer has been nominated as the Nodal Officer for the cyclotron. The Chief Medical Officer was directed to deploy medical and paramedical staff along with an ambulance for the event.

Other concerned officers and officials were also assigned duties for smooth conduct of the Cyclotron.

The meeting was attended by the Additional Superintendent of Police, Deputy Director Fire and Emergency Services, Chief Medical Officer, Chief Executive Officer Municipal Council, Executive Engineer KPDCL, District Information Officer, District Youth Services and Sports Officer, Deputy Superintendent of Police SDRF (DAR), Deputy Superintendent of Police Traffic Rural, and other officers and officials.

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, APRIL 22: Social Welfare Department (SWD)- SANKALP Hub for Empowerment of Women Srinagar organized a one-day awareness programme on skill development, vocational training, and financial inclusion at Government College for Women, M.A. Road, Srinagar, Wednesday.

The programme, as per an official statement, aimed to equip students with essential knowledge and practical skills to support their future career aspirations. It brought together students and members of the SANKALP-HEW team, who provided valuable insights into a wide range of vocational training opportunities and skill development initiatives.

The sessions were designed to enhance employability, foster entrepreneurial thinking, and prepare students to meet the evolving demands of Wednesday's job market.

Experts highlighted various

pathways through which young women can build sustainable careers and achieve economic independence.

A major highlight of the event was the session on financial inclusion. Participants were sensitized to the importance of financial literacy, access to banking services, digital financial transactions, and awareness of government schemes aimed at economic empowerment. The speakers emphasized that financial independence is a key driver of both personal and professional growth, especially for women.

The programme also featured interactive sessions, enabling students to engage directly with resource persons and gain practical insights into diverse career options.

The event concluded with a formal vote of thanks, acknowledging the efforts of the organizers and the enthusiastic participation of students, making the programme both meaningful and impactful.

## Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan

### IMHANS-K holds interactive session with recovered patients of drug addiction



KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, APRIL 22: An interactive session with recovered and recovering patients of substance abuse was held on Wednesday at Institute of Mental Health and Neurosciences (IMHANS-K) as part of the ongoing Nasha Mukht Jammu and Kashmir Abhiyan.

The event, as per an official statement, co-hosted by the Directorate of Social Welfare, was attended by around 23 patients of substance abuse who have recovered from the same.

Welcoming the participants, Medical Superintendent, IMHANS-K, Dr Ajaz Baba lauded them for their courage and resolve in combating the affliction of drug addiction. HOD, Psychiatry, Prof (Dr) Arshad Hussain highlighted the role of such interactions in reducing isolation and fostering hope among those struggling with addiction and drug dependence.

Nodal Officer, Drug De-addiction and Rehabilitation, Prof (Dr) Yasir Hassan termed the

recovered patients of Substance Abuse as 'fellow combatants' in the fight against drug addiction. Several patients shared their stories of struggle and success. One of the recovered patient related how after giving up drugs his relationship with his family had undergone a sea change and how he had got his business back on track and gained back his lost respect. He termed his successful recovery as "a journey back from darkness to light."

Another patient said that though the struggle wasn't easy he had got his life back and was "happily married now and living a meaningful life."

Some patients complained that societal attitudes towards former substance users are not very encouraging and they have to struggle with suspicion and distrust. The event which was co-ordinated by Dr Ajaz Suhaff, Medical Officer Oral Substitution Therapy (OST) and Sajad Ahmed, Sr. Social worker, IMHANS concluded with a shared resolve to combat the menace of drug addiction at individual as well as community levels.

## DDMA Baramulla to conduct civil defence air raid, blackout mock drill on April 24

KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, APRIL 22: District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) Baramulla has informed that a Civil Defence Air Raid/Blackout Mock Drill will be conducted on April 24, 2026 (Friday) at Showkat Ali Stadium, Baramulla. The mock drill will be carried out in two phases, with Phase I scheduled at 12:00 Noon and Phase II at 8:00 PM. The exercise is being organized to assess the district's

preparedness, strengthen emergency response mechanisms, and enhance public awareness about safety protocols during air raid or blackout situations.

DDMA Baramulla, as per an official statement, has urged the general public not to panic during the drill, emphasizing that it is purely a preparedness exercise. Citizens have been requested to extend full cooperation to the authorities and strictly follow the instructions issued during the course of the drill.

## Ring Road, NH444: DC Budgam holds interdepartmental follow up, coordination meeting

KT News Desk

BUDGAM, APRIL 22: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Athar Aamir Khan, Wednesday chaired a meeting to review the progress of the Ring Road Development Project in the district, following his field inspection of the project alignment yesterday.

The meeting, as per an official statement, focused on construction of Ring Road Phase-I, Airport and Railway Station connectivity, connectivity with district roads, Synchronization with NH444 corridor, Railway underpasses, junctions etc.

The DC was attended by ACR Budgam, Executive Engineer R&B Circle Srinagar, representatives of NHAI, and other

concerned officers.

During the meeting, the DC took a segment-wise review of the progress achieved across various stretches of the Ring Road corridor from NH-44 Galandara to Narbal, including Khanda, Wathoor, Gadsathu, Ichkoot, Razwan and Dharmuna.

He reviewed the status of works, land acquisition, utility shifting and alignment, drainage and irrigation water channelisation.

The DC directed executing agencies to ensure speedy progress across all stretches and directed for close coordination among departments to resolve bottlenecks. He also instructed adherence to timelines and quality standards.

## SVEEP awareness programme conducted in Shopian

KT News Desk

SHOPIAN, APRIL 22: In continuation of the ongoing Panchayat Electoral Roll Revision 2026 and the SVEEP (Systematic Voters' Education and Electoral Participation) initiative, a series of awareness programmes were conducted Wednesday at Government High School Shadab Karewa and Government High School Chanchmarg, Shadab Karewa, by the District Election Office Shopian in collaboration with Chief education officer shopian.

The programmes, as per an official statement, aimed at sensitizing students, staff about the importance of electoral participation and the ongoing revision of the Panchayat Electoral Roll.

During the sessions, awareness was imparted regarding the right to vote, procedures for enrolment, and the significance of ensuring accurate electoral registration.

On the occasion, officials highlighted the importance of voting in a democratic setup and urged all eligible citizens, particularly those who have attained the age of 18 years as on 01-04-2026, to enroll themselves in the electoral roll. It was emphasized that active participation in elections is essential for strengthening grassroots democracy.

The programmes witnessed the participation of teaching staff and school authorities, who extended full cooperation in organizing the awareness activities.

## CS reviews progress of Handicrafts & Handloom sector dev in J&K

'Focus on skilling, GI tagging, credit access, infrastructure development'

KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 22: Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo on Wednesday chaired a high-level meeting to

review the progress and future roadmap for large-scale promotion and strengthening of the Handicrafts and Handloom sector in Jammu & Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce; Director, Handicrafts & Handloom, Kashmir/Jammu; MD, JKHHMC and other concerned officers.

Taking a comprehensive review of departmental initiatives, the Chief Secretary emphasized the immediate operationalization of non-functional training centres across districts to ensure uninterrupted skill development and capacity building of artisans and craftsmen. He directed that these centres be aligned with the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF) to ensure wider recognition of

training certifications. Stressing formalization and financial inclusion, he instructed the department to enhance artisan registrations on the Udyam portal and facilitate their linkage with the RBI's Unified Lending Interface (ULI) to improve access to affordable credit. He further advised exploring the introduction of a dedicated term loan product for the sector, on the

analogy of the agriculture sector, to enable capital infusion and business expansion. The Chief Secretary also called for expansion of training and capacity-building programmes in collaboration with the National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), stating that short-term courses and diploma programmes would help integrate modern technology with traditional crafts.

Reviewing the progress on GI tagging, he directed optimal utilization of the QR-based management system for tracking and tracing GI products and emphasized its full operationalization through integration with the Government of India's MeghRaj cloud platform. He also stressed expediting the implementation of the Tex-RAMPS scheme, including early finalization of the requisite Memorandum of

Understanding (MoU). Commissioner Secretary, Industries & Commerce, Vikramjit Singh, presented a detailed overview of departmental functioning and initiatives aimed at revitalizing the sector. He informed that proposals for multiple projects have been submitted to the Government of India for approval to strengthen handicrafts across districts.

### CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

#### Nation pays tribute

his respects to the victims said that the country will never forgive those responsible for this dastardly act, and the grief of the martyrs' families is the grief of us all.

Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge in his message said that the nation remains united, resilient, and determined against terrorism as India marked the first anniversary of the tragedy that claimed the lives of 26 tourists.

Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra called it a "cowardly" act and asserted that India will "neither forget nor forgive the criminals".

In a post on X, Priyanka Gandhi expressed grief over the killing of innocent and unarmed civilians in the attack, describing it as a "crime against humanity" and reaffirming the country's collective stand against terrorism.

"Heartfelt tribute and salutations to all the brave Indians martyred in the cowardly terrorist attack in Pahalgam. In this attack, our unarmed and innocent people were brutally killed, which was a crime against humanity. India will neither forget it nor forgive the criminals who did so. The whole of India has always stood united against violence and terrorism and will continue to do so. Jai Hind!" Wayanad MP wrote in her post.

Pertinently, on April 22 last year, terrorists killed 26 people, mostly tourists, in Pahalgam in south Kashmir, triggering nationwide outrage.

In response, India launched a military operation on May 7, targeting and destroying multiple terror infrastructure sites in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) under 'Operation Sindoor.' (KNO)

#### 10 lakh tourists

Pahalgam from 2023 to April 2026. Of these, 14,54,269 visited in 2023, 12,65,925 in 2024, 10,04,234 in 2025, and 3,36,481 in 2026 (up to 20 April). Regarding foreign tourist arrivals, 15,061 visited in 2023, 14,483 in 2024, 9,090 in 2025, and 4,486 till April 2026.

Sandeep Seyal, a tourist, said they were in Pahalgam remembering the dark day last year when 26 people lost their lives. "The grief still remains, but while carrying that pain in our hearts, we must move forward. I want to tell people across the country that the situation which existed here 15-20 years ago no longer prevails. The atmosphere here is normal and peaceful, and the government has done significant work. I urge everyone to visit and support us so that we can strengthen the bond of Kashmir with India and boost the local economy. Tourism is the backbone of the economy here."

Another tourist, Tanya from Delhi, said, "I am feeling very good here. There is a lot of pollution in Delhi, so we came here to enjoy the pleasant weather." She said that last year, on this day, the Baisaran attack took place. "It feels emotional to be here on its anniversary. The incident was very unfortunate and tragic. However, the situation now feels normal and safe. People should not be afraid and should visit Kashmir to experience its beauty and support tourism." (KNO)

#### PM Modi has

skill development, generate opportunities for women, and make a significant contribution to the economic development of Jammu Kashmir."

The Lieutenant Governor said, "The industrial revolution we are witnessing today is a living symbol of new era for Jammu Kashmir. In the past 5 years, the scale of industrial development has moved beyond mere economic figures and become the most powerful medium of transformation across Union Territory."

"Establishing this esteemed company's plant is a landmark moment for the entire Jammu and Kashmir. It signals readiness to embrace opportunity, serve the nation and light the way to the future. It also reflects strong confidence in the immense potential of Jammu and Kashmir," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor shared significant figures to highlight industrial transformation of Jammu Kashmir after New Industrial Policy was launched in 2021.

He said in financial year 2025 26 alone, Jammu Kashmir attracted investment of Rs. 5,824 crore—more than 13 times the average investment recorded before 2021. In FY 2022 23 investment was Rs. 2,153 crore, in FY 2023 24 Rs. 3,389 crore, and in FY 2024 25 Rs. 4,145 crore.

In addition, half the preliminary work has already been completed on 312 units worth Rs. 7,864 crore, with production expected to begin in FY 2026 27. Jammu Kashmir has also seen, for the first time, the establishment of several units with investments exceeding Rs. 500 crore, including Chiripal Polyfilms (Rs. 1,215 crore), Kandhari Beverages (Rs. 830 crore), and Aegios (Rs. 666 crore). Three more units are expected to start production in FY 2026 27.

"The number of startups has risen from just 69 in 2020 to 1,305 in FY 2025 26—a growth of over 1,800%. Combined with all industrial units and PMEGP supported units, millions of young people have gained better employment opportunities," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Mohit Burman, Non-Executive Director, Eveready Industries India Limited said that the

state-of-the-art greenfield facility will generate around 500 direct and indirect employment opportunities at full scale in the region. He said the company also aims to contribute to 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' vision.

Eveready's new manufacturing plant boasts a robust annual peak production capacity of approximately 360 million alkaline batteries with an annual installed capacity of 456 million. Marking a significant scale-up in the industry's production capabilities, Eveready's Jammu facility will give an impetus to India's domestic manufacturing while catering to the country's growing demand for high-performance power solutions.

Arjun Lamba, Non-Executive Director; Eveready Industries India Limited; Anirban Banerjee, Chief Executive Officer; Bibek Agarwala, Executive Director and CFO; Sandeep Banerjee, Chief Human Resource Officer; Arun Sahay, Head Operations and other members of Eveready Industries India Limited were present.

Vikramjit Singh, Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce Department; Ayushi Sudan Deputy Commissioner Samba; Arun Kumar Manhas, Director, Industries & Commerce, Jammu; senior officials and representatives of trade and industrial organisations also attended the inaugural ceremony. (KNO)

#### LG visits Udhampur

in Ramnagar, Udhampur on April 20.

The team of doctors briefed the Lieutenant Governor on the health condition of the injured and the specialized treatment protocols being followed.

Hospital authorities informed the Lieutenant Governor that Hans Raj and Lakhwinder Singh are under the constant supervision of senior healthcare professionals and receiving the highest standard of clinical attention.

The Lieutenant Governor directed the Hospital Administration to ensure the best possible medical care for their speedy recovery.

#### Year after Pahalgam

acts against India, the response is assured. Justice will be served. Always," the Additional Directorate General of Public Information (ADG PI) said in a post on X, referring to Operation Sindoor launched after the attack.

The attack in Pahalgam had triggered widespread fear, leading to a sharp decline in tourist arrivals, cancellations of bookings and temporary closure of several destinations across the Valley.

Officials said the government has since taken multiple steps to restore visitor confidence and revive tourism-linked livelihoods.

At least 17 tourist destinations that were shut following the attack have now been reopened, including key locations around Pahalgam such as Betaab Valley.

Security has been strengthened across major tourist hubs with increased deployment, additional checkpoints and drone surveillance in sensitive areas.

In a move aimed at improving transparency, authorities have introduced a QR code-based identification system for tourism service providers. Over 7,000 workers, including pony handlers, guides and vendors, have been registered under the system.

"Tourists can scan the QR code to verify identity details of service providers. The idea is to build trust and ensure safety," an official said.

Tourist footfall, though still below pre-attack levels, has begun to improve gradually, with visitors from different parts of the country returning to the Valley.

Officials said the focus remains on ensuring safety while restoring economic activity dependent on tourism.

The Army, recalling its response under Operation Sindoor, said India's approach to countering terrorism would remain firm and consistent.

While the scars of the attack remain, authorities and stakeholders said coordinated security measures and policy interventions are helping restore normalcy and rebuild confidence among visitors across Kashmir. (KNO)

#### LoC areas witness

and believe in a peaceful and progressive future," an official said, adding that the marches reflected a growing resolve among the younger generation.

In the Gurez valley of Bandipora district, hundreds of students and local residents gathered in Dawar area to protest against the killing of civilians in last year's attack.

Eyewitnesses said the march began from a school ground and passed through village lanes before culminating near the riverbank close to the LoC.

"We want peace and a future without fear. Children like us should not grow up hearing about killings," said a Class 10 student holding a placard reading "Stop Killing Innocents".

Another student said the gathering was aimed at sending a message of unity. "We are from a border area and have grown up hearing about conflict, but we want to study and live a normal life," she said.

Local residents also joined the protest, lighting candles and offering prayers for the victims.

"Standing here today shows that people in border areas reject violence," said a local elder,

describing the attack as a wound that still remains fresh.

Speakers at the gathering called for lasting peace and urged authorities to ensure stronger protection for civilians, particularly in tourist and remote areas.

In Poonch district, members of social and trade organisations held a tribute programme at the main market to honour those killed in the attack.

Participants offered floral tributes and observed a moment of silence, while speakers condemned the incident and expressed solidarity with the bereaved families.

They said such attacks could not weaken the unity of the country and reiterated the need for firm action against terrorism.

The Pahalgam attack on April 22 last year, in which 26 people, mostly tourists, were killed, had triggered widespread outrage across the country.

Officials said the peaceful demonstrations and tribute events across LoC areas highlighted public rejection of violence and a collective call for peace.

Authorities said the situation across these areas remained peaceful during the events. (KNO)

#### CM directs best

monitoring. The Chief Minister, accompanied by Minister for Health & Medical Education Sakina Itoo and Minister for Transport Satish Sharma, conducted a detailed inspection of the hospital facilities. Deputy Commissioner Udhampur Minga Sherpa, Commissioner Transport J&K Vishesh Paul Mahajan, DIG Udhampur-Reasi range and SSP, National Highway, Principal GMC Udhampur, Regional Transport Officer Jammu, Medical Superintendent GMC Udhampur and other concerned were also present.

along with senior officers from the civil administration, police, and medical fraternity, were also present during the visit.

While taking round of the hospital, the Chief Minister inspected the Trauma Centre, ICU, Orthopaedic and Surgery wards, and other sections of the hospital. He met each injured patient individually, enquiring about their condition, treatment protocols, availability of medicines, nature of injuries, and expected discharge timelines.

The attending medical team briefed the Chief Minister on the line of treatment being administered, including surgeries and other medical interventions, as well as the recovery progress of the patients.

Assuring full support to the affected families, the Chief Minister emphasized the need for stringent measures to prevent such accidents in the future. He later chaired a review meeting to assess both the treatment being provided to the injured and the overall functioning of GMC Udhampur. The meeting was informed about the preliminary causes of the accident and the status of the ongoing investigation.

Expressing concern over road safety, the Chief Minister directed the Transport Department to ensure adequate frequency of buses on various routes and strictly curb overloading. "Don't show any laxity on these issues," he asserted.

On the occasion, officials apprised the Chief Minister about the relief being extended under the Road Accident Victim Fund, which includes financial assistance of 1 lakh in case of death, 75,000 for permanent disability, 50,000 for grievous injuries, and 10,000 for minor injuries.

The Chief Minister further instructed all concerned departments to extend maximum support to the victims and their families through various welfare schemes of key sectors, including health, education, and social welfare, ensuring a comprehensive support system during their recovery and rehabilitation.

Soon after the tragedy, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah announced immediate relief from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund for the victims with an ex-gratia of 2 lakh to the next of kin of each deceased, 1 lakh to those seriously injured, and 25,000 to those who sustained minor injuries in the accident.

#### Centre, state must

been ordered and an accident officer is currently investigating the incident. "Let the investigation be completed. Once the report is submitted, the recommendations will be implemented accordingly," he said.

Rejecting suggestions that poor road conditions led to the accident, the Chief Minister said available evidence pointed otherwise. "If the road condition had been bad, the vehicle would have moved slowly. The problem is not always the road but the mindset of drivers," he said.

He said issues such as overspeeding, overloading and wrong-side driving continue to contribute to accidents. "While the government will fulfil its responsibility, bus owners and drivers must also understand their duty. There should be strict action against violations," he added.

On tourism, CM Omar said the government is working to maintain stability and improve conditions in Jammu and Kashmir. He acknowledged that last year's Pahalgam attack had an impact on tourist inflow but expressed optimism about recovery.

"As the season picks up, we are hopeful that visitors will continue to come, whether for pilgrimage like Mata Vaishno Devi and Amarnath or for tourism," he said.

Referring to the first anniversary of the Pahalgam attack, CM Omar described the day as painful and said the government remains committed to preventing such incidents in future.

"We remember those who lost their lives. They had come for holidays but were targeted. We are still in grief, but we are committed to ensuring such incidents do not happen again," he said, calling for coordinated efforts by the government and security agencies.

On whether there has been any change in Pakistan after 'Operation Sindoor,' the Chief Minister said such assessments depend on intelligence inputs but asserted that India would not allow a repeat of such incidents.

Commenting on the ongoing tensions involving Iran, he said the conflict should end as it was impacting global supply chains and pushing up oil prices.

"This conflict is affecting every country. We hope it ends soon," he said. (KNO)

#### 'Tourists our

tribute to those who lost their lives in Pahalgam.

The Pahalgam terror attack last year had led to loss of lives and triggered widespread condemnation across Kashmir. It was seen as a setback to the region's long-standing image of hospitality and safety for visitors.

"We regret and condemn whatever happened in Pahalgam last year. Tourists are our honour. We urge people to visit. We are available anytime and will be protective," said a hotelier.

An elderly participant said the people of Kashmir stand for peace. "We condemn the act. We are here in solidarity with the bereaved families. We are peace lovers," he said.

They said such incidents do not reflect the values of Kashmir, adding that the region has always welcomed tourists with warmth and respect.

"We pray for the safety of our country and Kashmir. We stand with those whose loved ones lost their lives". (KNO)

#### 'No shortage

School Education; Secretary, IT and Transport Departments; Divisional Commissioner, Jammu/Kashmir; IG Traffic; and other concerned officials.

The Chief Secretary emphasized the need for continuous monitoring of the situation to ensure ease and convenience for the public. He directed Deputy Commissioners to saturate the e-KYC of all active beneficiaries under the Public Distribution System within the next two weeks, ensuring transparency and efficiency in service delivery.

The Chief Secretary further stressed the importance of closely monitoring the distribution and usage of fertilizers to prevent hoarding or disproportionate consumption by any individual or entity. He directed that mechanisms be put in place to ensure equitable access for all farmers and stakeholders. He also underscored the need to implement an Aadhaar-enabled distribution system for fertilizers to ensure transparency and fair allocation.

Reviewing the supply position, he it was informed that both Kashmir and Jammu divisions currently have adequate stocks of petroleum products and LPG. The Divisional Commissioner, Jammu, Ramesh Kumar while aporising about Jammu Division, revealed that the diesel availability stands at about 11 days and petrol around 4 days, with additional supplies in transit improving the overall position. LPG stocks in Jammu are sufficient for 8-10 days, while kerosene reserves remain comfortable, he added.

Similarly for Kashmir Division, the Divisional Commissioner, Anshul Garg divulged that the petrol and diesel stocks provide coverage of around 17-19 days, extendable up to 20-22 days with supplies in transit, while LPG stocks are sufficient for about 15 days.

The meeting also took detailed note of district-wise price trends of LPG and petroleum products, along with enforcement actions taken against violators. It was informed that strict action has been initiated against those indulging in hoarding or attempting to create artificial scarcity in the market, with a clear directive to maintain market discipline and protect consumer interests.

Availability of fuel and LPG to commercial and industrial establishments was also reviewed. The meeting was apprised that adequate arrangements are in place to ensure uninterrupted supply to key sectors. Special emphasis was laid on ensuring availability of food, cooking fuel and other essentials to critical residential institutions such as hospitals, hostels and other care facilities across all districts.

Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department, Ashish Chandra Verma, apprised the meeting that fertilizer stocks across J&K remain stable, though continuous monitoring is essential. He advised that consumers should be encouraged to use fertilizers judiciously to maintain balanced availability.

Highlighting enforcement measures, it was informed that extensive inspections are being carried out across districts to curb violations. Necessary action, including issuance of show-cause notices and suspension of licenses, is being taken against erring entities to ensure compliance with regulations.

Commissioner Secretary, FCS&CA, Saurabh Bhagat, informed that the department has issued CTG guidelines in the UT and is actively monitoring the prices of around 40 essential commodities across markets to prevent overpricing and ensure affordability.

The meeting also reviewed grievance redressal mechanisms. It was informed that distress calls and public grievances received from different districts were given prompt attention and addressed within a defined timeframe, ensuring that no inconvenience was caused to the public.

Reiterating the government's commitment to ensuring uninterrupted supply and price stability, the Chief Secretary directed the Divisional and respective district administrations to remain vigilant, strengthen coordination, and take timely measures to address any emerging challenges. The Divisional Commissioners assured that the situation is under constant review and that adequate arrangements are in place to meet public requirements without disruption.

#### CM discusses dev

to all the delegations and assured them that their genuine demands would be examined on priority. He reiterated the government's commitment to inclusive development and responsive governance, emphasizing that the concerns of people from all regions are being addressed in a systematic and time-bound manner.

#### Earth Day: Experts

growth in Srinagar and Jammu has come at a high environmental cost, with wetlands and natural green buffers being systematically destroyed.

"Wetlands are not wastelands—they are vital ecological assets. They store excess water, regulate floods, and support biodiversity. Their loss directly translates into increased flood risks, rising pollution levels, extreme heat, and the disappearance of wildlife," he said.

Qadri said the consequences are already visible. "The highest cost we are paying is in the form of frequent flooding and deteriorating living conditions. If this trend continues, urban centres like Srinagar could face severe environmental stress in the coming years," he warned. He called for strict enforcement against illegal constructions, restoration of degraded wetlands, large-scale plantation drives, and adherence to scientific urban planning.

Environmental expert and teacher Mudasir Ahmad highlighted the growing unpredictability of weather patterns in the Himalayan region. "Many of us can feel that something is changing. Winters are no longer the same, rainfall patterns have become erratic, and extreme weather events are becoming more frequent. These are clear indicators of a shifting climate," he said.

He said the fragile Himalayan ecosystem is particularly vulnerable to such changes. "Unpredictable weather impacts everything, from faster melting of glaciers and uncertain water sources to crop failures and increased risks of floods and landslides. For communities dependent on agriculture, this is not just an environmental issue but a livelihood crisis," Ahmad added. He said the pace of environmental change is accelerating, making immediate action crucial.

Meanwhile, Dr Aamir Hussain Bhat, a lecturer in Environmental Science, warned that the disappearance of wetlands has stripped Srinagar of its natural flood defence system. "Wetlands act like a sponge. Without them, floodwaters hit harder, summers become more intense, groundwater levels fall, and migratory birds stop arriving. What replaces them is concrete that absorbs heat and fails to manage water," he explained.

Dr Bhat proposed a set of urgent measures, including declaring remaining wetlands as protected "no-touch zones," reviving urban forests and recharge ponds, and halting construction on marshy land. "We need ecological planning, not cosmetic development. Parks alone won't solve the problem—functional ecosystems will," he said.

Noted geologist Dr Shakeel Ahmad Romshoo said that awareness has been raised over the last several years, but it is now time for action. He said that since 1969, awareness has been raised, but it is time for action now, and concerned authorities, along with people, need to act to save our fragile environment.

Experts stressed that Jammu and Kashmir stand at a critical juncture where development and environmental preservation must go hand in hand. They urged policymakers, planners, and the public to treat environmental protection as a priority rather than an afterthought.

"Protecting nature today means safeguarding our future," they said, adding that Earth Day should serve as a wake-up call for collective action before the damage becomes irreversible. (KNO)

## Tamil Nadu set for crucial Assembly polls

Over 5.73 cr voters to decide fate of 4,023 candidates

PTI

Chennai, Apr 22: Over 5.73 crore voters will decide the electoral fate of 4,023 candidates in the fray for the crucial Tamil Nadu Assembly elections on April 23, amid tight security and a massive crackdown by election authorities to prevent inducements to influence voters.

The high-stakes contest primarily pits the DMK-led SPA against the AIADMK-led NDA, with Chief Minister M K Stalin seeking to retain power and AIADMK General Secretary Edappadi K Palaniswami fighting to return to the treasury benches after five years.

Addressing a press conference here, Tamil Nadu Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Archana Patnaik said the state is fully prepared for the huge democratic exercise. "The total electoral strength stands at 5.73 crore, comprising 2.93 women, 2.83 crore men, and 7,728 third-gender persons," Patnaik said.

Highlighting the importance of youth participation, Patnaik noted that 14,59,039 first-time voters have been enrolled.

"The voting will take place across 75,064 polling stations situated in 33,133 locations, with the Commission deploying 1,06,418 ballot units along with 75,064 control units and VVPAT machines. To prevent any technical delays, a reserve of 20 per cent for EVMs and 30 per cent for VVPATs has been maintained," the CEO added.

The state has witnessed an aggressive enforcement campaign against the influence of money and materials. Patnaik disclosed that the total value of intercepted items has reached Rs 1,262 crore, of which actual seizures of cash and other material amount to Rs 543 crore. "The



enforcement machinery has been particularly active on digital platforms, where 163 FIRs have been lodged in connection with various violations. The social media monitoring cell has ensured the removal or blocking of 2,180 URLs across different platforms," Patnaik said.

The CEO also stated that 243 rebuttals and clarifications were issued to counter misinformation on social media during the campaign period.

Responding to queries regarding allegations of digital bribery and the distribution of cash substitutes -- such as pamphlets resembling cheques for Rs 8,000 or Rs 2,000 -- Patnaik asserted that FIRs have been filed in all cases where such items were seized.

She emphasised that the Commission is taking help from cybercrime units for social media patrolling and will act strictly as per the law. The official further noted that the District Election Officers have carried out maintenance at polling booths at the local level to ensure they are accessible and voter-friendly.

Regarding logistics for those on duty, Patnaik informed that 68,501 service electors are on the rolls, including 909 personnel from

the Bihar battalion enrolled for the first time.

"On the postal ballots front, 4,18,541 votes have been received so far, while 1,10,595 Election Duty Certificates have been issued to personnel who will cast their votes at the same booths where they are stationed. The state has also recorded 3,98,513 electors aged 85 and above, many of whom have already utilised the home voting facility," she added.

EVMs are already on their way to the polling stations.

The Commission has placed a heavy emphasis on inclusivity and special management of booths. There are 249 model polling stations, 325 'pink' stations managed entirely by women, 71 managed by persons with disabilities, and 29 managed by youth.

Additionally, some districts are piloting green polling stations to reduce the environmental impact of the election. Security remains a top priority, with 300 companies of the Central Armed Police Forces deployed alongside 83,875 local police personnel.

Out of the total polling booths, 5,949 in 3,025 locations have been identified as highly sensitive, Patnaik said. To manage these areas and ensure peaceful polling,

300 companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) have been deployed, working alongside 83,875 local polling police personnel.

Addressing a common voter query about the use of mobile phones, Patnaik clarified that devices are strictly prohibited inside the polling booth. However, she highlighted a special effort this year to provide facilities to collect and store mobiles outside every polling station.

She also encouraged voters to use the Vazhikatti app to easily find their specific booths. For those who may not have received their physical booth slips, Patnaik noted that awareness campaigns have been extensive and manual identification processes are in place to ensure no eligible voter is turned away.

The political stakes of the election have been magnified by the debut of TVK founder Vijay, who is contesting from Perambur and Tiruchirappalli East. The Dravidian majors have doubled down on their respective developmental agendas, with Stalin promising a model state and Palaniswami focusing on restoring past administrative standards.

The Election Commission has also commenced the second phase of the International Election Visitors Programme, with delegates set to visit dispatch centres, control rooms, and media monitoring units to witness polling on April 23.

Following the conclusion of voting at 6 pm on April 23, all EVMs will be transported to 62 approved counting centres across the state. The results of this high-decibel contest will be known when the counting takes place on May 4.

## PM Modi's Varanasi visit: BJP intensifies preparations for mega women's conference

PTI

Varanasi, Apr 22: Preparations have intensified in Varanasi ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's proposed visit to the city on April 28, with the BJP and its Mahila Morcha stepping up efforts.

BJP's Kashi region president Dilip Patel said the party's district and city units have planned a booth-level outreach campaign to make a proposed women's conference during Modi's visit historic.

Patel said the prime minister will arrive in Varanasi on the afternoon of April 28 and inaugurate projects worth crores at the Banaras Locomotive Works.

He will then address the massive women's conference and stay overnight in the city.

On April 29, Modi will inaugurate the Rinpoche Sangpa Hospital and Medical College of the Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies and later, leave for Haridwar to inaugurate the



Ganga Expressway.

Patel said since 2014, the prime minister has taken several historic steps to promote women's empowerment, self-reliance and their participation in social and political spheres.

He appealed to women to participate in the upcoming event in large numbers, saying the conference would send a strong message of women's empowerment across the country.

To ensure the participation of more than 50,000 women,

responsibilities have been assigned to senior leaders across all eight Assembly segments in this Uttar Pradesh district.

According to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), meetings at the mandal level have been completed and Mahila Morcha teams will now carry out a door-to-door outreach campaign to invite women to participate in the conference. The BJP aims to make the event historic, with the organisation mobilising its full strength for the programme, Patel added.

## 'India welcomes extension of ceasefire by US, hopes of early end to conflict'

PTI

Balrampur (UP), Apr 22: India welcomes the extension of ceasefire by the United States with Iran, Union Minister of State for External Affairs Kirti Vardhan Singh said on Wednesday, expressing the hope that the conflict will end soon.

US President Donald Trump has announced he was extending the ceasefire with Iran at the request of mediator Pakistan and said the move was aimed at giving Tehran's fractured leadership time to come up with a unified proposal to end the seven-week war.

"India welcomes the extension of the ceasefire by the US. We believe that this fighting will come to an end shortly. All countries, including India, are working towards ensuring that the conflict is resolved," Singh said at a programme here.

The minister said that concerns were being raised about possible challenges before the common people due to the West Asia situation, but assured that no such situation has arisen under the current government. "As

fears were being spread among common citizens that problems may arise, nothing of that sort has happened under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government. We will not allow such issues to emerge. Energy supply will also be streamlined soon," he said.

Referring to the West Bengal elections, the minister alleged that vote-bank politics was harming the country and raised concerns about border security.

"Earlier, there were allegations of large-scale irregularities in voting in West Bengal, but this time such incidents will not be allowed. The Union Home Minister has made it clear that monitoring will continue even after the elections to ensure that no one faces harassment," Singh said.

He urged voters in the state to cast their ballots without fear.

"People of West Bengal should vote fearlessly in the assembly elections so that the state can be fully integrated into the national mainstream," he said.

Targeting the opposition over the Women's Reservation Bill, Singh accused them of obstructing its passage.

## West Asia crisis, inflation weighed on RBI panel's decision on interest rate: MPC minutes

PTI

Mumbai, Apr 22: Uncertainties triggered by the West Asia crisis and its impact on inflation, as well as growth, weighed on the RBI monetary setting panel members' decision as they voted for the status quo on interest rates this month, according to the MPC meeting minutes released on Wednesday.

Following the three-day meeting, the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) kept its key policy rate unchanged on April 8, adopting a cautious wait-and-watch stance as policymakers assessed the fallout from the Iran conflict on energy supplies, inflation and growth.

RBI Governor Sanjay Malhotra headed a six-member MPC voted unanimously to keep the benchmark repurchase rate at 5.25 per cent, flagging heightened uncertainty after the West Asia conflict drove crude prices sharply higher, a weak rupee and disrupted trade flows.

The RBI's policy stance was retained at neutral.

Malhotra opined that the West Asia conflict poses challenges to the Indian economy through a number of channels -- exports, supply of critical commodities, elevated energy and other commodity prices, remittances, uncertainty, and subdued global demand.

Overall, geopolitical uncertainties have intensified, with the conflict widening its spread over the last month, he said.

As a result, supply chain disruptions, which may take longer to subside fully and restore the logistics network, pose downside risks to the growth and upside risks to inflation.

"As for monetary policy, this represents a supply shock. The underlying inflation pressures,



minus the shock, are contained.

"If the conflict remains unresolved for a long duration, it can make the task of central banks arduous in their endeavour to rein in inflation expectations while minimising growth sacrifice," the minutes quoted Malhotra as saying.

MPC member and RBI Deputy Governor Poonam Gupta opined that under the circumstances, central banks need to continue to play a conducive role in supporting the productive requirements of the economy.

"Constant vigil is warranted while waiting to ascertain the persistence of the supply shock, if any," she said.

RBI Executive Director and rate-setting panel member Indranil Bhattacharya noted that the global economic outlook, which was buoyant till the February MPC meeting, has deteriorated significantly after the outbreak of the West Asia conflict.

The consequent disruption in the logistics network has not only triggered a sharp increase in international energy prices, but it has also choked global trade flows, particularly those transiting through the Strait of Hormuz, which accounts for about half of India's energy imports, he said.

While three members of the MPC are RBI officials, the other three are nominated by the government. The external

members are Nagesh Kumar (Director and Chief Executive, Institute for Studies in Industrial Development, New Delhi); Saugata Bhattacharya (Economist, Mumbai) and Ram Singh (Director, Delhi School of Economics, Delhi).

According to the minutes, Kumar said the April 2026 MPC meeting is taking place against the backdrop of the West Asia conflict, dramatically clouding the economic outlook for the global economy with significant spillovers for the Indian economic outlook for 2026-27.

At the time of the February 2026 MPC meeting, the outlook for the Indian economy seemed to have brightened considerably with the conclusion of the long-pending EU-India FTA negotiations on 27 January, the withdrawal of high Trump tariffs on exports to the US in February, and boosted by the Union Budget 2026-27 proposals, while inflation remained benign.

In the current highly uncertain economic environment, prudence requires a status quo on monetary policy action, he said. Bhattacharya said that despite tentative indications of a cessation of hostilities in the West Asia conflict and a consequent easing of tight global financial conditions, uncertainty regarding persisting dislocations of global supply chains remains heightened.

## 'Gut microbiome changes in Parkinson's risk gene carriers could help predict disease'

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 22: Changes to the composition of about a quarter of gut microbial species in individuals carrying a variant of the GBA1 gene -- associated with an increased risk of Parkinson's disease -- may indicate a higher chance of developing the neurodegenerative condition, according to a study. The findings, published in the journal Nature Medicine, suggests that biological changes linked to Parkinson's disease may emerge prior to the onset of clinical symptoms, which could potentially help identify people in early stages of disease development.

Researchers, including those from University College London, said that motor and non-motor symptoms of the condition often appear only after substantial neuron loss has occurred.

Increasing evidence suggests that changes to one's gut microbiome accompany both established Parkinson's disease and the prodromal phase -- the period during which subtle symptoms may precede diagnosis.

Patients of Parkinson's disease have been studied to experience gastrointestinal issues, including constipation and gastroparesis.

The team analysed clinical and faecal data from participants from the UK



and Italy: 271 people with Parkinson's disease, 43 carriers of the GBA1 variant with no clinical symptoms, and 150 healthy control participants.

The analysis revealed 176 microbial species that differed between healthy individuals and those having the neurodegenerative condition, with over a quarter of the gut microbiome changing abundance between the two groups.

Of the 176, 142 species were seen to change consistently between healthy individuals and those carrying the GBA1 variant but do not have

symptoms of Parkinson's disease.

Further, among the GBA1 carriers, the microbial species of the microbiome resembled an intermediate pattern between that of healthy and affected groups, with its extent correlated with early symptoms.

The authors observed similar microbial patterns in three external cohorts in the US, Korea, and Turkey, totalling an additional 638 cases of Parkinson's disease and 319 healthy participants.

These findings identify a distinct pattern in the gut bacteria of people who carry

a GBA1 genetic variant but do not yet have symptoms, pointing to early biological changes linked to Parkinson's disease.

However, the authors said that the study was a cross-sectional one -- analysing data at a single, specific point in time, providing a 'snapshot' of characteristics -- and therefore, cannot determine whether microbiome changes are predictive of future disease.

Longitudinal following individuals over time will be necessary to establish whether the microbiome can reliably identify those most likely to develop Parkinson's disease, they said.

## Iran seizes two ships seeking to cross Strait of Hormuz, fires on another

AFP

Dubai, Apr 22: Iranian forces targeted three container ships on Wednesday, seizing two and firing on a third, global security monitors and the country's Revolutionary Guards said, the latest incidents to threaten a crucial trade route in the Middle East war.

British maritime security agency UKMTO said an Iranian gunboat fired at a container ship off the coast of Oman Wednesday, while a ship off Iran was also fired upon.

Iran's Revolutionary Guards (IRGC) said separately that their naval forces stopped two ships attempting to cross the Strait of Hormuz and directed them to Iranian waters.

It accused them of breaching its blockade of the route, imposed in the Middle East war that erupted on February 28 with US and Israeli strikes on Iran.

"The master of a container ship reported that the vessel was approached by one IRGC gunboat... that then fired upon the vessel, which has caused heavy damage to the bridge. No fires or environmental impact reported," the United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations center said. It added that the



incident took place 15 nautical miles northeast of Oman and all the crew were safe.

According to British maritime security firm Vanguard Tech, the vessel was sailing under a Liberian flag and "had been informed it had permission to transit the Strait of Hormuz."

Iranian news agency Tasnim said the ship had "ignored warnings from Iran's armed forces."

The IRGC said its naval force "this morning identified and stopped in the Strait of Hormuz two violating

ships." In a statement, the force said the vessels "were seized by the IRGC's naval forces and directed to the Iranian coast."

The IRGC named the two ships seized as the MSC-Francesca and the Epaninondas, Iranian broadcaster IRIB said on Telegram.

It alleged the Francesca was linked to Israel while the Epaninondas lacked "the necessary permits" and had been "tampering with navigation systems."

Ship-tracking platform MarineTraffic showed the two

vessels — both container ships — stopped near the Iranian coast on Wednesday.

Cargo ship fired on  
In a separate incident, a cargo ship eight nautical miles west of Iran was fired upon and stopped in the water, UKMTO said.

"A master of an outbound cargo ship reports having been fired upon and is now stopped in the water. Crew are safe and accounted for. There is no reported damage to the vessel," UKMTO said.

Vanguard identified it as the Panama-flagged containership Euphoria, which it said was "transiting outbound of the Strait of Hormuz."

MarineTraffic later showed the Euphoria had left the strait and was headed to Jeddah in Saudi Arabia.

Shipping through the strategic Strait of Hormuz has been heavily restricted by Iran since the start of the war with Israel and the United States, while the US military is enforcing a counter-blockade of Iranian ports.

US President Donald Trump announced Tuesday that the truce between the two countries would be extended after it first took effect on April 8.

## Over 500 Israeli settlers storm Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem



AFP

London, Apr 22: Hundreds of Israeli settlers stormed the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in the walled city of occupied East Jerusalem on Wednesday. The Jerusalem governorate said that 508 settlers entered the site, accompanied by Israeli forces, and performed Jewish rituals, including "epic prostration," near Bab Al-Rahma and the Dome of the Rock, accord-

ing to the Wafa news agency. The Al-Aqsa Mosque, Islam's third-holiest site, also known as Al-Haram Al-Sharif, has been the site of frequent conflicts — including raids by Israeli settlers and restrictions on Muslim worshippers — since East Jerusalem was occupied in June 1967. The area is administered by Jordan's Ministry of Awqaf, which holds the legal authority to manage the compound and control

access. It was reopened to Muslim worshippers early in April after being closed for 40 days due to the US and Israel's war on Iran.

Itamar Ben-Gvir, a prominent settler and Israel's far-right national security minister, has repeatedly called for greater access to it for Jewish worshippers. Since taking office in 2023, he has stormed the site at least 15 times, sparking anger and condemnation.

## India among 12 countries selected for FIFA Women's Development Programme

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 22: India was on Wednesday included among 12 countries selected by world football governing body FIFA for its Women's Development Programme.

The other countries are Germany, Netherlands, Sweden, Scotland, Canada, Mexico, Finland, Ghana, Jordan, Lithuania, and Paraguay.

India's inclusion in the programme was confirmed by FIFA after an initial application by All India Football Federation (AIFF), which was followed by a detailed presentation of the commercial strategy and future plans. The programme will be held online from May to October 2026, the AIFF said. The course itself will be tailored by FIFA for the various stakeholders in women's football across the country.

"With AIFF now backed by a commercial partner, this programme will equip clubs with the tools and knowledge needed to build sustainable models, while also preparing them for the upcoming women's club licensing system that AFC (Asian Football Confederation) plans to introduce," the AIFF said in a release.

## 2nd ODI vs NZ

### Bangladesh team fined 10% match fee for slow over-rate

PTI

Dhaka, Apr 22: The entire Bangladesh squad has been fined 10 per cent of its match fee for maintaining a slow over-rate against New Zealand in the second men's ODI here on Monday, the ICC stated in a media release.

ICC match referee Andy Pycroft imposed the sanction after Mehidy Hasan Miraz's side was ruled to be two overs short of the target after time allowances were taken into consideration. "In accordance with Article 2.22 of the ICC Code of Conduct for Players and Player Support Personnel, which relates to minimum over-rate offences, players are fined five per cent of their match fee for every over their side fails to



bowl in the allotted time," the release further stated.

Mehidy pleaded guilty to the offence and accepted the proposed sanction, so there was no need for a formal hearing.

On-field umpires Richard Illingworth and Gazi Sohel, third umpire Nitin Menon and fourth umpire Masudur Rahman Mukul levelled the charge.

## Extreme heat threatens global food systems, UN agencies warn



REUTERS

Rome, Apr 22: Extreme heat is pushing global agrifood systems to the brink, threatening the livelihoods and health of more than a billion people, according to a new report by the UN's food and weather agencies.

The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said heatwaves are becoming more frequent, intense and prolonged, damaging crops, livestock, fisheries and forests. "Extreme heat is rewriting the script on what farmers, fishers and foresters can grow and when they can grow. In some cases it is even dictating if they can still work," said Kaveh Zahedi, head of FAO's climate change office.

"At its core, this report is telling us that we face a very uncertain future," he told Reuters. Recent climate datasets show global

warming is accelerating, with 2025 ranking among the three hottest years on record, triggering more frequent and severe weather extremes.

Acting as a risk multiplier, extreme heat intensifies droughts, wildfires and pest outbreaks and sharply cuts crop yields once critical temperature thresholds are breached.

RISKS ESCALATE RAPIDLY AS TEMPERATURES PUSH HIGHER

The report said higher temperatures are shrinking the safety margin that plants, animals and humans rely on to function, with yields for most major crops falling once temperatures exceed about 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit). Zahedi cited Morocco, where six years of drought were followed by record heatwaves. "This led to a fall in cereal yields by over 40 percent. It decimated the olive and citrus harvest. Basically, those harvests failed," he said.

## Rohit bhai asked me to play first 15 balls without any thought in mind, says Tilak

PTI

Mumbai, Apr 22: Tilak Varma revealed on Wednesday that advice from Rohit Sharma — to play the first 15-20 balls without overthinking the match situation — helped him return to form with an IPL hundred.

Tilak struck 101 not out to set up a massive 99-run victory as Mumbai Indians snapped their four-match losing streak with a win over Gujarat Titans in their previous outing.

Tilak's unbeaten ton off 45 balls, studded with eight fours and seven sixes, came on the back of a slow start, with the left-handed batter reaching 19 not out off 22 balls at one stage.

"I was talking especially with Rohit bhai. He told me to 'play 15-20 balls' and that 'you know what you are capable of,'" Tilak told reporters at the Wankhede Stadium on the eve of MI's clash against Chennai Super Kings.

"(Rohit said) 'if you play 15 balls, everyone knows what you will do after that. Just do not look at the situation or anything else, play 15 balls and we will see whatever the result would be.'"

"... That gave me confidence and I had it in my mind to play the 15 balls and to see the rest after that. Once I had played those 15 balls, you get that instinct automatically, that I will hit now," Tilak added.

Tilak said he did not take any pressure on himself after a poor start to the IPL saw the left-handed batter making 20, 0, 14, 1 and 8.

"(In a couple of matches) I did



not get much time on the wicket and I had to go from the start. Sometimes, it comes my way and sometimes I get out, so I did not take much (pressure) on me that I was not in a good form," he said.

Tilak said Suryakumar Yadav, who has only one fifty to show for in this IPL, is not too far away from a big innings.

"I would not say that Surya bhai is out of form; he is batting well. If you see the shots he is playing in the match, they are coming from the middle of the bat and it doesn't look like he is out of touch," Tilak said.

"It is just a matter of one innings which he is waiting for."

"The same thing had happened in the first match of the T20 World Cup. If the starting match had not gone well for the (Indian) team, the atmosphere would have been different and he proved it there," Tilak said.

Tilak has floated up and down in the batting order not just for MI but also for India, even though No.3 remains his preferred slot.

"I have been hearing the same question (on batting order) for the last three years. I love to bat at No.3 but I am always up (to bat) where the team needs me to whenever it is Nos. 4, 5, 6 or 7," he replied when asked about the change of slots.

The 23-year-old Tilak said he doesn't stick to any one specific approach in training when runs are not flowing.

"To be honest, I always think about what is the need (of the team) at that moment," he said.

"Sometimes, I feel like I have to practice more and sometimes, I feel like I have to stay off the game. Before going to sleep, I think about how I am feeling mentally. It's not always possible to practice more in order to score runs -- there is nothing like that."

"In the World Cup, I did not score many runs at the start and I felt I needed to practice and I practiced a lot. But now (in IPL), when I did not score in 2-3 matches, I felt like staying off the game."

**INOX SRINAGAR**

*Movies Watchlist*

THURSDAY 23<sup>rd</sup> APRIL

<p><b>DHURANDHAR</b> (A)</p> <p>HINDI - 01:55 PM, 05:00 PM</p>	<p><b>BHOOTH BANGLA</b> (U/A 16+)</p> <p>HINDI ATMOS - 12:00 PM, 03:15 PM, 06:30 PM</p> <p>HINDI - 10:30 AM, 01:45 PM</p>
<p><b>THE MUMMY</b> (A)</p> <p>ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES</p> <p>11:00 AM</p>	<p><i>Michael</i> (U/A 13+)</p> <p>ENGLISH WITH ENGLISH SUBTITLES</p> <p>06:20 PM</p>