



LG directs strict action against those harbouring terrorists

'Identify narco-corridors, dismantle hotspots, fortify security grid'

Chairs meeting with DCs, SSPs of Jammu Division

Reviews security scenario, NBA, forthcoming pilgrimages

KNO Desk

Jammu, Apr 29: Reiterating zero tolerance policy against those aiding anti-national elements, Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday directed security agencies to take the strictest possible action against individuals and Overground Workers (OGWs) harbouring terrorists.



While chairing a high-level meeting to review the security scenario, progress on Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyaan and District wise preparations for the forthcoming pilgrimages, LG Sinha, according to

the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO) directed the Deputy Commissioners and Senior Superintendents of Police to conduct a comprehensive review in their respective districts with respect to the

arrangements for forthcoming Amarnath Yatra 2026 and other upcoming pilgrimages in Jammu division.

The Lieutenant Governor issued a firm directive to fortify the security grid through unwavering coordination among all security forces, ensuring a seamless and impenetrable shield against emerging threats. He directed for the strictest possible action against individuals and OGWs harboring terrorists, vowing zero tolerance for those who shelter threats to national security.

During the meeting, Deputy Commissioners and SSPs apprised the Lieutenant Governor of the law and order and security scenario in their respective districts. They also gave details on the progress of 100 days campaign | [More on P6](#)

Vaishnav to flag off Jammu-Srinagar Vande Bharat today

Services from May 2; Sgr-Jammu travel in under 5 hours

Umair Gull Ganie

Srinagar, Apr 29: Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnav will flag off the extended 20-coach Vande Bharat Express between Jammu Railway Station to Srinagar on April 30 tomorrow (Thursday), while regular services will commence from May 2.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the train, which earlier operated between Srinagar and Katra, has now been extended up to Jammu, ensuring seamless rail connectivity between the Kashmir Valley and one of the busiest railheads in North India.

The service will cover a distance of around 266-267 kilometres and is expected to reduce travel time between the twin capitals of Jammu and Kashmir while providing an all-weather and reliable transport link.

The Vande Bharat rake has been augmented from 8 to 20



coaches in view of sustained high demand since its launch in June 2025, effectively more than doubling passenger capacity and easing pressure on reservations, especially during peak tourist and pilgrimage seasons.

As per the Northern Railway schedule, Train Nos. 26401/26402 Vande Bharat Express will run between Jammu Tawi (JAT) and Srinagar (SINA), halting at key stations

including Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra, Reasi, and Banihal. The train will complete the journey in approximately 4 hours and 50 minutes, maintaining an average speed of 55.17 kmph.

The train from Jammu will depart at 6:20 AM and reach Srinagar at 11:10 AM. On the return leg, it will leave Srinagar at 2:00 PM and arrive in Jammu at 6:50 PM, | [More on P6](#)

Weather to improve in J&K from today

Another wet spell likely May 3-5: MeT

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 29: The weather across Jammu and Kashmir is expected to improve slightly on April 30 with partly cloudy skies and isolated spells of light rain, while another wet spell is likely between May 3 and 5, the Meteorological Department said on Wednesday.

According to the India Meteorological Department (IMD), Jammu and Kashmir is likely to experience largely dry conditions on May 1 and 2, although brief, isolated showers cannot be ruled out in some areas.

However, the MeT department, as reported by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), has forecast a fresh spell of generally cloudy weather accompanied by light rain and thundershowers at scattered to many places between May 3 and 5.

From May 6 to 9, the region is

expected to remain mostly dry, with chances of brief and isolated showers at a few locations.

Meanwhile, as per the latest weather data recorded on April 29, daytime temperatures remained below normal across most parts of the Kashmir Valley, while humidity levels stayed relatively high.

In Srinagar, the maximum temperature was recorded at 23.1°C, which was 1.9°C below normal, while the minimum settled at 11.7°C. Qazigund, Pahalgam, Kupwara and other stations in south and north Kashmir also recorded below-normal day temperatures.

Gulmarg, the famous ski resort, recorded a maximum temperature of 13.8°C, while Pahalgam registered 20.2°C during the day.

In the Jammu division, temperatures also remained mostly below normal. Jammu city recorded a maximum of 35.7°C, which was 3.1°C | [More on P6](#)

IGP, Div Com review 100-day anti-drug drive

296 peddlers arrested, 281 cases registered in Kashmir

Multi-pronged strategy: intensified legal action, FIRs, financial probes, property attachments

Sajid Raina

Srinagar, Apr 29: The Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir and Divisional Commissioner Kashmir on Tuesday co-chaired a high-level meeting at Police Control Room Kashmir to review the implementation and progress of the ongoing "Nasha Mukta Jammu & Kashmir Abhiyan," a 100-day campaign aimed at combating drug abuse and illicit trafficking across the Union Territory.

The campaign, launched by the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, has been described as a time-bound and outcome-oriented initiative with a zero-tolerance approach towards drug peddling and related offences. The meeting was attended by all range



Deputy Inspectors General of Police (DiSG) of Kashmir, Deputy Commissioners of all districts in the Kashmir Zone, Senior Superintendents of Police (SSPs), Joint Director Prosecution ZPHQ and other senior officers.

At the outset, district SSPs briefed the chair about

ongoing enforcement operations under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. They informed that sustained action has resulted in the arrest of more than 296 drug peddlers and registration of over 281 cases across the Valley. Officials said key drug | [More on P6](#)

545 village revenue records missing in J&K

258 still untraced; over 650 dilapidated Massavis

Raja Syed Rather

Srinagar Apr 29: The issue of missing village revenue records (Massavis) in Jammu and Kashmir has drawn increased attention, with official figures showing 545 records missing across 20 districts. Of these, 258 remain untraced or unresolved, raising concerns about the integrity of land record systems.

District-wise data, accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), shows Udhampur with the highest number at 154 missing Massavis; however, 139 have been restored, leaving 15 pending. Kishtwar follows with 58 missing, of which only 10 have been traced, while 48 remain unresolved.

Doda has reported 46 missing Massavis, none of which have been traced so far, leaving all 46 pending. Reasi recorded 40 missing, with only 2 restored and 38 still pending.

In the Jammu division, Rajouri

reported 43 missing Massavis, with 28 traced and 15 pending. Kathua recorded 38 missing, all of which remain pending with no recoveries reported. Jammu district has 44 missing records, of which 24 have been restored, leaving 20 pending.

Samba reported 9 missing Massavis, with 7 traced and 2 pending, while Ramban has 12 missing records, none traced so far, leaving all 12 pending.

In the Kashmir division, Baramulla reported 21 missing Massavis, with 17 traced and 4 pending, while Kupwara recorded 12 missing, with 11 traced and just 1 pending.

Budgam has reported 25 missing records, of which 23 have been reconstructed, leaving only 2 pending. Anantnag has 3 missing records, all of which remain unresolved.

Bandipora has 2 missing Massavis, both still pending, while Ganderbal reported 3 missing records, all of which have been | [More on P6](#)

J&K Govt clears 18% transport fare hike across UT

Rehan Qayoom Mir

Srinagar, Apr 29: Jammu and Kashmir Government has approved an 18% increase in fares for various categories of public transport vehicles across the Union Territory, revising rates for the first time since the year 2021.

According to an official notification issued by the Transport Department, a copy of which was accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the Transport Commissioner, J&K has been directed to fix revised maximum chargeable fares for commercial passenger vehicles by adding an 18 per cent hike over the rates notified under SRO-97 dated



March 19, 2021.

The revised fare structure shall apply to big buses, medium and mini buses operating as stage carriages, besides different categories of taxi/maxi cabs. These include base model

contract carriage vehicles such as Sumo, Bolero, Tata Indica, Swift, Tata Winger and Tempo Traveller, medium segment tourist vehicles including Tavera, Scorpio and Xylo and premium class | [More on P6](#)

Finance Dept pushes prepaid meters in govt offices, PSUs, universities

KNO Desk

Srinagar, Apr 29: The Finance Department Wednesday asked all government offices, PSUs, corporations, and universities to fast-track the installation of prepaid smart meters.

According to the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), the department in a circular said that all the administrative departments shall expedite the installation of pre-paid smart meters in all office buildings and residential quarters owned by the Government, PSUs, Corporations, Local body, Institutions and Universities etc in coordination with Power Development Department and its DISCOMS.



It also said that for smooth and successful transition from conventional mode of electricity accounting or payment to pre-paid smart metering

system, the departments are instructed to ensure installation of pre-paid smart meters in all Government offices and buildings under their administrative

control on priority basis, as per the instructions already issued.

"All the outstanding electricity dues shall be cleared out of the available funds after proper reconciliation of outstanding bills, simultaneously with the installation of pre-paid smart meters, as the 50% balance funds under the unit head "008-Electricity Charges" stands also released," it reads.

The circular further said that the payment of post "installation of pre-paid meters" electricity charges (pre-paid payments) by all the Drawing & Disbursing Officers (DDOs) shall be made out of the available budgetary allocation on the pattern of payments being made | [More on P6](#)

Technology supports diagnosis, but AI can't replace compassion: LG Sinha

Launches Book 'Healer in Exile: The Untold Story of Dr Sushil Razdan'

KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 29: Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday launched the book, "Healer in Exile: The Untold

Story of Dr Sushil Razdan" authored by his son Sachin Razdan. Addressing the gathering, the Lieutenant Governor said that Dr Sushil Razdan stands among India's leading neurologists and his contributions in the medical field remain unmatched.

"The story of Dr Sushil Razdan's life conveys a significant lesson of committing yourself to the selfless service of others. It is a sacred duty to

place the needs of the person before you above your own and see society not merely as a city or village, but as a community of responsibilities, where true fulfillment lies in dedicating one's strength to the care of its most vulnerable population," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that the central message of this book is profound and what makes a doctor truly



exceptional is not only skill in treatment, but the ability to serve with compassion.

"Today, some experts in healthcare claim that artificial intelligence will transform the healthcare sector and it will deliver treatments with flawless precision. I hold a different view. Technology can indeed support diagnosis and treatment in important ways, but it cannot replace the spirit of

service. No instrument of AI can embody or substitute this essence of care with compassion," the LG said.

The Lieutenant Governor said that Dr Sushil Razdan bore the anguish of being uprooted from his soil. He said the pain of leaving behind roots and cherished homes defies expression and like countless fellow Kashmiri Pandits, Dr Razdan endured | [More on P6](#)

Div Com Kashmir meets religious leaders, invites them for Nasha Mukta Padyatra

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 29: Continuing outreach efforts to engage stakeholders in the fight against drug abuse and to build a narcotics-free society, Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, on Wednesday held a meeting with religious leaders from various faiths.

The meeting was attended by Imams, members of the Shia Community, Gurudwara Prabhak Committee, and representatives of the migrant Hindu community.

During the interaction, the Divisional Commissioner, as per an official statement, appreciated the proactive role of religious leaders in the Nasha Mukta J&K Abhiyan, noting their influence in spreading awareness through religious institutions and community engagement.

He emphasized that the role of religious leaders is indispensable in combating the growing menace of narcotics. On the occasion,



he extended a cordial invitation to all religious figures, across sects and faiths, to participate in large numbers in the Nasha Mukta J&K Padyatra scheduled for May 3. The participants

shared valuable suggestions and assured full cooperation and active participation in the upcoming padyatra, reinforcing their commitment to the collective fight against drug abuse.

NDPS Act Violators Illegal properties of drug peddlers built on State Land demolished: District Admin Anantnag

KT NEWS DESK

ANANTNAG, APRIL 29: In a major operation against NDPS Act violators, the District Administration Anantnag along with the Police, Wednesday carried out a massive demolition drive against the illegal properties built by the drug peddlers in Sangam, Bijbehara.

The action, as per an official statement, was part of the intensified 100 Days Nasha Mukta JK campaign launched recently to eradicate the drug menace from the society.

During the crackdown, revenue authorities led by SDM and Tehsildar Bijbehara, supported by a district police team led by SDPO Bijbehara, identified several commercial structures viz Kashmir Restaurant, Taj Restaurant, and MIR Restaurant that had been illegally raised on State Land and found to be owned and operated by individuals involved in narcotics trafficking. Several FIRs had already been registered against the accused and by

utilizing these unauthorized roadside locations, they were facilitating illegal activities and promoting substance abuse in the area.

The Revenue officials also ensured retrieval of the encroached land along NHW-44, while the demolition was executed in coordination with the local police for removal of the structures. This operation underscored the administration's firm stance that narcotics

trade and other associated illegal activities will be dealt with strictly as per law.

The District Administration has reiterated its commitment to a zero-tolerance policy against drug peddling and narcotic business. Local authorities have been directed to maintain a strict vigil, and the public is encouraged to continue supporting the administration in its mission to make the district drug-free.



Census preparedness gathers pace in Urban Srinagar

Training of Field Trainers underway

KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 29: Preparations for the forthcoming Census in Urban Srinagar have gained significant momentum, with the administration intensifying efforts to ensure the smooth and efficient conduct of the nationwide exercise.

The Principal Census Officer Urban Srinagar/Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation, Faz Lul Haseeb, directed to intensify preparedness and the arrangements being put in place for the successful implementation of the Census operations.

As part of the preparatory phase, training sessions, as per an official statement, for Field Trainers are currently underway. The program is designed to equip the trainers with the necessary knowledge, technical understanding, and operational guidelines required for effectively conducting the Census process at the grassroots level.

Officials associated with the exercise informed that the training focuses on familiarizing the Field Trainers with census procedures, enumeration protocols, data collection methodologies, and the use of prescribed formats and digital tools to ensure accuracy, reliability, and uniformity in the data collection process.

Authorities further stated that preparations are in full swing, with administrative and logistical arrangements being strengthened to facilitate the seamless execution of the Census across the urban areas of Srinagar.

J&K Judicial Academy organises special session on 'Yoga for Mental Fitness'



KT NEWS DESK

SRINAGAR, APRIL 29: Under the patronage of Arun Palli, Chief Justice, High Court of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (Patron-in-Chief, J&K Judicial Academy), Arun Palli and guidance of Chairperson and members of Governing Committee for J&K Judicial Academy, the J&K Judicial Academy Wednesday organised a special session titled "Yoga for Mental Fitness" at the District Court Complex, Mominabad, Srinagar, for the Judicial Officers and staff of Srinagar district, in collaboration with the Isha Foundation.

The session, as per an official statement, was inaugurated by Naseer Ahmad Dar, Director, J&K Judicial Academy, who in his address, underscored the importance of maintaining the physical and mental well-being in the discharge of judicial responsibilities. He observed that the effective administration of justice demands sustained concentration, emotional balance and that structured wellness practices such as yoga can significantly contribute towards enhancing the professional efficiency and overall well-being.

The programme emphasised yoga as a holistic discipline that harmonises the body, mind, and breath. The participants were encouraged to incorporate simple yet consistent wellness practices into their daily routines to enhance the clarity of thought, reduce stress and build resilience.

The Judicial Academy conveyed its sincere appreciation to the Isha Foundation for its collaboration and expert guidance in conducting the session.

The programme witnessed active participation and was widely appreciated by the attendees. The Academy also extended its gratitude to Haq Nawaz Zargar, PDJ Srinagar, for his valuable logistic support and cooperation. The Academy reaffirmed its commitment towards organising similar initiatives aimed at fostering a culture of health, well-being, and holistic development within the judicial system.

The programme concluded with a vote of thanks presented by Tabasum, Chief Judicial Magistrate, Srinagar, who conveyed her heartfelt appreciation to the Judicial Academy, the Isha Foundation and all the participants for their cooperation and engagement in the successful conduct of the session.

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Rehana Bashir S/o: Javid Ahmad Wani R/o: Ialad.

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

(Registrar of Birth and Death) ...Non Applicant

NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE

Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of Birth event of the applicant's Son namely Mohammad Hanzallah S/o: Javid Ahmad Wani as 06-12-2020 at H.S.S Hospital Hazbugh.

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 1ST CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Ashiq Hussain Tantray S/o: Gh Hassan Tantray R/o: Gund Brath.

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

(Registrar of Birth and Death) ...Non Applicant

NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE

Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of Birth event of the applicant's Son namely Hanan Ashiq Tantray S/o: Ashiq Hussain Tantray as 27-12-2026 at M.C.H 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 1ST CLASS SOPORE

In the case of: Aabida Begum W/o: Mushtaq Ahmad Parry R/o: Pary Pora.

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

(Registrar of Birth and Death) ...Non Applicant

NOTICE TO PUBLIC AT LARGE

Whereas, the above titled case is under process in this court, seeking direction therein to the non-applicant u/s 13(3) of the Registration of Births & Deaths Act, 1969 for registration of Birth event of the applicant's Son namely Salim Mustaq S/o: Mushtaq Ahmad Parry as 15-07-2021 at Gusu Hospital.

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

Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Sopore

GOVERNMENT OF (U.T) JAMMU & KASHMIR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPTT. GROUND WATER DIVISION SRINAGAR BAGHI-ALI-MARDAN, NOWSHARA SRINAGAR.

E- mail: - suresh05.gupta@jk.gov.in Tel./ Fax No:- 0194-2411285

Short Term.

NOTICE INVITING e-TENDERS

GIST of Detailed e- NIT No - 10/JS-PHE/GWDS/Mech. of 2026-27.

For and on behalf of Government of UT - J&K, e-tenders from reputed and resourceful Firms/Companies/drilling agencies/ Joint Ventures etc for "registered experienced Contractors of Machine Drilled Hand pump wells" as per details given below. The bidding process shall be completed online on www.jktenders.gov.in in two covers viz. Cover 1st consisting of Pre Qualification Criteria, General Terms and Conditions and Technical Specifications and Cover 2nd shall consist of Financial Bid in the prescribed BQQ. Table-I

S. No	S. No of AA	Name of work	Est. Cost Rs. in Lacs	Earnest money (EMD)	Cost of Tender Document	Time of completion	Major Head / Programme	Technical Sanction	Tender Call
1	1	Construction of Borewell near land of Rabi Hadi Gani & Mushtaq Ahmad Ganie & Others at Karewa Kanganhall, Achabal in District Anantnag.	Rs. 4.09 Lacs	Rs. 12,300/-	Rs. 200/-	10 Days Each Well (after identification of site)	District Capex Budget 2025-26 (CDF Scheme)	JS-PHE/ GWDS/ CDF Scheme/02 of 04/ 2026, Dt: 27-04-2026	1 st
2	4	Construction of Borewell near House of Sameer Ahmad, Zeeshan Ahmad and others, Bulbul Bagh Tumbripora in District Anantnag.	Rs. 2.99 Lacs	Rs. 9,000/-	Rs. 200/-	10 Days Each Well (after identification of site)	District Capex Budget 2025-26 (CDF Scheme)	JS-PHE/ GWDS/ CDF Scheme/05 of 04/ 2026, Dt: 27-04-2026	1 st
3	2	Construction of Borewell near land of Showkat Ahmad Ganie & Mushtaq Ahmad Bhat Gopal Pora Road Kanganhall, Achabal in District Anantnag.	Rs. 2.99 Lacs	Rs. 9,000/-	Rs. 200/-	10 Days Each Well (after identification of site)	District Capex Budget 2025-26 (CDF Scheme)	JS-PHE/ GWDS/ CDF Scheme/03 of 04/ 2026, Dt: 27-04-2026	1 st
4	3	Construction of Borewell at land As. Rashid Shah at Tengpora Kanganhall Block Achabal in District Anantnag.	Rs. 2.94 Lacs	Rs. 8,850/-	Rs. 200/-	10 Days Each Well (after identification of site)	District Capex Budget 2025-26 (CDF Scheme)	JS-PHE/ GWDS/ CDF Scheme/04 of 04/ 2026, Dt: 24-04-2026	1 st
5	5	Construction of Borewell near Jamia Masjid Muqdam Pora Chee in District Anantnag.	Rs. 2.42 Lacs	Rs. 7,300/-	Rs. 200/-	10 Days Each Well (after identification of site)	District Capex Budget 2025-26 (CDF Scheme)	JS-PHE/ GWDS/ CDF Scheme/06 of 04/ 2026, Dt: 27-04-2026	1 st
6	01	Installation of Hand Pump with 1-Horse Power Motor at Gundi Jafar near Masjid Sha-reef Railway Colony Sadura-A in District Anantnag.	Rs. 2.42 Lacs	Rs. 7,300/-	Rs. 200/-	10 Days (after identification of site)	District Capex Budget 2025-26 (CDF Scheme)	JS-PHE/ GWDS/ CDF Scheme/01 of 04/ 2026, Dt: 23-04-2026	1 st
7	1	Construction of Hand Pump NHO Shabir Ahmad Khanday & Others at Montipora in District Anantnag.	Rs. 1.64 Lacs	Rs. 5,000/-	Rs. 200/-	10 Days (after identification of site)	District Capex Budget 2025-26 (CDF Scheme)	JS-PHE/ GWDS/ CDF Scheme/07 of 04/ 2026, Dt: 27-04-2026	1 st

Position of Funds: - Available:
> (For Sl. No. 01-05): Accord of Administrative Approval issued by the District Development Commissioner Anantnag Vide Order No: 164-DDCA of 2026, issued under endorsement No. DDCA/ CDF- 44/2025-26/800-05, Dated: 11-04-2026.

> (For Sl. No. 06): Accord of Administrative Approval issued by the District Development Commissioner Anantnag Vide Order No: 162-DDCA of 2026, issued under endorsement No. DDCA/ CDF-43- Anantnag West/2026-27/1589-94, Dated: 11-04-2026.

> (For Sl. No. 07): Accord of Administrative Approval issued by the District Development Commissioner Anantnag Vide Order No: 177-DDCA of 2026, issued under endorsement No. DDCA/ CDF-42Kokernag ST/2026-27/760-64, Dated: 16-04-2026.

The Bidding Documents and other details can be downloaded from the website: <https://www.jktenders.gov.in>
From 29.04.2026 (06:00 PM) to 13.05.2026 (11:00 PM)

The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings (if any), Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms, conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the website: <https://www.jktenders.gov.in>

As per Critical Dates/Information scheduled given below	
1.	Publishing Date
2.	Period of Downloading of Bids
3.	Period of Submission of bids
4.	Date of opening of Tender.
5.	Tender Receiving Authority: Executive Engineer - Jal Shakti (PHE) Ground Water Srinagar Kashmir-190011
6.	Cost of Tender Document: Non-Refundable should be in form of DD /TR/ deposited to Account Head 0215 or in favour of Executive Engineer (Jal Shakti) PHE Ground Water Division Srinagar (The firm shall specify the name of work for which apply)
7.	Note: In case the firm/agency/contractor submits/uploaded scanned copy of tender document fee in the shape of DD /TR/ the hard copies shall have to be submitted in the divisional office before opening of cover 2 nd (Financial Cover) of e-NIT (if needed)
8.	The bids can be downloaded or uploaded on www.jktenders.gov.in

No instrument—such as an Earnest Money Deposit (EMD), Treasury Receipt, or Challan-generated prior to the publication of the tender document will be accepted. Any bid submitted contrary to this requirement is liable for summary rejection. In the event the tender is retendered due to government exigencies or otherwise, an instrument shall be considered valid only if generated after the date of the initial tender publication. The cost of Tender Document under Account Head 0215 to be pledged in favour of the Executive Engineer Ground Water Division Srinagar (as specified in the table (I) (Page 1st)). Bid security will have to be in any one of the forms as specified in the bidding documents and shall be valid for 180 Days after opening of bid. Bids will be opened in the Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Ground Water Division Srinagar (H.Q. Baghi-Ali-Mardan, Nowshara Srinagar) on 14-05-2026 (11:00 AM) If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

DIPK-882/26

DATED: 29-04-2026

Executive Engineer
Jal Shakti (PHE) Deptt.
Ground Water Division, Srinagar.

Roots of Ruin

Wild Boars Re-Emerge to Wreak Havoc on Kashmir's Farms

WARIS FAYAZ

Srinagar, Apr 29: Wild boars, largely unseen in Kashmir since the mid-1980s, have re-emerged across central and north Kashmir, damaging crops and raising concern among farmers and wildlife officials.

The animal, not native to the Valley has been sighted in Uri, Lachipora, Limber, Rafiaband, Zaingeer and parts of Bandipora, besides villages in Budgam. Farmers say the resurgence has intensified over the past few years, with a sharp spike in sightings this season.

For cultivators already hit by erratic weather, the boar has become a serious threat.

Freshly sown paddy fields are being destroyed within days, pushing many into financial stress.

"We had just sown paddy saplings with hard work. Within days, everything is destroyed. Every morning we see our fields ruined," Ali Mohammad, a farmer from Zaingeer Sopore said.

Several farmers alleged that repeated complaints to authorities have not led to concrete action. Many have started guarding their fields at night, fearing total crop loss.

"Continued damage could force us to abandon cultivation this year," said a farmer.

Officials said advisories are being issued to farmers regularly to help



them protect crops and reduce risks. In-charge Wildlife officer, Intisar Suhail attributed the resurgence

to long-term climate shifts. He said the species, introduced during the Maharaja's era around 80 to 90 years

ago, had remained largely absent for decades.

"For the last 20 to 25 years, the climate has changed, so the population has revived," Suhail said. He pointed to the animal's high breeding rate, with two litters annually producing up to nine offspring, as a key factor behind the sudden rise.

The officer ruled out large-scale culling or translocation, citing logistical and legal challenges. "They are in hundreds and thousands. You cannot cull such numbers. This requires a policy decision at a higher level," he said.

Suhail urged residents to take preventive steps, including fencing vulnerable agricultural land. He also advised people not to allow children to move in isolated areas where animal

movement has been reported.

"This problem is not going to vanish. We have to tackle it in a coordinated manner," he added.

Environmental activist Dr Raja Muzaffar Bhat has urged immediate intervention by authorities, including Forest and Wildlife Minister Javed Rana and Chief Wildlife Warden Sarvesh Rai.

"These wild animals attack paddy crops at night and destroy entire fields. Farmers are frustrated and need urgent relief," Bhat said.

Officials said a comprehensive study on the resurgence is underway, though no official population data is currently available. They acknowledged growing damage and said movement outside natural habitats is driven by food scarcity—(KNO)

LG Saxena approves constitution of Ladakh UT Haj Committee

RAJA SYED RATHER

Leh, Apr 29: Lieutenant Governor Vinai Kumar Saxena, has approved the constitution of the Ladakh Union Territory Haj Committee, with the appointment of its chairman and members for a period of three years.

The decision follows the completion of the tenure of the previous UT Haj Committee in 2025. Ghulam Abbas Abidi has been appointed as the Chairman of the UT Ladakh Haj Committee, while the other members include Ashay Mallo, Mohammad Hussain, Sheikh Liaquat Ali, Haji Ghulam Mohammad, Bilal Ahmad, and Zahara Banoo.

"The constitution of the UT Haj Committee reflects our commitment to ensuring that pilgrims from Ladakh receive all necessary support for a smooth, safe, and spiritually fulfilling Haj pilgrimage," LG Saxena said. "I am confident that the newly appointed Chairman and Members will work with dedication and sensitivity to address the needs of the pilgrims and uphold the highest standards of service."

The constitution of the new committee has been finalised after due consultations and representations from relevant stakeholders, ensuring inclusive and effective representation.

The UT Haj Committee will play



a crucial role in facilitating Haj pilgrimage for the residents of Ladakh. Its key functions include screening and processing applications, coordinating vaccination and training schedules, organising orientation programmes, acting as a liaison between pilgrims and central authorities, and ensuring welfare, assistance, and logistical support to pilgrims throughout the pilgrimage process—(KNO)

SMC to act against car, bike dealers blocking roads, footpaths

REHAN QAYOOM MIR

Srinagar, Apr 29: The Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) on Wednesday said it will launch strict action against car and bike dealers occupying roads, footpaths and other public spaces for commercial display of vehicles, while a comprehensive policy is being framed to regulate and rehabilitate street vendors across Srinagar.

SMC Commissioner Fazlul Haseeb said the civic body will not allow continued misuse of public spaces by commercial establishments.

"Those car and bike vendors who are using public spaces will face strict action. If specific inputs are shared with us, we will immediately initiate action against them," Haseeb said.

Residents have repeatedly raised concerns that several footpaths have become inaccessible due to parked vehicles placed for sale, forcing pedestrians to walk on roads and creating safety risks.

Replying to queries regarding food courts and



street vendors, the Commissioner acknowledged that previous measures taken by authorities had largely remained temporary and were not sustainable in the long run.

"We have tried temporary solutions in the past, but they do not sustain over time. We are now working on a comprehensive policy framework," he said.

Haseeb said the proposed plan is aimed at relocating vendors to designated spaces in an organised manner so that public spaces are cleared without damaging the livelihoods of those

dependent on vending. "There is a question of bread and butter as well. We cannot ignore livelihoods. Our effort is to relocate and rehabilitate vendors in such a way that public spaces are freed while their source of income remains intact," he added.

The SMC Commissioner said the proposed framework is expected to streamline street vending, reduce congestion in busy markets and roads and create regulated vending zones that may also contribute to municipal revenue generation—(KNO)

SEC extends Panchayat Electoral Roll deadline



KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 29: The State Election Commission (SEC) has extended the deadline for filing claims and objections for the revision of Panchayat Electoral Rolls-2026 to May 5, 2026, with 01.04.2026 as the qualifying date. In a communication issued today, the Commission said the extension follows requests from several districts. The revised schedule is in continuation of its notification No. SEC/Pyt/03/2026/607-639 dated 25.03.2026.

Under the revised schedule, claims and objections for addition, deletion, correction or transposition in the electoral rolls can be filed from March 27 to May 5. Special camps will be held at polling booth locations

on May 2 and May 3, where the Panchayat Election Booth Officials including VLW, MPW and GRS, along with the Assembly BLOs, will be available with requisite forms and the draft electoral roll to assist voters.

The Electoral Registration Officer will dispose of all claims and objections by May 14 and the final Panchayat Electoral Roll-2026 will be published on May 21. The Commission has directed the District Panchayat Election Officers to strictly follow the revised timeline and ensure wide publicity at the grassroots level through field staff of all departments, including Numberbers and Chowkidars, so that no eligible voter is left out.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

Shopian stream claims 4-Year-Old, search hits Day-4

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Shopian, Apr 29: The search for four-year-old Mohammad Hanzala, who is feared to have drowned in a fast-flowing stream near Dubjan Bridge in South Kashmir's Shopian district, entered its fourth consecutive day on Wednesday with no trace of the minor found so far.

Hanzala, a resident of Tiken in Pulwama, slipped into the Ranbiara nallah on Sunday after losing balance near the bank. The strong currents swept him away instantly, triggering a massive rescue operation that has continued unabated since then. Officials said that multiple teams remain engaged in the search operation, combing the stream and its adjoining areas despite difficult conditions.

Rescue teams from the Army, Jammu and Kashmir Police, and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) have been working round-the-clock, using specialised equipment to scan deeper stretches of the nallah.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

TPRM assesses JKCIIP implementation in J&K

KT NEWS DESK

Visakhapatnam, Apr 28: The Tripartite Portfolio Review Meeting (TPRM) of IFAD-supported projects, including the Jammu and Kashmir Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture and Allied Sectors Project (JKCIIP), was held at Visakhapatnam under the chairpersonship of Anu Mathai, Additional Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Government of India here yesterday.

JKCIIP is a flagship IFAD-supported initiative being implemented in Jammu and Kashmir with the objective of enhancing the agricultural productivity, strengthening farmer institutions, promoting agribusiness and entrepreneurship and improving the market linkages across the value chain. The project adopts a comprehensive ecosystem approach, integrating farmers, youth, institutions and infrastructure to drive sustainable and inclusive growth in agriculture and allied sectors. The meeting brought together senior

officials from the Government of India, IFAD and project implementing agencies to review progress, assess key outcomes and discuss strategies for strengthening implementation across IFAD-supported initiatives.

Dr. Sagar D. Dattatray, Mission Director, HADP/JKCIIP, participated in the meeting along with Mr. Marc J. de Souza, Country Director, IFAD and presented an overview of the progress achieved under JKCIIP in Jammu and Kashmir.

During the review, the DEA expressed satisfaction over key developments in the project, including the successful onboarding of the Project Management Unit (PMU), conduct of the Startup Mission and organisation of Implementation Support Missions in the Union Territory. These initiatives were noted as important steps in strengthening the institutional mechanisms and accelerating project implementation.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

'Organ donation remains alarmingly rare in J&K'

JAHANGEER GANAIE

Srinagar, Apr 29: Organ donation remains alarmingly rare in Jammu and Kashmir, with doctors and health officials stressing the urgent need to build public awareness and encourage voluntary participation to save lives, as the region continues to lag behind despite advancements in medical science, particularly in deceased donations.

At present, only limited organ donations, mainly kidneys within families, are taking place in the Union Territory.

Dr Farooq Ahmad Lone, a DSHK doctor posted in Shopian said that the deceased organ donation has not yet fully taken off in the region. "Currently, deceased donation is largely restricted to eye donation, and even that sees very little participation. People are still hesitant to come forward," he said, underlining the need for a cultural and informational shift.

He said a single organ donor has the potential to save or improve the lives of more than eight individuals. Organs such as the heart, liver, kidneys, lungs, pancreas, and intestines can be transplanted, while tissues like corneas can restore eyesight.

"Organ donation offers a second chance at life to patients suffering from end-stage organ failure," Dr Lone said.

Doctors said that despite the availability of skilled



professionals and infrastructure, the major hurdle remains the lack of donors. Many patients in J&K suffering from kidney, liver, and heart failure are on long waiting lists, with limited chances of receiving timely transplants due to the shortage of organs.

Dr Shabir Ahmad from DSHK said the State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organisation (SOTTO) has been carrying out awareness campaigns across Jammu and Kashmir for several years, encouraging people to come forward and pledge their organs after death. The initiative has witnessed an encouraging response, with hundreds of individuals voluntarily registering as organ donors.

"One organ donor can save multiple lives. Yet, a lack of awareness and hesitation

continues to limit the number of donors," he said.

Experts explained that deceased organ donation involves retrieving organs from brain-dead donors, with strict medical protocols in place. A specialised team transports organs through a "green corridor" to ensure timely transplantation. Each organ has a limited viability window, ranging from 4 to 36 hours, making efficient coordination crucial.

Doctors said reliance on living donors alone cannot meet the growing demand. "Not everyone has a suitable living donor. To bridge the gap between demand and supply, deceased organ donation is essential," they said.

Continued on www.kashmirthunder.in

IT Dept eyes multi-channel delivery for e-services

KT NEWS DESK

Jammu, Apr 29: In a significant step towards strengthening the digital governance and enhancing citizen service delivery, the Information Technology Department on Wednesday convened a comprehensive meeting under the chairmanship of Secretary, Information Technology, to deliberate upon the adoption of a Multi-Channel Messaging API Solution for seamless delivery of government e-services to the citizens.

The meeting was chaired by Dr Piyush Singla Secretary, Information Technology Department and was attended by senior officers and officials of the Department, including the CEO,

JaKeGA, Director Finance, Additional Secretary IT, Head SeMT, Consultant SeMT, and representatives of empanelled System Integrators (SIs) under the National e-Governance Division (NeGD), Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), Government of India.

The deliberations focused on leveraging a conversational multi-channel communication platform to improve the accessibility, efficiency and responsiveness of government services. During the meeting, technical presentations and Proof of Concept (PoC) demonstrations were reviewed, highlighting multiple citizen-centric use cases such as grievance redressal, service delivery notifications,

application status tracking, dissemination of government schemes and public information and interactive citizen support services.

Speaking on the occasion, the Secretary IT emphasized that the initiative is aimed at bringing the government services closer to the citizens by utilizing widely adopted digital communication platforms, thereby ensuring ease of access, real-time interaction, and an improved user experience. He further observed that integration of Multi-Channel Messaging API Solution based services has the potential to significantly strengthen inclusive governance, particularly in remote and underserved areas of the Union Territory.

EDITORIAL

A New Dawn For Rural J&K

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's announcement of an Rs 8,000 crore rural development package for Jammu and Kashmir is a big step towards improving the lives of people living in remote areas. By launching PMGSY-IV (Batch-II) and announcing a rural transformation plan, the central government has shown that development is finally reaching the region. The package focuses on roads first. Without good roads, nothing works. The approval of road projects worth Rs 3,566 crore

under PMGSY-IV will connect far-off villages. Today, in many areas, patients are still carried on shoulders because vehicles cannot reach. Children cannot go to school. Farmers cannot take their produce to markets. These roads will change that. The minister also promised that no poor family in J&K will remain without a permanent house. This is a big relief for people who face harsh winters every year without proper shelter. The focus on women through Self-Help Groups is equally important. The

release of Rs 4,568 crore under DAY-NRLM will help rural women become financially independent. When women earn, families eat better, and children study more. The package also addresses farming and horticulture. Most farmers in J&K have small landholdings. The minister announced integrated farming systems that combine agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, livestock, and beekeeping. This means farmers will have multiple income sources. If one crop fails, others will support them.

The Clean Plant Programme, in partnership with the University of Kashmir, will provide certified disease-free plants. For years, apple and walnut growers have suffered because of poor-quality plants. This will change now. A team of ICAR scientists will also visit J&K to study soil, climate, and water resources. They will prepare a scientific roadmap for farming in the region. The minister spoke in a personal tone, calling himself "Mama" and saying that the Centre is not an outsider

but part of the family. This may sound like rhetoric, but it signals a real shift. For decades, people of J&K felt neglected. Now, the government is showing that it cares. Roads, houses, women's empowerment, scientific farming, and a government that listens - this Rs 8,000 crore package has all the elements of real change. J&K is called paradise. Now, the people of paradise will finally get what they have waited for: development that reaches their doorstep.

Coloring Economies Orange: Tribal Art, Crafts And Livelihoods

Tribal livelihoods, have long been grounded in knowledge-based and traditional practices, where creativity is embedded across crafts, traditions, textiles, music, dance, storytelling and languages

Ranjana Chopra

Worshang Khaiyar, sustains himself and his family by hand-crafting pots and pans made of clay and serpentinite stone available in his village Longpi in Ukhrul district of Manipur. The traditional craft believed to be graced by Goddess Panthoibi by the local Tangkhul Naga tribals is today a major source of their incomes and has put the tiny village on the global map. Similarly, Northy Kuttan, inhabiting the tiny village of Pagalkod Mandh in the district of Udhamgamandam in Tamil Nadu, is making a livelihood out of the traditional art of embroidery used by Toda tribal group settled in the verdant forests of Nilgiris. This GI tagged craft celebrates nature and community bonding and has been very aesthetically placed on table mats, runners, jackets, etc and popularized in contemporary usage. Both Khaiyar and Kuttan earn around Rs. 6-8 lakhs annually from practicing an elevated form of their traditional tribal artforms.

Tribal livelihoods, have long been grounded in knowledge-based and traditional practices, where creativity is embedded across crafts, traditions, textiles, music, dance, storytelling and languages. These are not mere products or services but a living heritage of knowledge, transmitted across generations. The creative assets possessed by tribal communities hold significant economic

value, which, when tapped in a sustainable manner while being sensitive to tradition, can fuel orange economy and create income generating activities within their ecosystem.

Widely used to indicate creative economy, orange economy as per UNCTAD (UN Trade and Development) estimates ranges between \$2 trillion to \$2.25 trillion constituting about 3.1% of global GDP. In India, while robust data exists for handloom and handicrafts sector, data for tribal crafts and livelihoods is poor. However, the strategic implication is unambiguous: tribal art and craft are among the few rural livelihoods that can plug directly into global creative goods demand if authenticity, logistics, and quality systems are in place.

India's Scheduled Tribe population is estimated at 104 million and constitute approximately 8.6% of its population. Around 700 distinct tribal communities are distributed across different ecological zones: forests, hills, plains and frontier regions. This diversity has direct economic connect. It predicts craft specialization by ecology, such as bamboo and cane in forested regions, metal and clay in mineral belts and textile traditions in weaving corridors. As a result, tribal regions in India have a "multiple economies" reality rather than a single "tribal crafts sector." Hence, policy design has to be regionally differentiated and not "one craft scheme fits all" and cognizant of raw material constraints, design and quality issues and

market linkages.

Currently, the tribal art/craft livelihood ecosystem is shaped by overlapping mandates across ministries and institutions. Ministry of Tribal Affairs is the anchor and works on improving infrastructure critical to growth and provides market linkages through TRIFED (Tribal Cooperative Marketing Development Federation of India Limited) which functions as a key market operator. TRIFED supports Van Dhan Vikas Kendras (VDVKs) which are grassroots units for procurement and value addition and does retail marketing through TRIBES India outlets and aadi mahotsavs/haats to connect producers with buyers and institutional partners. Ministry of Textiles promotes crafts through National Handloom Development Programme (NHDP) and cluster infrastructure through Comprehensive Handloom/Handicrafts Cluster Development Schemes (CHCDS) and maintains the database of artisans. Ministry of MSME supports cluster regeneration and marketability through Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI), explicitly shifting from supply-driven to market-driven models and emphasizing e-commerce as a channel.

Experience shows that rural livelihoods value-chain is challenged as these are weak, artisans are not directly linked to markets and heavy dependence on middlemen. These factors reduce

margins and poor warehousing and aggregation inhibits economies of scale. If we were to further drill analytics down to the level of artisan households, then the pattern that is visible is that of a mixed economy. The artisans treat craft work as supplementary or part-time employment, particularly where agriculture is seasonal or inadequate to meet the needs of the family. In this scenario, poor credit worthiness and enterprise development, lack of marketing linkages and dependence on traders create inconsistent income stream.

However, crafts can be produced at home with low capital with a potential for high returns. Craft interventions are often interventions in women's employment, income, and bargaining power. Rough estimates tell us that women constitute 56% to over 70% of the 7 million+ artisans and 72.29% of weavers under the handloom sector. Skill transmission is informal and usually passed on from one generation to the other and for tribal art forms, where cultural meaning is embedded in technique and narrative, transmission is both economic (skills) and cultural (authenticity).

Three existing models under Ministry of Tribal Affairs provide pathways to robust linkages: producer collectives like VDKs which provide shared infrastructure and aggregation; Tribes India stores for connect with the buyer and cooperative institutions at the State level for development

of clusters and skill upgradation. For e.g., in Odisha 150 VDKs are operational with cumulative sales of 2,459.91 lakh and integrating about 40,000 tribal producers. Tribal Development Cooperative Corporation, an apex level cooperative body, anchors the marketing and branding of forest and non-forest-based commodities generated by tribal producers.

This underlines a core strategic recommendation for India: tribal art/craft within the orange economy requires better sector accounting, enforceable authenticity/ethical trade infrastructure, and stronger producer-owned distribution to reduce intermediary capture. In the short term, festivals like Bharat Tribes Fest have to be treated as procurement pipelines, standardization and digitalization of the product catalogue and integration of credit support through National ST Finance Development Corporation and schemes like PM Vishwakarma with buyer orders. However, in the long-term government will have to consider building a tribal creative economy satellite account, build export grade compliance and brand architecture and structure an India-appropriate ethical trade code for tribal art. Through these measures, tribal orange economy will rise from the hinterlands and join the journey towards Viksit Bharat @2047.

The author is Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Is Screen Time Really The Problem?

Jamie Krenn

Summer removes structure, revealing how digital environments, not hours, shape daily life.

As the school year winds down, a familiar concern starts to creep in: What happens to all that screen time during summer?

I read this all the time: "I know they're getting too much screen time..." Or a teacher says, "They're all addicted to screens." Or a teen asks, "Why didn't I get enough likes?" With all of this in the background, the American Academy of Pediatrics released new guidance, and buried inside it is a major shift just in time for the non-school months: They no longer set hourly screen limits for school-age children and teens.

For years, the recommendation hovered around one to two hours a day, depending on age. (Before the pandemic, it was 2 years to have short interactions with screens; an 18-month start came with the homebound environment during a tough time in the world. It made sense at the time.) Screens meant TV, DVDs, maybe a Wii. Media was mostly passive, and platforms weren't engineered for constant engagement. Screens were meant to be watched and then turned off.

That world doesn't exist anymore. The AAP's plain-language framing addresses the "digital ecosystem." It isn't just screens. The ecosystem's platforms, algorithms, notifications, social environments, and design features are meant to keep users engaged. Kids are not just using screens. They are inside digital environments designed to shape behavior. And in that world, "screen time" is newly defined.

Why Time Is Now a Meaningless Metric Consider the following:
2 hours FaceTiming Grandma
2 hours on endless-scroll TikTok



2 hours building in Minecraft with friends
2 hours watching YouTube autoplay alone at midnight

2 hours writing and/or reading your favorite fan fiction

The same amount of time, but radically different developmental experiences, depending on the interaction. Time alone can't tell us what we actually need to know.

Why Summer Makes This Harder

Summer doesn't create a screen time problem; it exposes one. When school ends, structure disappears. Days become longer, looser, and far less predictable. For many families, that means:

More unstructured time
Less routine

More solo device use
Screens filling the gaps between camps, childcare, commuting, and work schedules

This is where the old idea of "screen time" starts to fall apart. Not because kids are suddenly using screens differently, but because the guardrails around their use are gone. Summer doesn't increase screen time. It reveals how little "time" was ever the right metric.

This Is Where Haidt Comes In

When we move beyond the one- to two-hour screen time limit, the conversation shifts. In The Anxious Generation, Jonathan Haidt argues that the move to a phone-based childhood, particularly social media, has coincided with rising anxiety, depression, and

social fragility in adolescents. He points to the loss of play, the rise of social comparison, and the psychological effects of constant connectivity. There has been some pushback... kids have always had screens. The AAP's new policy cuts through this debate. It suggests we've been measuring the wrong thing.

The issue isn't screens. It isn't just hours. It's the environments children now inhabit, the environments engineered to capture attention, amplify social comparison, and make it difficult to just plain turn it off. Haidt names the problem at the societal level. The AAP names it at the design level. Not screens. Not hours. But rather, all of what's listed below, and the world around it:

Algorithmic environments
Engagement-maximizing design
Endless scroll
Social comparison loops
Notifications and variable rewards
Displacement of sleep, movement, and in-person connection

So What Actually Matters Now?

If we're no longer asking "How many hours?" what do we ask instead? The AAP shifts the questions to:

What is the child doing?
Is it passive or interactive?
Is someone else involved?
Is the platform designed to keep them from stopping?
Is it affecting sleep, mood, school, or relationships?

These are more complex questions and add to our cognitive load as caregivers and educators. They require nuance... yet, they are better questions. Parents were told to manage minutes. The AAP is telling us to examine the design and quality of time spent.

The Quiet Bombshell
Perhaps the biggest shift is this: The burden is no longer placed entirely on caregivers. The bombshell is that these new guidelines

are saying that this isn't a caregiver issue anymore, calling out platform design, industry responsibility, and policy responsibility. For years, as caregivers, we were told to limit screen time. Now the AAP is saying the environment itself needs to change. What this means for grown-ups right now is they don't need to count the seconds. They should, however, look out for:

Sleep disruption
Mood changes
Social withdrawal
Loss of interest in offline life
And engage in:
Co-viewing
Conversation
Awareness of platform design

We have been measuring the wrong thing for a long time as technology evolved and accelerated during the pandemic, when screens became lifelines. It was never just about the hours; it was about the environment. Summer isn't a screen time problem. It's an environmental problem with fewer guardrails and more digital pull. The AAP just gave us permission to stop asking the wrong question and gave us a map for asking the right ones.

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Source: Psychology Today

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

Govt committed towards farmers' welfare: Javid Dar

Inaugurates Rs 3.5 Cr fruit, vegetable processing unit in Marh, Jammu

KT News Desk

JAMMU, APRIL 29: In a major boost to agricultural infrastructure in Jammu region, Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Department, Javid Ahmad Dar, on Wednesday inaugurated a state-of-the-art Fruit and Vegetable Aggregation, Processing, Grading and Packing Unit at Marh, Jammu.



ensuring value addition and creating better marketing opportunities for the farmers at both local and national level.

He highlighted that Marh, known as the vegetable hub of Jammu district, contributes significantly to vegetable supplies across the region, making the installation of such a facility crucial for the farming community.

Addressing the gathering, the Minister, as per an official statement, said that establishment of the processing unit will play a transformative role in strengthening post-harvest management, boosting processing capacity and significantly reducing post-harvest losses. He said the facility will add 100 metric tonnes of storage capacity,

"The Rs 3.5 crore project will provide farmers with modern post-harvest infrastructure, helping minimise crop damage and ensuring improved returns through better grading,

packing and storage facilities," the Minister said.

Reiterating the government's commitment towards farmers' welfare, Javid Ahmad Dar said the Jammu and Kashmir government is ensuring the availability of high-quality seeds and fertilizers to maximise farm productivity. He added that exotic varieties of vegetable seeds and fruit plants are being made available through departmental channels.

The Minister further informed that Centres of Excellence have been established across all districts to provide quality seedlings and technical support to

the farmers. He assured that the demands and concerns raised by MLA Marh Surinder Kumar Bhagat would be addressed on priority, adding that several initiatives have already been taken to facilitate the farming community.

He directed the field functionaries and departmental officers to work tirelessly for resolving farmers' issues and to intensify awareness campaigns regarding welfare schemes being implemented by the Jammu and Kashmir Government and the Government of India.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Marh Surinder Kumar Bhagat appreciated the department for establishing the processing unit in his constituency and termed it a landmark step for strengthening the agricultural economy of the area.

Earlier, Managing Director JKHPMC briefed the gathering about the significance of the project, stating that the unit will play a pivotal role in enhancing the farmers' income, promoting agriculture and horticulture production and increasing shelf life of perishable products by two to three times through advanced pre-cooling and storage facilities.

Speaker LA reviews progress on new LA Complex



KT News Desk

JAMMU, April 29: Speaker, Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, Wednesday convened a meeting with the senior officers to review progress on construction of the new Legislature Complex at Jammu.

Secretary, Law, Justice & Parliamentary Affairs, Achal Sethi; Engineer-in-Chief Purshotam Kumar, Chief Engineer R&B Jammu Rajesh Kumar; Secretary, JKLA, Manoj Kumar Pandita; Director Finance PWD HK Prashar, SE R&B, South Circle Jammu Arit Gupta, and other senior officers of concerned departments

and Assembly Secretariat were present in the meeting.

Threadbare discussion, as per an official statement was held on the issues pertaining to early completion of the new Assembly Complex including provision for Central Hall, committee cum meeting rooms, seating capacity, library, Media room etc.

A detailed presentation about various phases of project execution was presented by the Executive Engineer in charge of the project through a PowerPoint Presentation.

The Speaker was apprised that Central Hall has been proposed as it is one of the basic

requirements of the Legislative Assembly. It was also informed that there is a provision for 5 committee cum meeting rooms with the seating capacity ranging from 50 to 100 chairs.

Regarding the space for the Library and Media room, it was apprised that there is sufficient space for both requirements.

The Speaker, after reviewing the progress of development works of Assembly Complex emphasized the timely completion of the project while maintaining high quality standards. He directed the executing agency to complete the project within the stipulated time frame.

DC Bandipora reviews progress of Capex Works in Gurez Sub-Division



KT News Desk

BANDIPORA, APRIL 29: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib Wednesday chaired a review meeting to assess the progress of developmental works under District Capex and other schemes in Gurez Sub-Division.

The meeting focused on sector-wise and head-wise allotment and expenditure, including key sectors such as Minor Irrigation, R&B, Elementary and Secondary Education, Youth Services & Sports, Health, Urban Development, PHE, Un-tied Grants, BDC/DDC Grants, PRI works, ABDS, APDS, SSS, and other allied sectors.

Emphasizing financial discipline, the Deputy Commissioner directed proper utilisation of funds be ensured across all sectors. A detailed JE wise review was conducted, and the DC sought comprehensive expenditure details under each head.

During the review, the Deputy Commissioner expressed concern over slow progress in certain sectors and specifically

took note of the poor performance of SSD Gurez during the previous year, stressing the need for marked improvement and greater accountability.

Highlighting the importance of coordination, the DC directed officers to work in close coordination with the Executive Engineers and the Superintending Engineer's office to remove bottlenecks and accelerate implementation.

The DC further directed that no delay should be tolerated in ongoing works and that new works should be taken up immediately after necessary approvals. The Superintending Engineer was urged to hold regular review meetings with field staff.

The meeting concluded with directions to hold regular JE wise monthly review meetings for Gurez to ensure continuous monitoring and effective implementation of development works.

Among others, the meeting was attended by Chief Planning Officer, Mohammad Maqbool Lone; Executive Engineer R&B Gurez; AEE, Junior Engineers and other concerned officials.

Prepare District Sanitation Plans for door-to-door waste collection: Secretary RDD directs DCs

KT News Desk

SRINAGAR, APRIL 29: Secretary, Rural Development (RDD) & Panchayati Raj, Mohammad Aijaz Asad Wednesday chaired a high-level review meeting under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen and directed all Deputy Commissioners to prepare comprehensive District Sanitation Plans within one week for universal door-to-door waste collection across rural Jammu & Kashmir.

The Secretary, as per an official statement, said the District Sanitation Plans must begin with Panchayat-wise mapping of existing rural sanitation infrastructure created by the Department, including Segregation Sheds, Plastic Waste Management Units (PWMUs), compost pits, soakage facilities, waste collection points, transport vehicles and other sanitation assets, so that these are effectively integrated into the waste collection chain.

He instructed districts to design Panchayat-wise collection routes, assess manpower needs and establish linkages between household waste collection and scientific processing/disposal facilities. He added that cluster-wise review meetings would be held after submission of district plans.

The Secretary stressed that



several sanitation assets in the past had been created at unsuitable locations and therefore future planning must ensure optimum utility, accessibility and long-term sustainability.

He further directed strict implementation of the Solid Waste Management Rules-2026, making four-stream segregation at source mandatory—wet waste, dry waste, sanitary waste and special care waste. Domestic hazardous waste such as medicines, paints and thermometers, he said, must also be separately handled.

To ensure sustainability, Mohammad Aijaz Asad said that dedicated funds have now been earmarked as a dedicated allocation for door-to-door collection, segregation and operation & maintenance of sanitation assets. However, he

emphasised that user charges must be regularly collected so that the system remains financially viable.

He observed that waste management should not become a "leaking bucket" dependent only on repeated government funding, adding that long-term success depends on community ownership, cost recovery and efficient local management.

Emphasising citizen participation, he said strong IEC campaigns are essential and identified tourist destinations, markets, hospitals, schools, urban-rural fringe zones and legacy waste sites as special focus areas.

District administrations were also directed to maintain zero tolerance against roadside dumping, animal dung accumulation along village roads, choked drains and open burning of waste.

Yasha Mudgal reviews progress on centrally sponsored computerization of PACS

KT News Desk

JAMMU, APRIL 29: Commissioner Secretary, Cooperative Department, Yasha Mudgal, Wednesday chaired a meeting to review progress on the Centrally Sponsored Scheme for Computerization of Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS) under Phase-II across the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.



Implementation and Monitoring Committees (DLIMCs), progress remains pending in the remaining districts.

The meeting, as per an official statement, was attended by the Special Secretary, Cooperative Department, FA/CAO Cooperative Department, Joint Registrar (Audit), Deputy Registrars of the Cooperative Department and other senior officers of the Department.

During the meeting, the Commissioner Secretary was informed that the Union Ministry of Cooperation, has approved 171 PACS for coverage under this phase in J&K. It was further highlighted that while 8 out of 20 districts have successfully completed the identification and approval process through their respective District Level

Yasha Mudgal reiterated that PACS, being grassroots-level cooperative institutions, play a pivotal role in providing credit and essential services to farmers and rural populations. She emphasized that the computerization initiative, envisioned by the Government of India, aims to strengthen these societies through digital enablement, ensuring greater transparency and

modernized service delivery.

Taking serious notice of the slow progress in the remaining districts, the Commissioner/Secretary issued a stern directive to all the Deputy Registrars of the lagging districts. She ordered the immediate expedition of the approval process and set a hard deadline of May 5, 2026, for completion of all DLIMC approvals, making it clear that timely completion of formalities is non-negotiable for the onboarding and digitization of these societies.

The Commissioner Secretary underscored that the success of this centrally sponsored initiative depends on accountability and proactive follow-up at the district level. She called for rigorous monitoring to ensure that the structural benefits of the scheme, primarily improved efficiency and transparency, reach the rural communities within the stipulated timelines.

The meeting concluded with directions for enhanced coordination among the field functionaries and strict adherence to all procedural requirements.

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Emphasizing financial discipline, the Deputy Commissioner directed proper utilisation of funds be ensured across all sectors. A detailed JE wise review was conducted, and the DC sought comprehensive expenditure details under each head.

During the review, the Deputy Commissioner expressed

concern over slow progress in certain sectors and specifically took note of the poor performance of SSD Gurez during the previous year, stressing the need for marked improvement and greater accountability.

Highlighting the importance of coordination, the DC directed officers to work in close coordination with the Executive Engineers and the Superintending Engineer's office to remove bottlenecks and accelerate implementation.

The DC further directed that no delay should be tolerated in ongoing works and that new works should be taken up immediately after necessary approvals. The Superintending Engineer was urged to hold regular review meetings with field staff.

The meeting concluded with directions to hold regular JE wise monthly review meetings for Gurez to ensure continuous monitoring and effective implementation of development works.

Nasha Mukht J&K Abhiyan

Awareness programmes, Padyatras held in Rafiabad

KT News Desk

BARAMULLA, APRIL 29: As per the scheduled calendar, the 100-day milestone of the Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyan was successfully observed Wednesday across several Panchayats of Block Rafiabad, including Halqa Yarbugh, with a series of awareness programmes and padyatras.

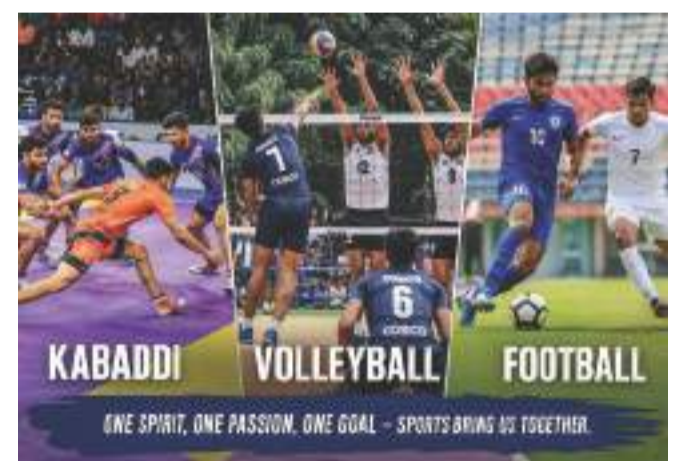
The activities, as per an official statement, were led by Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Baramulla, Mudasir Hussain, who spearheaded the padyatra and

awareness camps. Officials, PRI members, youth, and locals participated in large numbers, reflecting strong community engagement.

Speaking on the occasion, the ACD highlighted the growing threat of substance abuse and emphasized the need for sustained awareness at the grassroots level. He stated that such initiatives, conducted as per the scheduled calendar, are crucial in educating people, especially the youth, about the harmful effects of drugs and in fostering a collective responsibility to eliminate the menace from society.

J&K Sports Council launches anti-drug sports drive

Flags off Pulwama Kabaddi League



KT News Desk

Srinagar, April 29: In a bold and far-reaching initiative to reinforce the vision of a Nasha-Mukht Jammu & Kashmir, the Jammu & Kashmir Sports Council has rolled out a mega sports engagement campaign aimed at transforming youth energy into discipline, purpose, and excellence through structured sporting platforms.

Marking the beginning of this campaign, the Council on Wednesday announced the launch of the inaugural Pulwama Kabaddi League, a high-intensity, three-day open-category tournament scheduled from May 1 to May 3, 2026, featuring 8 teams and 96 athletes from across the Kashmir Division.

As per a statement, the participating teams, Pulwama Panthers, Midline J&K, Harmokh Warriors (Bandipora), AR Warriors (Bandipora), United Kashmir (Baramulla), AKC Budgam, Kulgam Tigers, and other district contenders, reflect the rising competitive spirit and deepening grassroots footprint of kabaddi across the valley.

Designed as more than just a tournament, the League

represents a strategic social intervention, leveraging the power of sport to counter substance abuse, promote healthy lifestyles, and instill discipline and teamwork among youth. The open-age format ensures participation of seasoned as well as emerging players, strengthening the competitive ecosystem at the district level.

Highlighting the growing success of grassroots initiatives, Aamir Hamid Wani of Dadoora, Pulwama, recently earned selection in the Pro Kabaddi League Season 11 at a base price of 9 lakh, an achievement that stands as a testament to the untapped potential of the region.

Building on this momentum, the Sports Council is set to expand the campaign footprint with a volleyball tournament in Shopian, a football league in Anantnag, and a series of women-orientated leagues, ensuring inclusive participation and empowering young women through sport-led engagement.

Commissioner/Secretary, Youth Services & Sports, Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, emphasised the larger vision behind the initiative, stating:

'Back to Bachpan' spells pure joy: participants relive childhood's timeless magic

Event evokes nostalgia for innocence, simplicity, unbridled fun of early years: Dr. Shahid Iqbal

KT News Desk

Jammu, Apr 29: Under the golden haze of a Jammu afternoon, laughter pierced the chaos of adult life, raw, unfiltered and utterly free. Hundreds converged on the sprawling Dussehra Ground in Gandhi Nagar for "Back to Bachpan," a heartwarming initiative by the Directorate of Youth Services and Sports, J&K. This event whisked the participants back to the playgrounds of their youth, reigniting forgotten joys.

"This programme evoked deep nostalgia for the innocence, simplicity and unbridled fun of childhood," said Commissioner Secretary Youth Services and Sports, Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, who graced the occasion as the chief guest. His eyes sparkled like a child is discovering a cricket ball, as he rallied volunteers, dusted off ancient rules and transformed the field into a living time

machine, fueled by his own memories of chasing langris down narrow gullies.

Banners fluttered with the message: Back to Bachpan - Where Joy Had No Price Tag. Families poured in—parents with wide-eyed children, grandparents sharing bubbling tales, young professionals trading briefcases for barefoot prints.

Hundreds of people joined the "Back to Bachpan" event at Dussehra Ground in Gandhi Nagar on Tuesday. Organized by the Directorate of Youth Services and Sports, J&K, the programme brought families together to play childhood games. People took part in tug of war and hopscotch, with parents, grandparents and young professionals all joining in. A teacher who played hopscotch said she had not played since Class 3. The event aimed to help adults relive simple joys and take a break from busy routines.

In the game of Kanchey, marbles clinked inside a circle as players placed bets and showed off their skills. Children and adults used their fingers to flick the glass marbles, bringing back the memories of old Jammu bazaars.

The egg-and-spoon race made everyone laugh. Five-year-olds and grandfathers tried to balance the wobbling eggs on spoons. When one egg fell and splattered, the crowd cheered loudly. "That's the fun of it!" Dr. Shahid said, wiping sweat from his face.

In the Langri Taang relay, players hopped on one leg using wooden clappers. A young boy did a somersault and won the race. After the win, people of all ages came together for a big group hug.

As the sun set and the sky glowed like a childhood evening, strangers turned into friends and worries faded away. A father lifted his daughter for

one last tug of war pull and said, "This is what I missed giving you." An elderly woman held a marble in her hand and said, "Childhood was our real superpower."

Dr. Shahid exclaimed, "We didn't just play games today. We reclaimed joy, the pure, unscripted kind no app can replicate."

Earlier, in her welcome address, Anuradha Gupta, Director General of Youth Services and Sports, declared 'Back to Bachpan' not merely an event but a promise to preserve innocence. She reaffirmed the department's commitment to the Fit India Mission. She said traditional food dishes hit the stalls today.

Joint Director Youth Services and Sports, Vinakshi Koul extended vote of thanks.

Under starlit skies, the crowd dispersed, leaving Jammu's spirit forever rejuvenated by the playground battles' timeless thrill.

West Bengal registers 92.47% turnout in two-phase Assembly polls

Highest since Independence

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 29: West Bengal has registered a record 92.47 per cent voter turnout in the two-phase Assembly polls, the highest in the state since Independence, the Election Commission said on Wednesday.

In 2013, Tripura had recorded the highest ever voter turnout in an Assembly election at 93.61 per cent.

As of 7.45 pm, poll participation in West Bengal in Phase II of the Assembly elections stood at 91.66 per cent. In Phase I of the elections on April 23, the poll participation was 93.19 per cent.

"The combined poll percentage over the two phases stands at 92.47 per cent," the poll watchdog said.

West Bengal has a voter base of 6.81 crore.

Previously, the highest voter turnout in the state was 84.72 per



cent in the 2011 Assembly polls.

In Phase II, the participation of women electors was marginally higher compared to men. According to the Election Commission (EC), 92.28 per cent of the total women electors voted as compared to 91.07 per cent of men.

Commenting on the impressive voter turnout, Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar said, "For the highest ever percentage of polling in West Bengal since Independence, the EC salutes each voter of the state."

On April 9, Assam and

Puducherry surpassed their highest-ever poll participation by recording a voter turnout of 85.38 per cent and 89.83 per cent, respectively.

According to the EC, previously, the highest poll participation in Tamil Nadu was 78.29 per cent (in 2011).

In Tamil Nadu, women's participation was recorded at 85.76 per cent as compared to 83.57 per cent for men.

In West Bengal, 92.69 per cent of women voters turned up at the polling stations in the first phase, compared to 90.92 per cent of men.

Skeptical Democrats confront Hegseth about Iran war for first time since conflict started

AP

Washington, Apr 29: Making his first appearance before Congress since the Trump administration went to war in Iran, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth faced withering questioning from skeptical Democrats Wednesday over a costly conflict being waged without congressional approval.

The war has cost \$25 billion so far, according to Pentagon numbers presented to the House Armed Service Committee during the contentious hearing that was ostensibly focused on the administration's 2027 military budget proposal, which would boost defense spending to a historic \$1.5 trillion.

While Republicans focused on the details of military budgeting and voiced support for the operation, Democrats pivoted to the ballooning costs of the war, the huge drawdown of critical US munitions and the bombing of a school that killed children. Some lawmakers also questioned President Donald Trump's dealings with allies and his shifting justification for the conflict.

Hegseth dismissed criticism of the war as political and referred to lawmakers who have raised questions about it as adversaries of the Pentagon.

"The biggest challenge, the biggest adversary we face at this point are the reckless, feckless and defeatist words of

Congressional Democrats and some Republicans," Hegseth said.

Democrats press Hegseth over reasons for war

In one tense exchange, Hegseth told Democratic Rep. Adam Smith that Iran's nuclear facilities were obliterated in a 2025 attack by the US, prompting Smith to question the Trump administration's reasoning for starting the Iran war less than a year later.

"We had to start this war, you just said 60 days ago, because the nuclear weapon was an imminent threat," said Smith, the ranking Democrat on the committee. "Now you're saying that it was completely obliterated?"

Hegseth responded by saying that Iran "had not given up their nuclear ambitions" and still had thousands of missiles.

Smith said the war "left us at exactly the same place we were before."

Democrats accused Hegseth of mismanaging the war and lying to Americans about the reasons for the conflict and said rising gas prices are now threatening the pocketbooks of millions of people in the US.

"Secretary Hegseth, you have been lying to the American public about this war from day one and so has the president," said Rep. John Garamendi of California, who called the war "a geopolitical calamity," a "strategic blunder" and a "self-inflicted

wound to America."



Hegseth blasted Garamendi's remarks.

"Who are you cheering for here?" he asked the lawmaker. "Your hatred for President Trump blinds you" to the success of the war.

Hegseth defends firings of top military officers

The defense secretary faced intense questions from Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, a Pennsylvania Democrat, about his decision to oust the Army's top uniformed officer, Gen.

Randy George, one of several top military officers to be dismissed since Trump's reelection.

Houlahan said George was deeply respected by both members of the military and Congress and asked why Hegseth fired him. Hegseth's response that "we need new leadership" failed to satisfy Houlahan.

"You have no way of explaining why you fired one of the most decorated and remarkable men," Houlahan began to say before Hegseth interrupted her. "We needed new leadership," he

repeated.

Hegseth has also removed Adm. Lisa Franchetti, the Navy's top uniformed officer, and Gen. Jim Slife, the No. 2 leader at the Air Force, while Trump fired Gen. Charles "CQ" Brown Jr. as chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Hegseth has said his personnel changes are part of an effort to rebuild a "warrior culture" at the Pentagon.

Republican Rep. Nancy Mace of South Carolina defended Hegseth's personnel moves, saying he is "trying to innovate and

trying to change the way we do business."

"I'm glad that you're firing people," Mace said. "There are people there that are getting in your way. They need to go."

Democrats ask about war's cost, Republicans back Trump on Iran

While a fragile ceasefire is now in place, the US and Israel launched the war Feb. 28 without congressional oversight. House and Senate Democrats have failed to pass multiple war power resolutions that would have required President Donald Trump to halt the conflict until Congress authorizes further action.

Republicans say they will keep faith in Trump's wartime leadership, for now, citing Iran's nuclear program, the potential for talks to resume and the high stakes of withdrawal. Still, GOP lawmakers are eager for the conflict to end, and some are eyeing future votes that could become an important test for the president if the war drags on.

Democrats questioned Hegseth over the war's economic impact and rising gasoline costs, noting Trump's promise to lower consumer costs. Hegseth responded by citing the threat posed by Iran.

"What is the cost of Iran having a nuclear weapon that they wield?" he said.

Republicans expressed support for Trump's decision to

strike Iran, including Mace, who

in late March had expressed concerns about the justification for the war. "The longer this war continues, the faster it will lose the support of Congress and the American people," she wrote in a social media post.

On Wednesday Mace noted her past concerns but said she is "impressed with where we are today." She told Hegseth: "Everything I have seen, you have surpassed all of my expectations."

Iran's closing of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital shipping corridor for the world's oil, has sent fuel prices skyrocketing and posed problems for Republicans ahead of the midterm elections. The US has responded by imposing a Navy blockade of Iranian shipping and building up its military forces in the region. Three American aircraft carriers are in the Middle East for the first time in more than 20 years.

The countries appear locked in a stalemate, with Trump unlikely to accept Tehran's latest offer to reopen the strait if the US ends the war, lifts its sea blockade and postpones nuclear talks.

Hegseth has avoided public questioning from lawmakers about the war, although he and Caine have held televised Pentagon briefings. Hegseth has mostly taken questions from conservative journalists, while citing Bible passages to castigate mainstream outlets.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

KPs endured

profound hardships beyond the genocide, a wound time cannot fully heal. He said initiatives like Radio Sharda provided a vital lifeline, reinforcing community bonds.

The Lieutenant Governor also felicitated prominent citizens of the community from diverse fields for their contribution to the society. (KNO)

Hydel power

that a total of 14,659.92 MUs from renewable sources were generated by J&K including 375.01 MUs by the small hydro projects and 14,284.91 MUs from large hydro projects.

As already reported by KNO, Jammu and Kashmir has indicated that a power load requirement of up to 7 Gigawatts (GWs) by the coming five years needs to be considered in the winter season—signalling major infrastructure upgrades to avoid seasonal blackouts.

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

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

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

Stating the details of Northern Region states load considered in Power System Simulator for Engineering (PSSE) for 2029-2030, the committee has projected 4211 Megawatts (MWs) of Emergency Power Supply (EPS) load in J&K by 2029-2030 timeframe.

Pertinently, the news agency has reported that Jammu and Kashmir was importing more than 95 percent of its electricity in the month of December.

The officials earlier in the month had informed that Jammu and Kashmir is importing electricity ranging from 2900 MWs to 3100 MWs during the peak hours.

It also said that during the other hours, the region is importing electricity ranging from

2400 MWs to 2800 MWs.

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

Farmers custodians

7,350% and oilseeds 1,500% since 2013-14. However, climate impacts are intensifying and last year witnessed extreme weather across states," he said.

LG Sinha called upon scientists and innovators for seven commitments for climate-resilient agriculture-farmer-led research partnership, expansion of climate-responsive insurance, green credit, localised climate advisories for all, safeguard traditional seeds, policy integration and transparent evaluation.

He also emphasized precision and regenerative farming, water management, diversification, and tech integration. The Lieutenant Governor said that innovations must reflect real-world needs, not remain trapped in seminar rhetoric and governments must scale protection to shield livelihoods from escalating risks.

He also asked the banks to prioritize sustainable agricultural financing, conserve heritage varieties as anchors of resilience, align every initiative for seamless, coordinated execution and assess each program openly, adapt swiftly, and refine continuously.

The Lieutenant Governor said that scientists and policymakers must recognize that small and marginal farmers contribute least to climate change yet endure its harshest blows. Calling for protection, the Lieutenant Governor said that farmers are not merely producers of grain but they are custodians of tradition, culture, food security, and the promise of a sustainable future.

"Every farmer deserves real-time climate guidance. Every field must be treated as a national asset, safeguarded with care. Our responsibility in agriculture is clear that we need to preserve it for generations. This is our

solemn resolve," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Satish Sharma, Minister for Food Civil Supplies & Consumer Affairs, Science & Technology; Prof. B. N. Tripathi, Vice Chancellor, SKUAST-Jammu; Dr. Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, Director General, Meteorology, India Meteorological Department (IMD); Prof. A.K. Dhawan, President, Indian Ecological Society; Dr. S. K. Gupta, Director Research, SKUAST-Jammu; Dr. Syed Sheraz Mahdi, Organizing Secretary, scientists, academicians, policymakers, experts, and students in large number also attended the inaugural session. (KNO)

MeT predicts rain

the recorded stations, registered a maximum of 15.0°C.

In the Jammu region, Jammu city recorded a maximum temperature of 32.6°C, 3.1 degrees below normal, and a minimum of 25.1°C. Banihal and Batote recorded 21.6°C and 20.1°C, respectively, while Katra registered 30.0°C.

Light rainfall was recorded at several stations during the day, including Pahalgam (7.2 mm), Kupwara (2.0 mm), and Kukernag (1.8 mm), while Srinagar recorded 0.1 mm.

The department said the weather conditions may lead to temporary disruptions and advised people to remain cautious during the afternoon and evening hours. (KNO)

In 'duniya ka swarg

Everyone will get a permanent home," he said.

Chouhan said women empowerment remains central to development strategy and Self-Help Groups will be further strengthened. "My sisters should not have tears in their eyes. They should live with dignity and pride," he said, adding that rural women entrepreneurs will be supported at every level.

Highlighting agriculture as the backbone of the rural economy, he said Jammu and Kashmir has small and fragmented landholdings that require scientific intervention. "As Agriculture Minister, I know land holdings here are small. We will increase farmers' income," he said.

He announced promotion of integrated

farming systems combining agriculture, horticulture, fisheries, livestock and beekeeping to increase income from multiple sources.

"We will promote integrated farming so farmers can earn from multiple activities together," he said.

Chouhan said horticulture productivity in J&K needs improvement and stressed the need for high-quality planting material. "We need good plants. Earlier apple and walnut plants were not of good quality," he said.

He also announced a Clean Plant Programme in collaboration with Jammu and Kashmir University to produce certified and disease-free planting material, along with development of modern nurseries.

He announced that a team of ICAR scientists will be deputed to Jammu and Kashmir to study soil, climate, water resources and agricultural potential. "They will prepare a scientific roadmap for agriculture and horticulture development in Jammu and Kashmir," he said.

Chouhan said the youth of Jammu and Kashmir are highly talented and capable of achieving global success if given opportunities. "The youth of Jammu and Kashmir are highly talented. If given opportunity, they can excel globally," he said.

He said, "We are not outsiders. We are your family. Do not call us chief guest—we are part of your home."

Pertinently, under PMGSY-IV (Batch-II), road projects worth Rs 3,566 crore were approved as part of a larger rural connectivity package of nearly Rs 8,000 crore. A Rs 4,568 crore Mother Sanction under DAY-NRLM was also released for women Self-Help Groups across 24 States and Union Territories. (KNO)

CM Omar calls

"You are not only a friend of J&K but also a true well-wisher. Even in Madhya Pradesh, people call you 'Mama' and that acceptance reflects the respect you have earned," CM Omar said.

He said the Union Minister has consistently supported Jammu and Kashmir's development

agenda over the last one and a half years of the elected government.

Omar said coordination between the Centre and UT administration has strengthened through continuous engagement on development matters.

He stated: "Whatever sanctions have been given, we will ensure work starts on the ground. In the coming months, we will begin implementation and take forward remaining requirements as well."

Referring to rural connectivity, the Chief Minister said PMGSY has significantly transformed life in remote and mountainous regions of Jammu and Kashmir.

"People who once had to walk four to five hours to reach a road now have access to motorable connectivity. Due to Phase 2, Phase 3 and now Phase 4, access to hospitals, schools and markets has improved," he said.

He added that roads remain the lifeline of development and the government's focus is on connecting every remaining habitation, especially in scattered and hilly areas.

"Our real strength lies in villages. Our heritage and economy are rooted in rural areas and our effort is to strengthen the rural economy in every possible way," he said.

CM Omar also highlighted ongoing initiatives under rural development and livelihood missions, particularly Self-Help Groups under NRLM, saying efforts are being made to expand opportunities for women-led enterprises.

He expressed optimism about women empowerment outcomes, stating his vision of "Lakshmi Didi" progressing towards "Crorepati Didi" through sustained support and capacity building.

He also stressed the need for stronger crop insurance mechanisms to protect farmers from weather-related risks affecting agriculture and horticulture sectors.

Meanwhile, during the event, the Union Minister also released Rs 4,568 crore Mother Sanction under DAY-NRLM for women Self-Help Groups across 24 States and UTs, including support for Jammu and Kashmir. (KNO)

Exit polls predict BJP win in Assam, edge in Bengal; DMK to return in TN, UDF to take Kerala

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 29: Several exit polls on Wednesday predicted a thumping victory for the BJP in Assam and a clear edge for the party over the ruling TMC in West Bengal, while projecting a return of the DMK government in Tamil Nadu and a comeback by the Congress-led UDF in Kerala after 10 years.

The pollsters also forecast a return to power for the BJP and its allies in the AIAPMC-led NDA government in Puducherry.

Axis My India predicted a sweep for the BJP in Assam, forecasting 88-100 seats for the BJP and its allies and 24-36 seats for the Congress and its partners.

People's Pulse predicted that the NDA would get 68-72 seats while the Congress plus would secure in the range of 22-26 seats.

Matrize said the NDA is likely to get between 85-95 seats and the Congress and its allies 25-32. The Assam assembly has 126 seats with the magic mark being 64.

In Kerala, Axis My India forecast that the UDF would get 78-90 seats, LDF 49-62 and NDA 0-3.

People's Pulse predicted that the Congress-led UDF would get 75-85 seats, the LDF 55-65 and the NDA 0-3.

Matrize forecast 60-65



seats for the LDF, 70-75 seats for the UDF and 3-5 seats for the NDA. Kerala Assembly has a total of 140 seats with the magic mark being 71.

In West Bengal, the People's Pulse exit poll predicted that the TMC would get 177-187 seats, BJP 95-110, Left Front 0-1 and the Congress 1-3.

Matrize, however, predicted a BJP edge in the state, and said it is likely to get 146-161 seats. It said the TMC would get 125-140 seats.

P-Marq predicted 150-175 for the BJP and 118-138 to the TMC.

West Bengal has a total of 294 seats with the majority mark being 148.

In Tamil Nadu, the People's Pulse predicted 125-145 for the DMK-led alliance, 65-80 for AIADMK-BJP and 18-24 for TVK.

Matrize forecast that the DMK-Congress would get

122-132, NDA 87-100 and TVK 10-12.

The Tamil Nadu has a total of 234 seats with the magic mark being 118.

Most exit polls have had a chequered history and have been off the mark on several occasions in the past.

In Puducherry, Axis My India predicted 16-20 seats for the NDA and 6-8 for the DMK-Congress. It said the TVK is likely to get 2-4 seats in the assembly. There are 30 elected seats in Puducherry. The counting of votes for all the five assemblies -- West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Assam -- will be taken up on May 4.

Polls were conducted in a single phase in Assam, Kerala, Puducherry and Tamil Nadu. West Bengal saw two-phase polling on April 23 and 29.

On April 9, Assam, Kerala and Puducherry went

to polls. Assam and Puducherry surpassed their highest-ever poll participation by recording a voter turnout of 85.38 per cent and 89.83 per cent respectively.

Tamil Nadu went to polls on April 23 along with the first phase of polls in West Bengal. Tamil Nadu with 84.69 per cent recorded their highest-ever voter turnout in Assembly polls since Independence.

In the first phase, West Bengal had recorded a record 91.78 per cent voter turnout.

While the BJP is seeking to retain power in Assam and Puducherry, where it is in an alliance government with All India N R Congress, the Congress is looking to wrest power from its rival in both these places.

In Kerala, the Congress-led UDF is seeking to replace the LDF government that is in power, while in Tamil Nadu, the DMK-led alliance is looking to retain power by thwarting the challenge from AIADMK-BJP and the debutant party -- Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam that is led by actor-turned-politician Vijay. The Mamata Banerjee-led TMC is looking to retain West Bengal and thwart the challenge from the BJP.

People are voting fearlessly in West Bengal this time: PM Modi



PTI

Hardoi (UP), Apr 29: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said voters are casting their vote in West Bengal this time in a "fearless atmosphere", which was unimaginable in the past six or seven decades. He also asserted that the assembly poll results on May 4 will further strengthen the resolve of a developed India. Voting is underway in 142 constituencies of West Bengal in the second and final phase of polling. Addressing a gathering after the inauguration of the Ganga Expressway here, Modi said today marks an important day in the festival of democracy. "Voting for the second phase is underway in Bengal, and reports indicate a massive turnout, with people stepping out in large numbers just like in the first phase. Images of long queues at polling stations are flooding social media, reflecting the enthusiasm of the people to exercise their

democratic right," he said. "What we are witnessing in Bengal today is unprecedented which was difficult to imagine in the past six to seven decades, a fearless environment where people are voting without fear," he said.

The prime minister said this is a powerful symbol of the country's Constitution and the strengthening of democracy. "I express my gratitude to the great people of Bengal for being so aware of their rights and participating in large numbers," he said.

With several hours of voting still left, the prime minister urged the people of Bengal to continue participating in this democratic festival with the same enthusiasm.

Modi said in the recent Bihar Assembly elections, the BJP and NDA achieved a historic and decisive victory. "Just yesterday, results of local body elections in Gujarat showed that the BJP secured victories in nearly 80 to 85 percent of municipalities and panchayats.

'700 companies of central forces to stay in Bengal after polls'

PTI

Kolkata, Apr 29: Around 700 companies of Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) will continue to remain deployed across West Bengal after the completion of polling, an Election Commission official said on Wednesday.

The continued presence of the central forces is aimed at maintaining peace and ensuring that no untoward incidents take place in the post-poll period, he said.

"As per the EC's deployment plan issued on March 19, after completion of poll today, 700 companies of CAPF shall continue to remain deployed in the state for security arrangements and law and order duties, till further orders," he said. "The forces will be stationed in sensitive areas and will assist the state administration in maintaining normalcy," he added.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah had on Monday said that central forces would stay in Bengal for 60 days after the polls. Officials said further decisions on the duration and scale of deployment would be taken based on ground assessments and inputs from security agencies. West Bengal voted for 142 seats in the second phase on Wednesday, while polling for 152 seats in the first phase was held on April 23. The votes in all 294 assembly seats will be counted on May 4.

Pleas against hate speeches

No legislative vacuum exists warranting intervention: SC

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 29: The Supreme Court on Wednesday said the existing framework of criminal law adequately addresses the issue of hate speeches and no "legislative vacuum" exists warranting intervention.

"The contention that the field of hate speech remains legislatively unoccupied, is misconceived," a bench of justices Vikram Nath and Sandeep Mehta said. The top court delivered its verdict on a batch of petitions seeking action against those involved in hate speeches and also for mechanism to deal with such instances.

The bench said it would be open to the Centre and the competent legislative authorities to consider in their wisdom whether any further legislative or policy measures were warranted in light of the evolving societal challenges or to bring about suitable amendments as suggested by the Law Commission's 267th report of March 2017.

"While we decline to issue directions of the nature sought, we deem it appropriate to



observe that the issues relating to hate speeches and rumour-mongering bear directly upon the preservation of fraternity, dignity and Constitutional order," Justice Nath said while pronouncing the verdict.

The apex court said creation of criminal offences and the prescription of punishments lies squarely within the legislative domain.

It said the constitutional scheme founded upon the doctrine of separation of powers does not permit the judiciary to

create new offences or expand the contours of criminal liability through judicial directions.

"The precedents of this court consistently affirm that while Constitutional courts may interpret the law and issue directions to secure the enforcement of fundamental rights, they cannot legislate or compel legislation," the bench said.

It said the existing framework of substantive criminal law, including the provisions of the erstwhile Indian Penal Code, and allied legislations

adequately addresses acts that promote enmity, outrage religious sentiments, or disturb public tranquillity.

"The field is, therefore, not unoccupied," the bench said.

It said the statutory framework under the erstwhile Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), now the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS), 2023, provides a comprehensive and layered mechanism to set the criminal law in motion.

The bench said the duty of police to register an FIR upon disclosure of a cognisable offence is mandatory and in cases of non-registration of FIR, the CrPC or the BNSS provides efficacious remedy. The apex court dismissed several pleas and also closed the separate contempt petitions filed against the authorities of some states for their alleged failure in complying with the court's directions of taking action against those involved in hate speeches.

The detailed judgement is awaited.

The top court had reserved its verdict on the pleas on January 20, and observed that it would close most of the petitions related to hate speeches pending

since 2021, and in which the court had asked the police to suo motu register FIRs.

On April 28, 2023, the apex court had extended the scope of its 2022 order beyond three states and directed all states and Union Territories to register cases against individuals guilty of making hate speeches, regardless of whether a formal complaint was lodged.

It had termed hate speeches as a "serious offence capable of affecting the secular fabric of the country".

The top court had noted that its October 21, 2022, order shall be made applicable irrespective of religion, warning that any delay in registering cases will be treated as contempt of the court.

Emphasising that the Constitution envisages a secular nation, the apex court had in 2022 directed Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Delhi to promptly register criminal cases against the offenders without waiting for a complaint to be filed.

The apex court had warned that any delay from the administration in taking action on this "very serious issue" would invite contempt action.

Social justice ministry spends Rs 2,042 crore on edu schemes in FY-26

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 29: Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has disbursed over Rs 2,000 crore on various educational schemes for OBCs, EBCs, and DNTs students in the Financial Year 2025-26, an official statement said on Wednesday.

Union Minister Virendra Kumar said these interventions seek to improve access to quality education and support academic progression among students from these communities. "As part of its continuing efforts towards educational empowerment, the Department of Social Justice and Empowerment is implementing a range of schemes for students belonging to Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Economically Backward Classes (EBCs), and De-notified, Nomadic and Semi-Nomadic Tribes (DNTs)," the ministry said in a statement.

"During the financial year 2025-2026, an amount of Rs 2,042.08 crore has been disbursed under these initiatives,"

it said. According to the ministry, the expenditure under OBC welfare schemes increased by 36.96 per cent in FY 2025-26 over FY 2024-25.

"This reflects the sustained emphasis being placed on educational assistance and targeted welfare delivery for eligible beneficiaries," it said.

The ministry said that scheme-wise, expenditure has increased by 59.13 per cent under the Pre-Matric Scholarship for OBCs, EBCs and DNTs; 27.18 per cent under the Post-Matric Scholarship; 154 per cent under Top Class Education in Schools for OBCs, EBCs and DNTs; and 105.80 per cent under Top Class Education in Colleges for OBCs, EBCs and DNTs, as compared to FY 2024-25. The increase in expenditure under these schemes reflects the Government of India's continued commitment to expanding educational opportunities for students from socially and educationally disadvantaged communities, it added.

West Asia conflict raises inflation risks; India's domestic strength offers cushion: Finmin report

PTI

New Delhi, Apr 29: The ongoing conflict in West Asia poses a significant supply-side shock with rising risks to inflation, trade and financial flows, though India's strong domestic demand, policy buffers, resilient financial system and continued public investment are expected to provide a measure of insulation to the economy, the finance ministry said in a report said.

Prolonged uncertainty, particularly around energy and fertiliser supplies, could test the resilience of India's macroeconomic stability, the Monthly Economic Review for April released by the finance ministry said on Wednesday.

On top of this, the El Niño Southern Oscillation (ENSO) is expected to keep India's Southwest monsoon below normal, it said, adding that most rainfall districts are expected to receive below-normal rainfall this season.

Therefore, it said, risks are tilted to the upside for inflation, fiscal and external deficits and to the downside for economic growth. However, it said,

while striving to sustain economic growth, policy is expected to safeguard medium-term fiscal and external stability.

Observing that India enters FY2026-27 at the intersection of domestic resilience and external turbulence, the report said, encouraging a 7-7.4 per cent forecast for the upcoming financial year, only to be clouded by an altered macro-outlook in the wake of the war in West Asia.

The Indian economy is estimated to grow at 7.6 per cent, the strongest in recent years.

Noting that a 'supply shock' is apparent in the economy, it said that an accompanying demand compression is a serious concern, given high prices, rising inflation, and a reduced pace of economic activity.

Inflation may become cost-push as businesses/producers pass on their increased input costs to protect their profit margins, it said.

A wide spectrum of downstream industries relies directly on the petroleum sector, and it is likely that input cost pressures will be felt widely across the economy, it said. To temper cost



pressures in critical sectors like agriculture, it said, the government has taken various measures such as increased allocation of natural gas to the fertiliser production, waiver of customs duty and

around 12 per cent increase in nutrient-based subsidy for the upcoming kharif season.

Beyond the production structures, it said, the conflict has seriously dented

investors' confidence, disproportionately affecting Emerging Markets and Developing Economies (EMDEs), including India.

The consequent weakening of the rupee is another pressure point for domestic inflation, as that could raise import prices, it said.

The report said that repairing the damage to the oil and gas production/supply infrastructure in the Gulf region may take several months.

If such a gradual recovery is not supported by a good kharif output (a weather shock /below normal monsoon as predicted by the IMD - possible El Niño conditions), it is likely that the price shock felt at the headline inflation might spill over to the core measure through the cost-push channel, it said.

Yet it remains to be seen whether the spill-over effect will be strong/widespread or weak/limited, as it depends on a range of factors such as the size of the shock, variability in the pass-through duration across different markets/commodities, price flexibility/rigidity in sectoral markets, energy intensity of different sectors, etc, it said.

The crisis in West Asia is not expected to adversely affect financial stability, as key indicators for capital adequacy, liquidity, and asset quality in both SCBs and NBFCs remain strong, it said.

Further, it said, the RBI will continue its proactive approach to ensure adequate liquidity to meet the economy's productive needs.

To sustain momentum in the country's trade performance, the report said, the government has introduced targeted measures complementing its diversified trade strategy.

These include the RELIEF scheme; efforts to improve turnaround times and easier switching of fuels; and reforms under the Advance Authorisation Scheme to enable faster approvals and enhance transparency and predictability, alongside the approval for the establishment of the Bharat Maritime Insurance Pool, it said.

Additional interventions, it said, such as strengthened port coordination, advisories to improve transparency in shipping line pricing, monitoring of insurance risks, and relaxations to facilitate the movement of stranded cargo, further support trade flows.

Russia to hold Victory Day parade without military equipment for 1st time in nearly two decades

AP

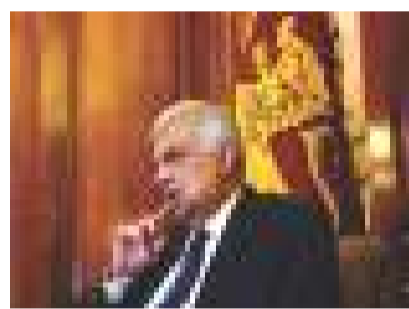
Moscow, Apr 29: Russia's traditional parade marking the 81st anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany in World War II this year will take place without tanks, missiles and other military equipment, the Russian Defense Ministry said in a statement late Tuesday.

It will be the first time in nearly two decades — and in the more than four years of Russia's war in Ukraine — that no military equipment will rumble through Moscow's Red Square on May 9, the day Russia celebrates its most important secular holiday. The Kremlin has used it to showcase its military might and global clout.

Victory Day parades on Red Square involved military equipment and various weaponry every year since 2008.

The ministry statement this week cited the "current operational situation" as a reason for excluding a military equipment convoy, as well as cadets, from the parade. The statement didn't elaborate.

Sri Lanka's ex president to face court indictment



PTI

Colombo, Apr 29: Sri Lanka's former president Ranil Wickremesinghe and his secretary Saman Ekanayake will face indictments for misappropriation of state funds worth 16.6 million Lankan Rupees (USD 52,000), a local court was told on Wednesday.

They are accused of using state funds for Wickremesinghe's travel to a British university in 2023 for his wife's graduation. Wickremesinghe, who served as president from 2022 to 2024, argued it was an official invitation from the University of Wolverhampton, and he attended it while on transit during his return to Sri Lanka following official engagements in other countries. The Colombo Fort Magistrate's Court on Wednesday ordered the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) to submit a progress report on the investigation into the case. The court also instructed the CID to present the relevant progress report on July 8.

Trump urges Iran to sign a deal after report suggests US may extend blockade

REUTERS

Washington, Apr 29: US President Donald Trump urged Iran on Wednesday to 'get smart soon' and sign a deal, following days of deadlock in efforts to end the conflict and a media report that the US would extend its blockade of Iran's ports.

In a post on Truth Social, Trump, who has said Iran can call if it wants to talk and has stressed repeatedly that Tehran cannot have a nuclear weapon, said the country "couldn't get its act together."

The Wall Street Journal cited US officials as saying the president had instructed aides to prepare for an extended blockade of Iran's ports in a bid to force Tehran to capitulate.

Officials said Trump had opted to continue squeezing Iran's economy and oil exports with the blockade as his other options — resuming bombing or walking away from the conflict — carried more risk,



according to the WSJ.

"They don't know how to sign a nonnuclear deal. They'd better get smart soon!" Trump said in Wednesday's post, without explaining what such a deal would entail. Iran wants some kind of US acknowledgment of its right to enrich uranium for what it says are peaceful, civilian purposes.

It has a stockpile of roughly 440 kilograms of uranium enriched to 60 percent, material that could be used for several nuclear weapons if further enriched. Iranian officials

said on Tuesday the country could withstand the blockade as it was using alternative trade routes, and the Islamic Republic did not consider the war over.

An Iranian Revolutionary Guard Navy speedboat approaches the cargo ship Epaminondas during what state media described as the seizure of one of two vessels accused of violations in the Strait of Hormuz on April 21. (Tasnim News Agency via AP, File) The conflict has killed thousands, thrown energy markets into turmoil and disrupted global

trade routes.

In a sign of the economic toll the war is taking on Iran's economy, its currency fell to a record low of 1,810,000 rials to the US dollar on Wednesday, the Iranian Student News Agency said, as demand for foreign currency that built up during six weeks of fighting is now flowing into the open market.

The rial has seen its value fall by nearly 15 percent in the last two days alone, ISNA reported.

Inflation for the Iranian month running from March 20 to April 20 was 65.8 percent, the central bank said, a trend which is likely to be exacerbated by the currency's plunge.

"No more Mr. Nice Guy" Iran's most recent offer for resolving the two-month war, suspended since April 8 under a ceasefire agreement, would set aside discussion of its nuclear program until the conflict is formally ended and shipping issues resolved.

Iran war could push 30 million people into poverty: UN

AFP

Paris, Apr 29: The US-Israeli war on Iran, which has sent the price of energy and fertilizer soaring, could plunge more than 30 million people into poverty, the head of the UN Development Programme said Wednesday.

"It's development in reverse," Alexander De Croo told AFP on the sidelines of a G7 development meeting in Paris. "It took decades to build stable societies, to develop local economies, and it took only several weeks of war to destroy that," he added.

"We did a study after six weeks of war and estimated that even if the conflict ended at that point, 32 million people would be pushed into precarity in 160 countries," said De Croo.

The war has led to closure of the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied



natural gas flows in peacetime.

Gulf nations are also important for many oil products and feedstocks to make fertilizer.

A shortage of supplies and high prices has led to countries in Africa and Asia imposing a range of measures that include fuel rationing and shortening the work week to reduce consumption. Other countries have reduced fuel taxes to cushion the

impact on consumers.

The UNDP says the war will have a profound impact on Sub-Saharan African countries as well as certain countries in Asia such as Bangladesh and Cambodia.

Developing island nations will also be particularly hard hit.

High "energy costs, a lack of fertilizer, will have an enormous impact in the months to come" on people in these countries, said De Croo, a former prime minister of Belgium.

He also warned of "political instability and a drop in remittances from abroad because a lot of people working in the Gulf countries send money home."

To avoid poverty taking hold, the UNDP estimates that around \$6bn "is needed in subsidies to support those most vulnerable to high food and energy prices," he added.

De Croo said discussions were

Bangladesh made a blunder by skipping T20 WC, series with India will improve relations



PTI

Mumbai, Apr 29: Former captain Shakib Al Hasan has described Bangladesh's absence from the T20 World Cup in India earlier this year as a "blunder", while expressing hope that bilateral cricket ties could improve if the teams play a couple of series.

Bangladesh did not travel to India for the tournament — co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka — after their seamer Mustafizur Rahman was dropped from the Kolkata Knight Riders squad.

Bangladesh were ultimately replaced by Scotland in the global tournament.

"I think that was a big loss," Shakib told reporters on the sidelines of the EUT20 Belgium's jersey launch event here on Wednesday.

"(It was a) great miss as far as Bangladesh cricket is concerned because we, as a country, love watching our players play World Cups and play (those) matches."

"We are a cricket-loving country and a country like Bangladesh not participating in the World Cup was a big miss. It's a blunder from the government's side that they took the decision not to participate," added Shakib.

Bangladesh's decision not to tour India for the mega event could have a lasting impact on bilateral relations between the neighbours, but Shakib expressed hope that one or two series could help "break the ice".

"I think things will get better," he said.

"Obviously, efforts need to be made and I think one or two series, if Bangladesh visits India or India goes to Bangladesh... (they are) playing a series which I heard might happen in August or September. If that happens, I think the ice will break and things will get better," said Shakib.

Shakib, an Awami League Member of Parliament, has not returned to Bangladesh since the ouster of

the Sheikh Hasina-led government due to safety concerns and pending legal issues.

However, the Bangladesh great hopes to play one final match for his country before hanging up his boots.

"We will see that later," he said when asked if he wished to have one final game.

"But, yeah, I think things will start getting better sooner or later. With time, everything heals, so I'm hopeful that I can get what I want," said Shakib, who has represented Bangladesh in 71 Tests, 247 ODIs and 129 T20Is.

Shakib, who featured in nine editions of the IPL for Kolkata Knight Riders and Sunrisers Hyderabad, acknowledged that a return to the tournament is unlikely, but said he is pleased to see the new generation taking over.

"I've played enough. The younger generation has come in. They're performing really well," he said.

"I see hardly any player of my age playing IPL. One or two, (or) maybe five maximum; if you include everyone, I think not more than five would be there playing IPL at my age. It is difficult, obviously, for me to play IPL now with the competitiveness. But I'm not missing it... I do enjoy watching it."

Shakib praised the robustness of Indian cricket through its domestic structure and the IPL, but added that the lure of T20 cricket may lead to the national team struggling in Test cricket.

"The pipeline is such in Indian cricket at this moment, (and) I think this will go for the next 50 years at least without having any problem. They'll keep on producing players because of the tournament they have," he said.

"They might struggle in Tests because everyone wants to play IPL. But they'll keep on producing great players just through IPL and with their domestic infrastructure," Shakib added.

Aggression, right kind of approach are working out for bowlers in IPL: Zaheer Khan



PTI

Mumbai, Apr 29: Former India pacer Zaheer Khan on Wednesday attributed the bowlers' steadily improving outings against marauding batters in the IPL 2026 to their aggressive mindset and putting in place right strategies.

Amidst the general bashing the batters meted out to bowlers, the likes of Akeal Hosein (4/17), Mohsin Khan (5/23), Josh Hazlewood (4/12) and Bhuvneshwar Kumar (3/5) have made strong impression across the last week or so.

"I'm very happy to see that bowlers are coming back in a tournament like IPL right now. You've seen some low scores. You've seen 155 (-run) games also being defended (and) you've seen (a) team getting all out for 76," Zaheer told reporters on the

sidelines of the jersey launch event of the EUT20 Belgium, which starts on June 6.

"I think aggression and the right kind of approach are working out (for bowlers). The teams (that) are having good balance in bowling, are making that impact in this tournament," he added.

Zaheer, however, did not read much into Jasprit Bumrah's form in this IPL where he has only two wickets to show in seven matches.

"That's the kind of season he's having. As a bowler, you can go through these phases," Zaheer said.

"It doesn't make you a bigger or a smaller bowler. It's just about the phase and he's aware of it. Still, (there are) what, seven games to go for him? So there's still plenty of time for him to turn things around. You've seen what kind of capability he has," he

added. Zaheer, however, heaped praise on Rajasthan Royals' Vaibhav Sooryavanshi for staying true to his natural approach.

"I think (it is about his) ability, confidence," he replied when asked about Sooryavanshi's knack of going after the top bowlers. It is just a special talent.

"(He is) someone who is not carrying any baggage, approaching the game in the purest form — seeing the ball, hitting the ball, and having that kind of talent and ability.

"To be able to do that consistently, that is the exciting part about someone like Vaibhav Sooryavanshi. (He is) just going out there and enjoying the game," Zaheer added.

Zaheer, who has 311 Test wickets, rued an injury-hit career so far for pacer Mohsin, who plays for Lucknow Super Giants.

"He has been down and out with injuries, isn't it, for a while. It is great to see him coming back. It is about how he makes the impact, right?" said Zaheer, LSG's former bowling coach and mentor.

"The skill is there. The fitness has to be backed properly for him because we have seen in the last two-three seasons, he has been a stop and start (player). For him, it is about playing more and more matches.

Movies Schedule

Thursday, 30th April

Dhurandhar: The Revenge (A)
Hindi - 10:45 AM

Michael (U/A 13+)
English with English Subtitles
02:00 PM, 05:00 PM

BHOOTH BANGLA (U/A16+)
Hindi Atmos - 11:15 AM, 02:30 PM, 05:45 PM
Hindi - 03:30 PM

The Devil Wears Prada 2 (A)
English with English Subtitles
07:00 PM

Lee Cronin's The Mummy (A)
English with English Subtitles - 11:00 AM

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