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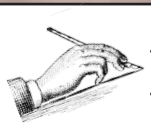

IMPORTANT

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GS 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE : 1

Nepal objects to Mansarovar Yatra via Lipulekh; India says unjustified

Shubhajit Roy
& Yubaraj Ghimire
New Delhi, Kathmandu, May 3

THE BALEN Shah-led government in Kathmandu, just over a month old, has objected to India and China planning to conduct the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra through the Lipulekh pass.

India said that such claims are "neither justified nor based on historical facts and evidence", and it remains open to "constructive interaction with Nepal".

IDEA eXCHANGE

"Nepal would like to balance its foreign policy relationship because we need all our friends"

SHANKAR PRASAD SHARMA
OUTGOING AMBASSADOR OF NEPAL TO INDIA

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The Lipulekh pass has been a "contested" territory and

»CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

E. EXPLAINED

Mansarovar hurdle

On April 30, India announced that the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra is set to take place from June to August this year. Nepal's objection to Lipulekh pass being used for the yatra and India challenging Kathmandu's premise sets a roadblock that needs to be removed before the pilgrims begin their journey.

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INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE : 2

Nepal

Nepal has often questioned moves by India and China to conduct trade and pilgrimages through the pass.

The Nepalese Foreign Ministry said on Sunday, "The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has drawn the attention of various media outlets to the questions and concerns raised regarding the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra, which is said to be conducted between India and China via Nepali territory, Lipulekh."

"The Government of Nepal is completely clear and steadfast in the fact that Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh and Kalapani east of the Mahakali River are integral parts of Nepal since the Sugauli Treaty of 1816," it said.

The ministry asserted that the Government of Nepal has "conveyed its clear stance and concerns to both India and China through diplomatic channels regarding the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra."

"Even before this, the Government of Nepal has been continuously urging the Government of India not to undertake any activities such as road construction or expansion, border trade and pilgrimage in the area," it said.

The Nepalese Foreign Ministry was referring to India and China resuming trade through the Lipulekh pass in August 2025, before the GenZ protests toppled the government in September 2025.

"In addition, it is clarified that the friendly country China has also been officially informed about the fact that the Lipulekh area is Nepali territory," it said.

Responding to the Nepalese statement, the Ministry of External Affairs official spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said on Sunday: "India's position in this regard had been consistent and clear. Lipulekh pass has been a long standing route for the Kailash Mansarovar Yatra since 1954 and the Yatra through this route has been going on for decades. This is not a new development."

"As regards territorial claims, India has consistently maintained that such claims are neither justified nor based on historical facts and evidence. Such unilateral artificial enlargement of territorial claims is untenable. India remains open to a constructive interaction with Nepal on all issues in the bilateral relationship, including on resolving agreed outstanding boundary issues through dialogue and diplomacy," the MEA spokesperson said.

GS 3: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

INDIAN EXPRESS PAGE : 7

Eyes in space: Indian startup launches a first-of-its-kind satellite via SpaceX rocket

Drishti can take synchronous optical and radar images

Amitabh Sinha
New Delhi, May 3

A SPACEX rocket launched from California on Sunday carried a unique satellite from Indian start-up GalaxEye that is meant to fill a long-standing gap in earth observation capabilities from space. The satellite, aptly called Drishti, is equipped to take optical as well radar-generated images of the same place at the same time, something that has not been tried before.

Most earth observation satellites use either optical sensors, which capture reflected sunlight just like a conventional camera, or Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) systems that use microwave signals to generate images. Both of them have limitations. Optical sensors produce clear and intuitive images, just like any normal camera, but are blinded by clouds, smoke or darkness. SAR can make continuous observations because microwave signals effortlessly penetrate clouds, smoke or darkness, but these images are not like regular photographs and require expertise to interpret, something similar to an X-ray film.

The satellite rode on a Falcon 9 rocket by SpaceX from the Vandenberg Space Force Base in California as one of the 45 payloads on the CAS500-2 mission.

Drishti, which has been built entirely in India, seeks to eliminate this familiar trade-off in satellite imagery. It is the world's first satellite equipped with both optical sensors as well as SAR, and the two have been synchronised to take simultaneous images of the same place on Earth. For this reason, GalaxEye is describing its innovation as OptoSAR technology.

"When the optical sensors are unable to take images because of clouds or darkness or other similar reasons, we will use artificial intelligence to regenerate optical-like images from the SAR," Suyash Singh, one of the founders of GalaxEye, told *The Indian Express* in a recent interview.

Until now this problem used to be solved by attaining datasets from multiple satellites and integrating them. But that had its own problems. SAR and optical datasets were not taken at the same time, and the situation on the ground could have changed during the intervals. So, some details would invariably be missed.

"What we are trying to do is to make space imagery available all the time, and understandable to all kinds of users," Singh said.

Drishti is the first satellite of GalaxEye, a company started by alumni of IIT Madras and incubated at the institute. The satellite rode on a Falcon 9 rocket by SpaceX from the Vandenberg Space Force Base in California as one of the 45 payloads on the CAS500-2 mission.

The launch, at 12.30 pm India time on Sunday, invited congratulatory messages from Vice-President C P Radhakrishnan, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar among others.

"Mission Drishti by GalaxEye marks a major achievement in our space journey. The successful launch of the world's first OptoSAR satellite and the largest privately built satellite in India is a testament to our youth's passion for innovation and nation-building. Heartiest congratulations and best wishes to the founders and the entire team of GalaxEye," Modi said in a message on X.

The capability of Drishti can be immensely useful in Indian conditions. Singh said one of the reasons no one else built a satellite like Drishti was that clouds and smoke was primarily a problem in the tropical countries. "Most of the satellite companies have traditionally been based in the western countries, and cater to the demands of those countries. Weather is relatively more predictable, and the skies are relatively cleaner and clearer. They don't have the same kind of issues with clouds that we in India face. We are trying to solve for problems in our part of the world," he said.

GalaxEye had to make important technological innovations to ensure that both the imaging sensors are put on the same satellite and operate in sync with each other to produce simultaneous imaging of the same place.

"SAR and optical sensors are designed in different ways. They look at the Earth at different angles. So, if they are placed side by side, for example, the optical sensor might be looking at Bengaluru while SAR is capturing Dubai at that instant. So, we had to come up with a technology stack that synchronises the functionalities of these two technologies, enabling them to look at the same location at the same time. This is our proprietary technology. This does away with the need of the users to manually align and synchronise the datasets from two different satellites which might have taken images of a place at totally different times. The situation on the ground could have changed during this time, so that data from SAR is not entirely translatable into optical data. Drishti will eliminate these complications entirely," Singh said.

E. EXPLAINED

Indian startups make a mark

GALAXEYE IS one among several Indian space start-ups that are beginning to make their presence felt. Agnikul Cosmos, another start-up from IIT Madras, has built the world's first 3-D printed rocket engine, while Skyroot has tested India's first privately built rocket. Companies like Pixxel, Dhruva Space and Bellatrix have been demonstrating impressing innovations in satellite technologies.

GS 3: SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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Why India's new helicopter-launched naval missile 'hits different'

Sushant Kulkarni
Pune, May 3

LAST WEEK, the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and the Indian Navy successfully test-launched a salvo of short-range anti-ship missiles from a helicopter off the Odisha coast. These indigenously developed missiles, called the Naval Anti-Ship Missile Short Range (NASM-SR), are to be deployed from ship-borne helicopters.

This was the platform's first successful salvo test — multiple launches in quick succession — wherein two such missiles were launched from the same chopper. While the Navy already has helicopter-launched missiles, the NASM-SR offers a potential upgrade.

Role of the missiles

A helicopter-launched system, such as NASM-SR, allows a navy to engage hostile vessels from a safe distance.

The Indian Navy already possesses the British-origin Sea Eagle anti-ship missile, which it has equipped its Sea King 42B heli-copters with. Stationed on ships, these helicopters can take off, strike a target from a relatively close range, and then return to the ship.

The Sea Eagles are 1980s-era missiles, lacking many modern capabilities. One of its key issues was its weight: a single missile weighs around 580 kg.

In the early 2010s, the DRDO began working on a lighter, modern, and home-grown missile that could be carried in higher numbers in helicopters. The NASM-SR's first successful flight test was conducted in May 2022.

Anatomy of the missile

The NASM-SR uses a solid propulsion booster rocket that gives the missile its first thrust and a long-burn sustainer engine that keeps it flying for longer.

One of its key subsystems include the seeker — a sensor that detects and tracks the target. It also has a radio altimeter device that measures height from the ground or sea. Another critical component is a high-bandwidth two-way data link system that allows real-time communication be-tween the missile and operator sitting in the helicopter, DRDO said.

One missile weighs around 380 kg: 200 kg lighter than the Sea Eagle. Its 55-km range, however, is lower than the Sea Eagle's 110 km. When the NASM-SR missile is within a certain distance of its target, a radio prox-imity fuse detonates its explosive device.

Development partners

- Premier DRDO labs in Hyderabad, Pune, and Chandigarh were part of the de-velopment process
- The missiles are being produced by private sector partners with the help of MSMEs, startups, and others

The NASM-MR missile was tested last week.
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

The hits

Many modern navies have helicopter-launched missiles with two features: "man-in-loop" and "waterline hit".

"Man-in-loop" means that a human op-erator can change the missile's path even when it's mid-flight. In a crowded maritime environment, this reduces the risk of hit-ting non-combatants and makes the mis-sile more adaptable. The Navy and DRDO successfully tested this feature in February 2025. In contrast, Sea Eagles are "fire-and-forget" missiles.

A "waterline hit" means the missile strikes a ship at or just above the line where the hull meets the water. One of the ship's most vulnerable parts, damage here can cause water to rapidly flood the vessel and disable or sink it. The Sea Eagle has no spe-cific waterline hit capabilities.

The salvo test

Demonstrating a salvo launch shows the ability to overwhelm shipborne defence systems. The missile can maintain a sea-skimming trajectory and accurately lock onto the most vulnerable part of the target

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After Hormuz disruption, Asia should build an energy security alliance

OVER THE BARREL

VIKRAM S MEHTA

FATIH BIROL, executive director of the International Energy Agency (IEA), said last month that "we are facing the biggest energy security threat in history", worse than the aggregate impact of the crises sparked by the Yom Kippur War of 1973, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 and the Russia-Ukraine conflict that began in 2022. He should know, as the organisation he heads was established as a result of the Yom Kippur War. The latter triggered the quadrupling of crude oil prices ($2.90/bbl in October 1973 to $11.90 in January 1974) and a global recession. In its aftermath in January 1974, US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger invited the leaders of the Western world to a conference in Washington, DC. Kissinger's objective was to create a mechanism by which Western countries could counter the cartel of the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries (OAPEC) and manage and mitigate future supply disruptions. The IEA was the outcome of this conference.

Fifty-two years on, in the wake of the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, India should lead a call for the petroleum-importing countries of Asia to create a similar institution, but with a broader threefold purpose. One, to safeguard the rights of individual member countries to free and unencumbered navigation passage through the maritime straits in Asia; two, to counter the pricing power of Middle East exporters through the lever of their aggregate purchasing strength; and three, to harness the complementary technical, financial and human assets of members to accelerate the pace of the green energy transition. Such an institution could be called the Asian Energy Collaborative Compact (AECC).

The closure of the Strait of Hormuz has had a dual impact on Asian oil-import-dependent countries. It has led to an energy shortage and highlighted the risks of exposure to maritime chokepoints. The closure has trapped 13 million barrels of petroleum (and its derivatives) in the straits. The bulk of this quantity (approximately 85 per cent) is destined for the Asian markets. As a result, a number of Asian countries are currently facing an energy-supply crisis. The Philippines has declared a national energy emergency; Japan has cut back on ferry and bus services, and India has rationed the supply of LPG to commercial establishments. China has also put the brakes on domestic consumption, although the impact has been buffered by substitute supplies from Russia and a drawdown of stocks from its strategic reserves.

Beyond this physical constraint, the closure has alerted countries to their vulnerability to other nautical chokepoints. Aside from the Strait of Hormuz, their energy supplies have to cross the Strait of Malacca and, further east, the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea. These maritime passages are in the high seas and under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea, also referred to as the "constitution of the oceans", all ships are assured the right of "innocent passage". The Iranian action has breached this right and created a precedent that compels reflection on the counterfactual. What if the Strait of Malacca (through which 60 per cent of all seaborne trade to and from East Asia passes) were choked? What if the flow of merchandise traffic through the Taiwan Strait and/or the South China Sea were impeded by regulatory restrictions and/or tolls? What pipeline configurations, over land and under water, might enable countries to create supply lines that avoid exposure to such blocks?

> The closure has alerted countries to their vulnerability to other nautical chokepoints. Aside from the Strait of Hormuz, their energy supplies have to cross the Strait of Malacca, the Taiwan Strait and the South China Sea

These concerns are common to most Asian countries irrespective of their political system, ideology or stage of economic development. They can and should therefore be discussed conjointly. The AECC could provide a forum for such discussions.

The "Asian Premium" (the price differential between the price paid for crude oil by Asian countries to Middle Eastern exporters and the North Sea benchmark price) ranged between $3 and $6 per barrel before the start of the conflict. It widened to $60 per barrel after the start of the bombing. It has come down since, but the initial increase warrants the question: Was the steepness of the hike in prices, freight rates and insurance premiums due entirely to tightening supply and inelastic demand? Or was it also because of asymmetric bargaining, that is, the fact that Asian importers failed to leverage their aggregate purchasing power?

Kissinger convened the leadership of the Western world in January 1974 to counter OAPEC. My suggestion is that AECC should be set up to secure a similar objective. It should develop mechanisms that, whilst not impeding a country's ability to trade independently, enable the members to negotiate collectively to secure better supply terms and reduced freight and insurance costs. In addition, AECC should provide real-time market intelligence on supply disruptions, infrastructure incidents and geopolitics. This information is currently provided by the IEA, but Asia should have its own bespoke agency. IEA has a Western skew as it works under the OECD's umbrella.

The exit of the UAE from OPEC is further evidence of the fractured relationships amongst the Gulf oil exporters and the terminal volatility of the international petroleum market. It deepens the urgency for Asia to shift away from fossils towards renewables. Most, if not all, Asian countries have a green energy strategy in place, and some have made impressive progress. But no country has successfully scaled up renewables to dominance in its energy consumption basket. The question arises: How can this shift be accelerated? One proposition that *prima facie* seems fanciful would be for Asian countries to leverage their green assets (technology, finance, mineral and metal resources, human talent) to identify and tackle areas of overlapping interests regarding the green transition. The proposition is fanciful because, unlike the IEA, Asian countries do not share a common political ideology or system. But the region does have a common purpose in decarbonisation and energy security. So, in its third role as an energy think tank, AECC should research how best the complementary assets of its members can be combined to generate a positive-sum green outcome.

The writer is chairman and distinguished fellow, CSEP Research Foundation

GS 2: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
THE HINDU PAGE : 1

U.S. choices are impossible operation or bad deal: Iran

Agence France-Presse
TEHRAN

Iran's Revolutionary Guards on Sunday said the United States faced a choice between an "impossible" military operation or a "bad deal" with Tehran.

Negotiations between the two countries have been deadlocked since a ceasefire came into effect on April 8, with only one round of direct peace talks held so far. Iran's Foreign Ministry said Tehran had submitted a 14-point plan "focused on ending the war" and that Washington had already responded to it in a message to Pakistani mediators.

"We are reviewing this and will take whatever response is necessary regarding it," spokesperson Esmaeil Baqaei told state television. Mr. Trump, however, had already dismissed the offer. "I will soon be reviewing the plan that Iran has just sent to us, but can't imagine that it would be acceptable in that they have not yet paid a big enough price for what they have done to Humanity, and the World, over the last 47 years," Mr. Trump said on Truth Social.

U.S. news website Axios reported that the proposal set "a one-month deadline for negotiations on a deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz, end the U.S. naval blockade and permanently end the war in Iran and in Lebanon". In a statement on Sunday, the Revolutionary Guards sought to put the onus back on Mr. Trump, saying he must choose between "an impossible operation or a bad deal with Iran".

> I will soon be reviewing the plan that Iran has just sent to us, but can't imagine that it would be acceptable in that they have not yet paid a big enough price for what they have done to Humanity, and the World, over the last 47 years
>
> **DONALD TRUMP**
> U.S. President

SLEEPLESS IN TEHRAN
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THE HINDU PAGE : 4

Govt. on major diplomatic outreach in May

Modi, Jaishankar to host counterparts from BRICS, Quad, Africa, Europe, and the Indian Ocean Region, and travel to different parts of the world this month; outreach efforts follow the 11th Heads of Missions meet where envoys were urged to improve India's image through 'positive messaging'

Suhasini Haidar
NEW DELHI

Days after a major conference of India's Ambassadors and High Commissioners, where they were urged to be more "proactive" in projecting India's message worldwide, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar are kicking off a busy summer season, with travels to different parts of the world and hosting a number of their counterparts from BRICS and Quad groupings, Africa, Europe, Asia, and the Indian Ocean Region, all in this month alone.

On Sunday, Mr. Jaishankar arrived in Kingston, Jamaica, at the start of his own nine-day visit to the Caribbean 'CARICOM' grouping of countries, and he will also travel to Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago.

At the 11th Heads of Missions conference last week, the Prime Minister addressed India's envoys worldwide, urging them to improve India's image through more proactive and "positive messaging". According to a number of officials present, who asked not to be identified, Mr. Modi expressed concern over the "slow speed" in communication, in projecting stories about India, and in reacting to developments in their host countries. Putting a special emphasis on India's neighbourhood, Mr. Modi referred to his decision to appoint a politician, Dinesh Trivedi, as the next High Commissioner to Dhaka and indicated that he was seeking more "*anubhavi*" (experienced) hands in nearby countries.

A post by the Prime Minister on social media said the discussions focused on "strengthening India's global engagement through advancing trade, technology and strategic partnerships, while deepening the connect with our diaspora".

Significantly, the Heads of Mission conference was held almost annually in the previous decade. However, after a break during the COVID-19 pandemic, the 10th Heads of Mission meeting was held in October 2022, and the 11th conference was held in April 2026, nearly four years later. In the interim, the External Affairs Minister and Foreign Secretary addressed Regional Heads of Mission conferences in different parts of the world.

While S. Jaishankar is on a visit to the Caribbean, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will travel to Europe for a five-nation tour. FILE PHOTO

The Prime Minister has expressed concern over 'slow speed' in projecting stories about India

The Prime Minister's first major visitor this month will be Vietnamese President To Lam (May 5-7), who will be in Delhi to discuss strengthening the India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership that was upgraded in 2016, with talks on defence cooperation, trade, and critical technologies. The Ministry of External Affairs will also host the 'Indian Ocean Dialogue', a track 1.5 (officials and academics) of the 23-nation Indian Ocean Rim Association, in Delhi (May 7-8), where the war and the Hormuz Strait blockades are expected to be at the top of the agenda.

When Mr. Jaishankar returns from the three-nation Caribbean tour, he will prepare for the BRICS Ministers meeting in May (14-15), where he has invited counterparts from Brazil, Russia, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the UAE, and Indonesia. Previous rounds of BRICS meetings have been disrupted by the war in West Asia, and a joint statement was elusive at the meeting of Deputy Ministers and Special Envoys due to deep differences between the "parties to the conflict", Iran and the UAE, as well as opposition to India's moves on softening the language on the Israel-Palestine issues and the Gaza conflict.

The Prime Minister will then travel to Europe for a five-nation tour to the Netherlands, Sweden, Norway, Italy, and the Vatican (May 15-20). In Oslo, Mr. Modi will also attend the Nordic-India Summit with the leaders of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden. With the European Free Trade Association in operation and the EU-India Free Trade Agreement finalised, both sides are discussing partnerships in strategic and defence areas as well.

However, the war in West Asia, the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict, and ties with the United States are expected to overshadow the meetings. Mr. Modi is also expected to stop over at the UAE, his first visit to the region since the war began.

Later this month, the outreaches will continue, with a visit from Cyprus President Christodoulides to Mumbai and Delhi (May 20-23). U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio is expected to travel to India for his first such visit as Mr. Jaishankar hosts the Quad Foreign Ministers Meeting (May 26). The India-Africa Summit, to be held after more than a decade, will be one of the year's major conferences (May 28-30), while later this year, India is due to host the BRICS summit and the Quad Summit as well.

GS 3 : SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

THE HINDU PAGE : 6

Govt. issues guidelines on childhood diabetes care

New framework provides for universal screening, district-level diagnosis and free lifelong care, including insulin, regular monitoring, and emergency response under public health system

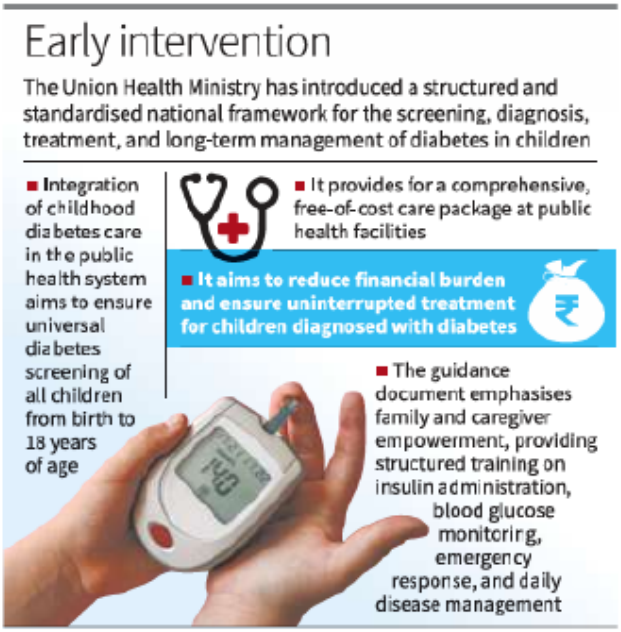
Bindu Shajan Perappadan
NEW DELHI

Integrating childhood diabetes care into the public health system, the Union Health Ministry has, for the first time, introduced a structured and standardised national framework for the screening, diagnosis, treatment and long-term management of diabetes in children.

Releasing the *Guidance Document on Diabetes Mellitus in Children* recently, the Ministry said this aims to ensure universal diabetes screening of all children in India from birth to 18 years of age.

"Suspected cases will undergo immediate blood glucose testing, followed by timely referral to district-level health facilities for confirmatory diagnosis and treatment," a senior Health Ministry official said.

He added that a key feature of the framework is the provision of a comprehensive, free-of-cost care package at public health facilities. This includes screening, diagnostic services, lifelong insulin therapy, monitoring devices such as glucometers and test strips, and regular follow-up care. The approach is designed to reduce financial burden and ensure uninterrupted treatment for children diagnosed with diabetes.



Integrated care

While the initiative positions India among a select group of countries that have integrated childhood diabetes care into the public health system, the document also introduces an integrated continuum of care, linking community-level screening with district hospital-based management and advanced care at medical colleges.

"This convergence ensures that no child is lost in the system and that care continues seamlessly from detection to long-term follow-up," the Health Ministry noted in a release issued on Sunday.

According to the World Health Organization, diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs either when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. Insulin is a hormone that regulates blood sugar. Hyperglycaemia, or raised blood sugar, is a common effect of uncontrolled diabetes and over time leads to serious damage to many of the body's systems, especially the nerves and blood vessels.

"4Ts" framework

The initiative seeks to support early detection and promote the "4Ts" awareness framework – Toilet, Thirsty, Tired, and Thinner – enabling parents, teachers and caregivers to recognise early warning signs of Type 1 diabetes.

In addition to clinical protocols, the document emphasises family and caregiver empowerment, providing structured training on insulin administration, blood glucose monitoring, emergency response and daily disease management. It also outlines evidence-based treatment guidelines, regular monitoring schedules, and protocols for preventing complications.

The initiative is expected to deliver public health benefits, including reduced mortality due to early detection, prevention of complications, and improved quality of life for affected children. Over the long term, it will contribute to lowering health care costs and strengthening health system capacity for managing non-communicable diseases among children.