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Modi led regime brought lasting peace to J&K: Amit Shah

Says decisive policies over the past decade transformed internal security

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Panchkula (Haryana), Dec 24: Asserting that the PM Modi led government has brought lasting peace to Jammu and Kashmir, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Wednesday said that decisive



policies and sustained efforts over the past decade have transformed the internal security scenario across the

country. Addressing the Passing Out Parade (POP) of the Recruit Basic Course (RBC) Batch-93 at Panchkula (Haryana), Amit Shah said, "A few years ago, there were three big challenges in the country in the matter of law and order- left-wing extremism, terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir, and armed groups in the northeast. But after 10 years from the formation of the Modi government, there is peace in these three areas, and the country is safe on

these three fronts." Shah said the PM Modi led government stands like a rock with the states in their fight against drug and human trafficking, cybercrime, and organised crime. Addressing the recruits, he said, "Your leadership is ready for it, and you will have to strengthen the hands of your leadership." "We stand like a rock with the states," he said, referring to the Union government. He said that the role of forensic science under

■ CONTD ON PAGE 2

48 pc Srinagar households enjoy 24x7 electricity: Omar

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Srinagar, Dec 24: Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Wednesday said that nearly 48 percent households in Srinagar enjoy uninterrupted electricity following a successful Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) trial with zero power cuts. Office of the Chief Minister, in a post on X, congratulated KPDCL on making another 83 areas in Srinagar 24-



hour power zones following a successful RDSS trial with zero power cuts. "With this, 108 areas in Srinagar now enjoy round-the-clock, uninterrupted electricity

supply, benefiting 1.25 lakh households, nearly 48% of the city. Similar upgrades are underway in other districts to ensure 24x7 power supply," he said. Pertinently, last year, CM Omar had informed that his government was trying their best to provide better facilities to the people and the complaints would pour in with regard to the pesky power cuts as it is the outcome of overloading.

■ CONTD ON PAGE 2

J&K Education 2025: A system under strain amid reform efforts

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu, Dec 24: In 2025, Jammu and Kashmir's school education system faced stark realities that exposed deep structural and academic weaknesses. Despite policy initiatives and incremental reforms, poor

learning outcomes, high dropout rates, infrastructure gaps, and staff shortages continued to undermine educational quality. One of the most serious concerns was the academic calendar. During the 2024-25 session, schools recorded fewer than 150 academic

days against the mandated 220, largely due to weather disruptions, floods, and extended vacations. This deficit placed pressure on students and teachers despite syllabus completion. Learning outcomes remained alarmingly low.

■ CONTD ON PAGE 2

CAG flags major lapses in rural power scheme in J&K, Ladakh

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu, Dec 24: A performance audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has exposed major lapses in the implementation of the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) in

Jammu & Kashmir, including Ladakh. The audit report tabled in the Parliament on December 18, reveals that Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh failed to complete 62.62% of its sanctioned work before the scheme's closure in March 2022.

Audit also observed that 20 States/UTs could not execute the quantum of work ranging between 3.31 per cent and 62.62 per cent till the closure of the scheme. Particularly, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, and Tripura could not complete

■ CONTD ON PAGE 2

2025: Police register 202 FIRs, nab 272 accused, seize 240 vehicles in Kashmir

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Srinagar, Dec 24: Acting tough against offenders involved in illegal mining and sand extraction, Police in North Kashmir registered 202 FIRs and arrested 272 accused in the year 2025. According to the details, Police carried out a sustained

crackdown in Baramulla, Kupwara, Bandipora, Sopore and Handwara. It also seized 240 vehicles, including tippers, tractors and earth moving machines that were allegedly used for unlawful excavation and transportation of minerals from rivers and nallahs.

■ CONTD ON PAGE 2

NEWS BRIEF

Traffic crawls on Jammu-Srinagar Highway; others closed

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Srinagar, Dec 24: Traffic moved slowly on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway on Wednesday due to single-lane traffic and the breakdown of two heavy motor vehicles (HMVs).

An official said, "Light Motor Vehicles (LMVs) and passenger vehicles have been advised to travel on NH-44 during the day and avoid night journeys, particularly between Nashri Tunnel and Navyug Tunnel, where HMV movement may cause delays."

■ CONTD ON PAGE 2

Director Information condoles demise of Subash Mehra, Editor in Chief of Jammu Jottings

JJ CORRESPONDENT

JAMMU, DECEMBER 24: Director, Directorate of Information and Public Relations, Nitish Rajora, has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the demise of Sh. Subash Mehra, Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Jammu Jottings Newspaper. Mehra breathed his last today at ASCOMS Hospital after a prolonged illness. Conveying deep sympathies with the bereaved family, the Director prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul besides courage to the

family members to bear this irreparable loss. The Director described Subash Mehra as a noble soul and a great human being who always projected the interests of the common masses with the dint of his journalistic aptitude and determination. He said the loss of late Mehra has created a void in the world of journalism and his contribution to the society would always be remembered by the media fraternity. He also expressed solidarity with the Managing Editor, Mohit Mehra, son of the deceased.

Jammu Jottings Founder Subash Mehra Consigned to Flames; Five-Decade Journalistic Legacy Honoured

Visionary Editor-in-Chief Passed Away; King C. Bharati Expresses Profound Grief, Vows Support as Mohit Mehra Continues Illustrious Dream

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu, Dec 24: The journalistic fraternity of Jammu and Kashmir today observed deep mourning as Shri Subash Mehra, the revered Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Daily Jammu Jottings Newspaper, passed away. His death occurred last night at Batra ASSCOMS Hospital after a prolonged illness, marking the end of a remarkable and impactful career spanning over five decades. His passing represents an immense and irreparable loss to the world of journalism. Hundreds of people assembled at Jogi Gate Crematorium today to pay their last respects, where his mortal remains were consigned to flames.

Shri Subash Mehra was a unique personality whose journey in journalism commenced long before the 90s, with him publishing and editing the Urdu newspaper Ghulam Ko Door



Karo. His visionary spirit truly manifested in the early 1990s when he founded Jammu Jottings as one of the first-ever colour English news magazines in Jammu and Kashmir. This pi-

oneering venture, under his astute leadership, subsequently evolved into a weekly publication, eventually transforming into the daily colour broadsheet newspaper that it is today. His foresight and dedication not only broke new ground but also set a high standard for quality journalism in the region.

King C. Bharati, the renowned journalist and artist of J&K, who shared a long and deep association with Shri Subash Mehra, Jammu Jottings, and the Mehra family since the 90s, expressed profound grief and a deep sense of personal loss. King C. Bharati, who served as the First Executive Editor of Jammu Jottings and was instrumental in launching the news magazine, recalled his close friendship with the late Editor-in-Chief. King C. Bharati stated, "The passing of Subash Ji is received with immense sorrow."

■ CONTD ON PAGE 2

ACB files chargesheet against businessman in bribery case filed by Ex-SP Jammu South

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu, Dec 24: Jammu and Kashmir Anti-Corruption Bureau on Wednesday filed the chargesheet against a businessman in a bribery

case filed against him by former Superintendent of Police, Jammu South. The ACB Spokesman said that J&K Anti-Corruption Bureau filed the charge-sheet before the Court of Special Judge,

Anti-Corruption, Jammu against Chander Sekhar Vohra, proprietor of M/s Asian Associates, for offering bribe to the Superintendent of Police, City South, Jammu, for seeking undue favour in

connection with extension of the date of exhibition cum sale at Gole Market, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. The then Superintendent of Police, City South, Jammu, in her complaint alleged that the

■ CONTD ON PAGE 2

Shri Subash Mehra, Founder and Editor-in-Chief of Daily Jammu Jottings Newspaper, passed away at Batra ASSCOMS Hospital after a prolonged illness, concluding a distinguished five-decade career in journalism; his mortal remains were consigned to flames at Jogi Gate Crematorium. Mehra, who first published the Urdu newspaper Ghulam Ko Door Karo before launching Jammu Jottings as one of J&K's first colour English news magazines in the early 90s, is survived by his sons Rohit Mehra, Mohit Mehra, daughter Sheetal Mehra, and grandchildren. King C. Bharati, First Executive Editor and a close friend, expressed profound grief and confidence that Managing Editor Mohit Mehra will realize his father's dream for Jammu Jottings to become J&K's top newspaper, praising Mohit's investigative journalism.

CONTINUATION FROM PAGE 1**Modi led regime**

The new criminal laws has been decided. "In crimes in which punishment is more than seven years, a visit by forensic experts to the scene of the crime has been made compulsory, and the main objective of this is to ensure punishment for the guilty," he said.

Shah told the constables that they were joining the police force at a time when the Colonial-era laws had been replaced by the new criminal laws.

He said the batch is the first from Haryana since the implementation of the new criminal laws.

As many as 5,061 newly trained constables formally joined the state police force from the batch.

This is the first batch in which 85 per cent youth are graduates and above, with an average age of 26, Shah said.

J&K Education 2025: A system

According to the ASER 2024 survey, only about 21 per cent of Class 5 students in government schools could read a Class 2 text, compared to over 60 per cent in private schools. Mathematics outcomes were similarly weak, with just 16 per cent of government school students able to solve basic division problems. While marginal improvements were recorded since 2022, progress was slow and uneven.

Dropout rates were another major concern. Jammu and Kashmir reported a secondary-level dropout rate of 13.4 per cent, the third highest in North India while Ladakh's rate stood at nearly 20 per cent. Retention challenges persisted at primary and senior secondary levels, with many students leaving school due to economic pressures, family work, or lack of engagement.

Despite having over 77 per cent government-run schools, only 54 per cent of students were enrolled in them, reflecting declining public confidence. Teacher shortages compounded the issue: recruitment has been frozen since 2019, leaving thousands of posts vacant, including over 4,200 lecturer positions. Additionally, the region ranked among the highest nationally for untrained teachers, particularly at pre-primary and upper-primary levels.

Infrastructure gaps further weakened the system. More than 98 per cent of schools lacked digital library facilities, over 1,900 schools had no separate toilets for girls, and many institutions operated with single teachers or even zero enrolment. Libraries, where present, often lacked basic textbooks.

Financial inefficiency added to the challenge. Over the past five years, only about 70 per cent of allocated education funds were utilised, with utilisation dropping to nearly 55 per cent in 2024-25.

Social and behavioural issues also surfaced. Surveys revealed that nearly 80 per cent of adolescents used smartphones primarily for social media rather than education, while 38 per cent reported being mocked by classmates, raising concerns about school climate and student well-being.

Amid these challenges, the government initiated several corrective measures. These included syllabus relaxation, curriculum standardisation, action against poor-performing lecturers, proposals to de-freeze General Line Teacher posts, staff creation for "hanging schools," free textbooks and uniforms for over 13 lakh students, and plans for dual-level mathematics exams in Class 10. The government also ordered the takeover of 215 schools linked to proscribed organisations.

While these steps signal intent, 2025 underscored that Jammu and Kashmir's education system requires sustained investment, accountability, teacher training, and a decisive shift from enrolment-focused metrics to genuine learning outcomes to ensure meaningful reform.

ACB files chargesheet

businessman approached her offering a bribe of Rs 30,000 to get an extension for the exhibition-cum-sale event at Gole Market, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu

"The bribe money was also recovered and seized on the spot in the presence of independent witnesses," he said. He added that after the completion of investigation of the case as proved and the charge-sheet has been filed against the accused in the Court of Special Judge, Anti-Corruption, Jammu for judicial determination.

Traffic crawls on Jammu-Srinagar

He urged the drivers to maintain strict lane discipline and warned that overtaking or wrong-lane driving can lead to congestion.

The official said, "Subject to fair weather and road conditions, LMVs, passenger vehicles, private cars, and HMVs (good carrier) will be allowed to move in both directions on NH-44 on Thursday."

Meanwhile, Traffic Control Units (TCUs) in Jammu and Srinagar have been asked to coordinate with TCU Ramban regarding road conditions and Security forces convoys have been advised to move on the NH-44 only after confirmation of road status.

According to the officials the Kishitwar-Sinthan-Anantnag NH-244 remains closed due to snow accumulation while vehicles on the Srinagar-Sonamarg-Gumari (SSG) Road, will be allowed to move in a regulated manner after getting a green signal from BRO. "LMVs and HMVs (up to six tyres) with anti-skid chains will be permitted from Minamarg towards Srinagar between 8 AM and 11:30 AM, and from Sonamarg towards Kargil between 1 PM and 4 PM," the official said, adding, "Similarly, on Mughal Road, LMVs and private cars with anti-skid chains will be allowed from Behramgala towards Shopian and Herpora-Shopian towards Poonch between 10:30 AM and 2:30 PM, subject to fair weather and road clearance from GREF. Vehicles will not be allowed after the cutoff timings. Security forces convoys will coordinate their movement to avoid disrupting civil traffic."

Commuters have been urged to confirm road conditions before travel from the following Traffic Control Units: Jammu (0191-2459048, 0191-2740550, 9419147732, 103), Srinagar (0194-2450022, 2485396, 18001807091, 103), Ramban (9419993745, 1800-180-7043), Udhampur (8491928625), PCR Kishitwar (9906154100), and PCR Kargil (9541902330, 9541902331).

48 pc Srinagar households**Disclaimer**

The responsibility of stories published by-name in this paper will be solely on the reporters with whom name the story is published and reporters have to take the responsibility of the same. Management shares no responsibility for any report carried under the byname of the reporters.

Editor-in Chief
Daily Jammu Jottings

However, he had informed that the 24x7 electricity would be possible only when the 100 per cent metering is done.

Furthermore, the CM as reported by KNO had also stated that adequate arrangements were put in place for better facilities to the people during winters.

Omar added that the tourist rush is expected to increase once the snowfall occurs, adding that the efforts are on to make J&K a round-the-year tourist destination.

2025: Police register 202 FIRs,

Officials said the operations were conducted through surprise night raids, intensified naka checking and joint inspections along with the Geology and Mining Department at identified hotspots along riverbeds and extraction sites.

Police have warned that unauthorized mining will invite strict legal action under relevant sections of the Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act and other applicable laws, urging people to report violations to help protect fragile riverine ecosystems.

CAG flags major lapses

62.62 per cent and 20.72 per cent of their respective sanctioned project costs.

In its response to audit observations, the Union Ministry of Power stated that delay in J&K was due to unexpected events.

"In respect of Jammu & Kashmir, it was stated that delays happened due to unexpected events i.e., issues in tendering, hostile terrain," the report said.

The Centre had launched the scheme 'Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana' (DDUGJY) in December 2014 to provide continuous and reliable electricity supply to rural areas through feeder separation, strengthening of distribution infrastructure, and rural electrification initiatives.

DDUGJY guidelines stipulated that in a project, the work was to be completed within 24 months from the date of issue of Letter of Award in case of turnkey contract and within 30 months in case of partial turnkey contract/departmental execution.

The Monitoring Committee overseeing the implementation of DDUGJY, in its 23rd meeting held on December 21, 2021, instructed state distribution companies (DISCOMs) to take up only those works that could be completed by December 31, 2021.

It was also conveyed that works executed beyond December 31, 2021 shall not be funded under the scheme.

Jammu Jottings Founder Subash

He was not just a colleague but a very dear friend and a true visionary. His keen insights and personal touch will always be deeply missed, not only in the crucial process of news gathering but also in the personal bonding that defined our association."

Shri Subash Mehra is survived by his two sons, Rohit Mehra and Mohit Mehra, his daughter Sheetal Mehra, and a loving circle of grandchildren. His legacy of fearless and dedicated journalism is now powerfully carried forward by his son, Mohit Mehra, the Managing Editor of Jammu Jottings. King C. Bharati, who has known Mohit Mehra since childhood, expressed unwavering confidence in his abilities. King C. Bharati affirmed, "Mohit possesses the vision and dedication to realize the dream Subash Ji envisioned for Jammu Jottings. I am confident that under his leadership, Jammu Jottings will emerge as the top-most newspaper of Jammu and Kashmir."

Mohit Mehra assumed the role of Managing Editor of the newspaper very early in his career. He has since handled the publication with exceptional efficiency. His reputation as a well-known investigative journalist has grown steadily, with him delivering "scoops after scoops" that have, at times, "rattled the powers that be." This fearless approach has allowed Mohit Mehra to carve a distinct niche for himself in the field of journalism.

King C. Bharati offered his full and unwavering support to Mohit Mehra in running Jammu Jottings, pledging his assistance to ensure the publication continues to thrive and honour its founder's legacy. He also offered his sincerest prayers for the eternal peace of the departed soul of Shri Subash Mehra, acknowledging that his absence would be profoundly felt across the journalistic landscape.

IN THE COURT OF TEHSILDAR EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS GANDHOL (BHALESSA)

Present: Muneeb Umar (JKAS)

Farooq Ahmed Vs Block Development Officer
S/O Faqir Mohd Chilly
R/O Haddal (Non-applicant)
Tehsil Gandhol (Bhalessa)
District Doda

In the matter of:-
Application for seeking direction upon the non-applicant to enter/register the birth particulars of the applicant's children in the Birth and Death Register.

NOTICE FOR PUBLIC AT LARGE

Whereas, the applicant named above has filed an application seeking direction to the non-applicant to register the date of birth particulars of applicant's Child/Children's as mentioned below in the concerned register.

Name of the Child	Sex	Father's Name	Mother's Name	Date of Birth	Place of Birth
01 MOHD MUZAMMAL	M	FAROOQ AHMED	GH BIBI	10/12/2012	HOME (HADDAL)
02 SHAH FARIED	M	FAROOQ AHMED	GH BIBI	01/02/2018	HOME (HADDAL)
03 MOHD YOUSAF	M	FAROOQ AHMED	GH BIBI	05/04/2019	HOME (HADDAL)

Therefore by virtue of this notice public at large is informed that if any person has any objection in respect to the above mentioned application, he/she shall file his/her objection in this office within 15 days from the issuance of this notice failing which said application shall be dealt into in accordance with law.

No: Teh/G/D&B/
Dated:

Tehsildar
Executive Magistrate 1st Class
Gandhol.

IN THE COURT OF EXECUTIVE MAGISTRATE 1ST CLASS LOHAI MALHAR

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform public in General that the following persons had filed their petitions before this Court (Tehsildar Lohai Malhar) or seeking directions regarding registration of birth records.

S. No.	Name Of applicant	Father's Name	Mother's Name	Sex	Date of Birth (as stated by the applicant)	Place of birth (as stated by the applicant)
1.	Asho Begum	Shatti	Kamoo	Fe-Male	03/04/1975	R/o Village Bhatooh Teh. Lohai Malhar Distt. Kathua.

Therefore, through the medium of this notice, public at large is informed that if any person has any objection in respect to the abovementioned details of the petitioners/applicant, he/she shall appear in this court either personally or through a counsel to file his/her objections within a period of 07 days from the publication of this notice in this newspaper.

S/
Tehsildar
Executive Magistrate 1st Class
Lohai-Malhar HQ, Machhedi

No: JC/TLM/2024-25/196
Dtd: 18/12/2025

EOW charges Arunachal woman in Rs 26 lakh online impersonation scam

Srinagar, Dec 24: The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Crime Branch Kashmir has filed a chargesheet in a 26 lakh rupees international online fraud case, unraveling a sophisticated impersonation racket run by an Arunachal Pradesh woman.

Officials said the accused allegedly duped a local businessman through fake social media profiles, forged identity documents and a bogus international business deal, routing the defrauded money through multiple bank accounts.

According to a statement issued, the Economic Offences Wing (EOW), Crime Branch Kashmir, has filed a chargesheet before the Court of Judge Small Causes, Srinagar, in connection with FIR No. 17/2020,

registered under Sections 419, 420, 468, 471 RPC and Section 66-D of the Information Technology Act.

The statement reads, the chargesheet has been submitted against accused Jumbom Riba D/o Henjum Riba, resident of Village Pagi, P.O./P.S. Basar, District Lepa Rada, West Siang, Arunachal Pradesh, for her alleged involvement in a sophisticated online cheating and impersonation racket involving international dimensions.

It reads, the case originated from a written complaint wherein the complainant alleged that he was contacted through social media by a woman identifying herself as Christiana, claiming to be a Secretary with Abbot Pharmaceutical, United Kingdom. On the

pretext of offering dealership rights for a product named "Agasina Nut," purportedly sourced from Arunachal Pradesh, the complainant was induced with promises of high profits and an international purchase agreement. Acting on these assurances, the complainant transferred approximately ₹26.25 lakh into multiple bank accounts. The fraud was further facilitated through a staged and fake demonstration of currency conversion, leading to substantial financial loss.

The statement also reads, during investigation, EOW Kashmir established that the accused used forged and non-genuine identity documents, including fake voter ID cards, to open multiple bank accounts in the names of Tabu Juli and Aisha

Kholi across various banks. These accounts were operated by the accused herself and were used for routing, diversion, and withdrawal of funds. Transaction analysis revealed rapid inter-bank transfers and cash withdrawals, with no legitimate source of income to justify the credits.

"The investigation conclusively proved offences of cheating, impersonation, forgery, and use of forged documents as genuine. Accordingly, the investigation has been concluded as proved, and the chargesheet has been produced in absentia under Section 512 CrPC for judicial determination. Economic Offences Wing Kashmir urges people to remain alert & don't fall prey to fraudsters online & offline," it reads further.

J&K HC dismisses Mehbooba's PIL on transfer of prisoners from outside jails to J-K

Srinagar, Dec 24 : The High Court of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh has dismissed a PIL filed by PDP president Mehbooba Mufti seeking transfer of prisoners from outside jails to prisons in J-K.

A division bench of the high court, comprising Chief Justice Arun Palli and Justice Rajesh Oswal, in a 15-page order passed on Tuesday said the petition appears to have been filed for garnering political mileage.

"It appears that the instant petition has been initiated by the petitioner for the explicit purpose of garnering political advantage and positioning herself as a crusader of justice for a particular demographic," the bench observed.

The court said it cannot remain oblivious to the violent past, which the residents

of Jammu and Kashmir have passed through, because of forces hostile to the unity and integrity of the country.

"In fact, the petitioner recognises the special circumstances of Jammu and Kashmir, when in relief part of this petition, she states that the undertrials are detained in the prisons in U.T. of Jammu and Kashmir, unless the Jail Authorities furnish reasons before this court demonstrating 'unavoidable and compelling necessity' in exceptional cases. The detailing of such exceptional cases has been conveniently ignored by the petitioner," the court said.

The bench said the PIL cannot be allowed to be utilised as an instrument for advancing partisan or political agendas or transforming the court into a political platform.

"Public Interest Litigation is also not a mechanism for gaining political leverage, and the Courts cannot serve as a forum for electoral campaigns.

"While political parties possess manifold legitimate avenues to engage with the electorate, courts cannot be employed as an instrument for achieving electoral advantage," it added.

The high court said that notwithstanding the "vagueness and the ulterior motive" that prompted the petitioner to approach the government and the court, it is deemed appropriate to observe that under-trials, whose cause, the petitioner claims to have projected in this petition, are facing trials before the respective courts.

"Judicial avenues were/are available to such undertrials for the redressal

of any grievance concerning their detention.

"The omission on their part to avail themselves of these legal remedies is an indicative of the fact that they are not genuinely aggrieved of their retention in the prisons outside the UT of Jammu and Kashmir," the court said.

It said a PIL is maintainable only on a prima facie showing of public interest.

Where such interest is in doubt or compromised by extraneous considerations, the court must decline to interfere, as preventing the abuse of legal process is, in itself, a matter of significant public interest, it added.

"In light of what has been said and discussed above, the present petition is found to be misconceived and is, accordingly, dismissed," the court said in the order.

RTO issues 15-day deadline for re-registration of outside vehicles in Jammu

JAMMU, Dec 24: The Regional Transport Officer, Jammu, has issued a public notice directing owners of motor vehicles bearing registration numbers of other States or Union Territories and plying in the Jammu Division beyond the permitted period to apply for re-registration immediately.

The notice states that keeping such vehicles in Jammu for more than 12 months without re-registration violates Section 47 of the Motor Vehicles Act, 1988, and poses risks to regulation, vehicle traceability and public safety.

As such, the vehicle owners have been given 15 days from the date of issuance of the notice to obtain a new registration mark from the competent authority, failing which the vehicles will be liable for seizure, detention, penalties and other legal action under the Motor Vehicles Act and relevant rules.

Govt Issues January roster of Admn Secys

JAMMU, Dec 24: The Jammu and Kashmir government has issued the roster of Administrative Secretaries who will remain available at the Civil Secretariat, Srinagar, during January 2026. As per the order issued by the General Administration Department, Brij Mohan Sharma, Principal Secretary, Culture Department, and M. Raju, Commissioner Secretary, General Administration Department, will be on duty from January 5 to 9, followed by Dr Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, Secretary, Health and Medical Education Department, and Mohammad Aijaz, Secretary, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department, from January 12 to 16.

Similarly, Vikramjit Singh, Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce Department, and Zubair Ahmad, Commissioner Secretary, Floriculture, Parks and Gardens Department, will be available from January 19 to 23, while Yasha Mudgal, Commissioner Secretary, Youth Services and Sports Department, and Dr Shahid Iqbal Choudhary, Secretary, Science and Technology Department, will remain stationed from January 26 to 30.

SDM Uri among 16 IAS officers promoted

JAMMU, Dec 24: The Ministry of Home Affairs has promoted sixteen IAS officers to the next higher grade, including Shubhankar Pratyush Pathak, who is currently posted as Sub-Divisional Magistrate Uri in Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir. Other officers promoted by the MHA include Samyak S Jain, Ishita Rathi, Ayushi, Manjunath R, Wairopkam Punshiba Singh, Kamleshwar Rao, Tushar Anand, Srinivas Sadi, Yashwant Meena, Sovigya S Chandra, Mohd Shabir, Shivam Chandra, Mukul Beniwal, Kanika, and Raghvendra Meena.

Army JCO killed in firing incident

Jammu Dec 24 : A Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) of the Army died in a firing incident inside a military camp in Samba district, a defence spokesperson said on Wednesday.

The incident occurred late Tuesday night and is under investigation, he said, ruling out any terror angle.

"A JCO of an Army unit in Samba sustained a gunshot wound while on duty in Jammu and unfortunately succumbed to his injuries in the line of duty. At this stage, the terror angle has been ruled out. "The incident is under investigation and further details will be shared as facts are established," the spokesperson said. The Army's Rising Star Corps identified the jawan as Subedar Surjeet Singh and paid rich tributes to him.

"Rising Star Corps pays solemn tribute to braveheart Subedar Surjeet Singh, who made the supreme sacrifice while on operational duty in Jammu. The Indian Army stands firmly with the bereaved family in this hour of grief and assures unwavering support," it said in a post on X.

PoK woman repatriated after crossing LoC in Poonch

Jammu Tawi, Dec 24 : A 35-year-old woman from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) was repatriated from Poonch district to Pakistan on Wednesday, nine days after she inadvertently crossed the Line of Control (LoC), officials said.

Shahnaz Akhter, a resident of village Mohra Shareef in Kotli district, was apprehended by Army troops soon after she intruded into the Indian side near Dabi post in Mendhar sector on December 16.

The woman was later handed over to police for questioning, the officials said.

Her questioning revealed that she had inadvertently intruded into this side after getting lost in the forest while grazing her sheep, they said.

Accordingly, the Army contacted their Pakistani counterparts and confirmed her antecedents, the officials said. They said she was handed over to the Pakistan army at Chakan-Da-Bagh border crossing point in presence of police and civil officials after completion of legal formalities Wednesday evening.

CRPF jawan injured in leopard attack

Srinagar, Dec 24 : A CRPF jawan was injured after a leopard attacked him at a camp of the paramilitary force in Anantnag district on Wednesday, officials said.

The leopard strayed into the CRPF camp in Kapran area of Verinag in south Kashmir while personnel were having breakfast in the mess, they said.

The animal attacked one jawan before fleeing into the nearby forest, the officials said.

The injured jawan was rushed to a nearby hospital, where he is undergoing treatment, they added.

J&K Bank wins 'Best MSME Bank' at MSME Banking Excellence Awards 2025

JJ CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 24: Jammu & Kashmir Bank has won the prestigious 'Best MSME Bank - Winner' award at the MSME Banking Excellence Awards 2025, while also securing the Runner-Up position in the 'CSR Initiative & Business Responsibility' category. The MSME Banking Excellence Awards recognise banks for exemplary performance and best practices in promoting MSMEs, corporate social responsibility and sustainable business models. Notably, Union Minister for Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal presented the awards at a high-profile ceremony held in New Delhi. On behalf of the Bank the awards were received by Chief General Manager (Business Development) Sunit Kumar and GM/Divisional Head (RO) Khursheed Muzaffar. Expressing delight over the



recognition, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee said, "We are deeply honoured to receive national recognition for our work in the MSME sector as well as for our CSR initiatives. I sincerely thank the organisers and the distinguished jury for this recognition. And I place my appreciation on record for our MSME team and CSR functionaries, whose dedicated efforts and efficient on-ground engagements have been instrumental in achieving these milestones."

Calling MSMEs a focus area for J&K Bank, MD & CEO further said, "In line with the national development objectives and regulatory expectations, MSME financing has been our strategic priority. As of now, we are exclusively implementing the UT Government's flagship Mission YUVA program, which aims at creating 1.37 lakh enterprises in next 5 years resulting in employment opportunities for 4.25 lakh youth." "The Bank remains committed to support entrepreneurs through tailored financial solutions, simplified processes, digital interventions and continuous handholding, especially in our core geography, while steadily expanding its MSME portfolio across the country", he added.

On CSR, MD & CEO noted that the Bank's initiatives are closely aligned with national development priorities, focusing on education, healthcare, environmental sustainability, skill development and livelihood generation, thereby ensuring that the Bank's growth also translates into meaningful social impact for the people it serves. Pertinently, former Supreme Court Judge Justice Deepak Verma chaired the jury for the awards organised by the Chamber of Indian Micro Small and Medium Enterprises with the evaluation carried out by its knowledge partner CareEdge Ratings.

Legal protection against child marriage: Awareness event held at ANMT School Doda

JJ CORRESPONDENT
DODA, DECEMBER 24: Child Helpline Doda organized an impactful awareness event here at ANMT School to educate students about legal safeguards against child marriage and protection of child rights. The event was hosted under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner, Harvinder Singh and supervision of District Social Welfare Officer, Zubair Ahmad. The visiting team sensitized students and staff to the harmful consequences of child marriage, existing legal safeguards and the significance of reporting such cases. The team also highlighted the vital role of Child Helpline 1098 as a 24x7 support service for children in distress. The program aimed to empower students with knowledge about their rights, foster awareness and encourage active participation in protecting children from exploitation and abuse.



The event was held in a classroom at ANMT School, Doda. A group of children and adults are seated at desks, listening attentively. A banner in the background reads "TAKE A PLEDGE TO CREATE A CHILD MARRIAGE FREE SOCIETY". The banner also mentions "Child Helpline 1098" and "Child Protection".

Mission Director Poshan J&K organizes training workshop for newly recruited Anganwadi Workers (Sanginis)

JJ CORRESPONDENT
JAMMU, DECEMBER 24: A one day training programme for newly recruited Anganwadi Workers (Sanginis) was today organized by the office of the Deputy Director Poshan Jammu division under the direction of the Mission Director Poshan J&K. The training programme encompassed the guidelines of Saksham Anganwadi and Poshan 2.0 along with detailed orientation of the schemes implemented by the department including Face Recognition System (FRS),

Automated Permanent Academic Account Registry (APAAR) ID, SS app, Growth Monitoring/SAM/MAM, Aadhaar up-dation, eKYC and PMMVY Portal. A group of 118 newly recruited Anganwadi Workers (Sanginis) hailing from district Jammu, Reasi, Samba & Udhampur participated in the training to prepare them for their future role in Anganwadi Centers. Speaking on the occasion, Mission Director Poshan J&K, Sajad Hussain Ganai welcomed the new recruits

to the department and exhorted them to keenly learn about the departmental schemes and policies and the implementation of the same in the field. He further asked the Anganwadi Workers (Sanginis) to act as a strong bridge between beneficiaries at the Anganwadi Centres and the department to facilitate full saturation of the schemes. The District Programme Officer Jammu also addressed the gathering, encouraging the participants to make the most of the training.

Reasi Administration continues grassroots outreach on Day 6 of Good Governance Week

JJ CORRESPONDENT
REASI, DECEMBER 24: On the sixth day of the week-long Good Governance Week campaign "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore", the District Administration Reasi, under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Nidhi Malik, continued its sustained grassroots outreach initiatives aimed at delivering government services at the doorsteps of citizens and promoting responsive, transparent and citizen-centric governance across the district. As part of the campaign, the Agriculture Department organized a Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore camp at Panchayat Bharkh, Zone Pouni, Sub-Division Reasi, which witnessed enthusiastic participation from a large number of farmers. During the camp, farmers were sensitized about various flagship schemes of the department, including the Kisan Credit Card (KCC), Pradhan Mantri



Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMBFY) and the Soil Health Card (SHC) scheme. Officials encouraged the farmers to avail benefits under these schemes and three KCC application forms were filled on the spot to facilitate immediate service delivery. The Jal Shakti Department (Public Health Engineering), Sub-Division Katra initiated door-to-door visits to the households of beneficiaries for the collection of water revenue and to address

issues related to non-regularised water connections. The field staff engaged directly with residents to ensure public-friendly revenue collection, hassle-free grievance redressal and enhanced accountability at the grassroots level. Additionally, Aadhaar enrolment and updation camps were organized at various panchayats under the Poshan Project Reasi as part of Sushasan Saptah. These camps aimed to facilitate Aadhaar services for beneficiaries across all age groups, thereby strengthening access to welfare schemes and ensuring inclusion of all eligible beneficiaries.

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issues related to non-regularised water connections. The field staff engaged directly with residents to ensure public-friendly revenue collection, hassle-free grievance redressal and enhanced accountability at the grassroots level. Additionally, Aadhaar enrolment and updation camps were organized at various panchayats under the Poshan Project Reasi as part of Sushasan Saptah. These camps aimed to facilitate Aadhaar services for beneficiaries across all age groups, thereby strengthening access to welfare schemes and ensuring inclusion of all eligible beneficiaries.

UFM Committee meeting on December 27: JKBOSE

JJ CORRESPONDENT
JAMMU, DECEMBER 24: The Unfair Means Committee (UFM) of JKBOSE is holding a meeting on December 27 to examine the nature of irregularities resorted to by certain candidates of Secondary School (Class 10) and Higher Secondary Part- II (Class 12) Annual/ Regular-2025 and dispose of the cases pertaining to winter zone areas of Jammu Division in accordance with the relevant regulations. "To be chaired by Joint Secretary Secrecy, the Committee will take up UFM cases of class 10 and 12 on December 27 at 10:30 AM here at J&K BOSE Office, Rehari Colony," a Board Official said. The concerned candidates are advised to attend the proceedings and plead their cases with the committee through evidence. The details of the candidates bearing examination Roll Nos. can be surfed on the official website, www.jkbose.nic.in.

UFM Committee meeting on December 27: JKBOSE

UFM Committee meeting on December 27: JKBOSE

Good Governance Week-Day 6: Extensive Public Outreach-Awareness Camps held across District Poonch

JJ CORRESPONDENT
POONCH, DECEMBER 24: In continuation to the "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore" campaign, District Administration Poonch hosted extensive public outreach, awareness activities and field-level engagement on the sixth day of Good Governance Week. A series of outreach programmes were organized across Balakote, Surankote, Lasana, Buzliar, Loran, Mankote, Mendhar, NSSB, Sathra, Mandi and Poonch where government functionaries listened and addressed public grievances provided varied services and generated public awareness about the Government schemes. A medical camp was held at Village KG Dharati (Aspirants Block Mankote), where a team of doctors provided OPD services to local people by conducting screening for Hypertension, Diabetes, Anaemia Tuberculosis and ANC Check-up. Senior citizens were registered for Vay Vandna Card. The people were also imparted awareness on National Health Programs. Similar medical camps were held in other parts of the district.

Good Governance Week-Day 6: Extensive Public Outreach-Awareness Camps held across District Poonch

Good Governance Week-Day 6: Extensive Public Outreach-Awareness Camps held across District Poonch

Power shutdown

JJ CORRESPONDENT
JAMMU, DECEMBER 24: Superintending Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL O&M Circle Kathua has informed that the power supply to Industry-1 and adjoining areas will remain affected on December 25 and 28 from 8 am to 1 pm. Similarly, the power supply to Kaluchak, Birpur Complex old, BB Town and adjoining areas will remain affected on December 27 and 30 from 8 am to 12 noon. Meanwhile, Executive Engineer, Electric Division-1, JPDCL, Parade, Jammu has informed that the power supply to Super Market area will remain affected on December 24, 26, 28, 30, 2025 & January 02 and 04, 2026 from 10 pm to 4 am. Similarly, the power supply to Parade area will remain affected on December 24 to 30 daily on as and when required basis.

Power shutdown

Power shutdown

DC Srinagar reviews implementation of PM Surya Muft Bijli Yojana in district

JJ CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR DECEMBER 24: To assess the progress achieved in installation of Solar Rooftops under PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana across the district, the Deputy Commissioner(DC) Srinagar, Akshay Labroo, who is also the Chairman Monitoring and Management Committee of the scheme, today chaired a review meeting at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex. Besides, Chief Planning Officer, Fayaz Ahmad Dar, Executive Engineers of KPDC, Lead District Manager (Banks), the meeting was attended by KPDC Engineers and empanelled scheme vendors who presented team wise appraisal of the ongoing installation works and the current status of implementation under the centrally sponsored scheme. At the outset, the DC took a detailed assessment of division-wise and team-wise performance, focusing on targets achieved, applications received, and installations completed across all four Electric Divisions of Srinagar.

DC Srinagar reviews implementation of PM Surya Muft Bijli Yojana in district

DC Srinagar reviews implementation of PM Surya Muft Bijli Yojana in district

Div Com Kashmir for In-Situ De-Addiction Mechanism in Educational Institutions

JJ CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 24: Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Anshul Garg, chaired a meeting on Wednesday to review and strengthen measures aimed at curbing the growing menace of substance abuse in the Valley. Emphasizing the need for coordinated and sustained efforts by all concerned departments, the Div Com directed educational institutions, including schools and colleges, to establish in-situ de-addiction mechanisms within their respec-

tive campuses. He instructed that each educational institution shall nominate one male and one female nodal officer responsible for implementation of IEC (Information, Education and Communication) activities, student counselling, identification of vulnerable individuals, and continuous monitoring and tracking of affected students. Wakf authorities were directed to organize orientation programmes for religious leaders to effectively utilize their influence in

society for generating awareness regarding the harmful effects of substance abuse and promoting social responsibility. With regard to coaching institutions and student accommodations, IMHANS was directed to develop a structured monitoring framework to keep effective oversight on coaching hubs. Director Health Services was instructed to prepare a comprehensive training calendar for training of trainers, with the objective of creating a robust pool of

trained resource persons for educational institutions. Further, Director Colleges and Director Schools were directed to compile and submit a list of staff members to be trained and assigned the responsibility of identification, counselling, and monitoring of students vulnerable to substance abuse. The Div Com emphasized the conduct of regular awareness sessions, maintenance of performance reports, and documentation and dissemination of success stories.

Police Department was directed to enhance surveillance over identified drug hotspots across Srinagar city and other districts in close coordination with the Health Department. The meeting was attended by the DC Srinagar, Akshay Labroo; Director School Education, Director Social Welfare, Joint Director Information, and officers from Health Services, Higher Education, IMHANS, Wakf Board, Police Department, along with representatives of civil society.

Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir
Office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical & Hospital Division Udhampur

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor, of Jammu & Kashmir (UT) e-tenders are invited in two cover system, from reputed and registered firms for the job mentioned below:-

S.NO.	Description of work	N.I.T No	Estimated/ Approved Cost (in Lacs)	Earnest Money/ Performance Security	Cost of tender documents	Time of completion	Eligibility Criteria of Bidder	Project Indenting Authority	Tender Receiving Authority
01	General repairs with replacement of defective parts of departmental Gypsy No. JK02BF-6452	E-NIT No. MHDU/TS/ 80 of 2025-26 Dt:- 22/12/2025 Due on:- 02/01/2026	0.722 Lacs	Earnest Money 2% of estimated amount, amounting to Rs. 1444/- only shall be submitted by all Participating Bidder in the shape of CDR/FDR/TDR/BG. Performance Security 3% of the contract value shall be submitted by the lowest Bidder before the allotment of work order in the shape of CDR/FDR/TDR/BG.	Rs. 200/- (Fixed Amount) in the shape of challan through J&K Govt. Treasury indicating treasury Voucher No. & date and also indicating the name of work duly credited to MH-0059(PWD) Misc. Revenue and uploading a copy of treasury challan/receipt on e-tendering portal OR The bidder may deposit tender fee in shape of e-challan through Account No. 0028010200000009, J&K Bank, Udhampur, of Executive Engineer Mechanical Division Udhampur)	10 days (Ten days)	Registered/ Reputed/ Mechanical firms having sufficient experiences for the similar nature work	-	Executive Engineer Mechanical & Hospital division Udhampur

Position of Funds:- (Available)
Position of AA/Tech. Sanction:- (Accorded)

The e-NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, terms & conditions, Bill of Quantities can be seen / downloaded from the J&K govt. website www.jktenders.gov.in (Tender ID 2025_PWDJK_ 298901_1)

DIP/J-9349/25
Date: Dec 24 2025
No: MHDU/TS/ 2774
Dated:- 22-12-2025

-sd-
(Er. Daljeet Singh)
Executive Engineer
Mechanical & Hospital Division
Udhampur

Sat Sharma calls for mass adoption of Swadeshi products BJP organizes Swadeshi Mela in Jammu, reinforces call for Atmanirbhar Bharat

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu, December 24: The Bharatiya Janata Party, Jammu & Kashmir, organized a vibrant Swadeshi Mela at Bahu Plaza, Jammu, aimed at promoting indigenously manufactured products, empowering local artisans, traders and entrepreneurs, and strengthening the spirit of Atmanirbharta and Swadeshi among the masses.

The event was graced by J&K BJP President and Rajya Sabha MP Sat Sharma, J&K BJP General Secretary (Organization) Ashok Koul, Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh, MP Jugal Kishore Sharma, along with J&K BJP Vice-Presidents Priya Sethi, Rajiv Charak, Rakesh Mahajan, Rekha Mahajan, Rashpaul Verma, General Secretaries Sanjita Dogra, Baldev Singh Billawaria, Gopal Mahajan, Secretaries Reema Padha, Arun Sharma, District President Naresh Singh Jasrotia, senior leaders Adv. Rajesh Gupta, Nand Kishore, Rinku Choudhary, and MLAs

Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal, Surjit Singh performances by local folk artists and singers,



Salthia, Chander Prakash Ganga, Ch. Vikram Randhawa, Yudhvir Sethi, Arvind Gupta, Prof. Gharu Ram, Dr. Rajiv, besides a large number of party functionaries and citizens.

The programme commenced with the lighting of traditional lamps by the dignitaries. Priya Sethi, Vice-President, J&K BJP, was the Programme Incharge, and the event was organized by the Jammu South District team. The Swadeshi Mela also featured captivating cultural

performances by local folk artists and singers,

Dr. Jitendra Singh, while addressing the Mela, highlighted India's rising global stature, and said that India today is not merely advocating Atmanirbharta but demonstrating it through decisive action and tangible outcomes. He pointed out that India's indigenous defence capabilities have proven their strength, stating that Indian-built firepower effectively countered hostile forces during Operation Sindoor. Dr. Singh said that the world is increasingly looking towards India in key sectors such as space science, satellite launches, advanced medicine and biotechnology.

He highlighted that even major global powers are opting for satellite launches through India, reflecting international trust in Indian capabilities. Recalling India's humanitarian role during the COVID-19 pandemic, he

used by an Indian household strengthens the nation's economy, empowers local workers, and enhances India's self-reliance," Sat Sharma said, urging citizens to consciously prefer Indian-made products in their daily lives.

Sat Sharma further asserted that the BJP-led government has transformed India into a confident and capable global player, with indigenous strength visible in defence, infrastructure, space, science, healthcare and technology. He stated that Viksit Bharat @2047 can only be realized when the spirit of Swadeshi becomes a mass movement. Ashok Koul underlined cultural pride and self-belief, and said that Atmanirbharta begins with the spirit of 'Swa'-self-pride, self-confidence and self-belief. He stressed the importance of respecting and promoting indigenous products, languages and culture as a foundation of national strength. He recalled the pivotal role played by former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee in securing the inclusion of the

Dogri language in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian Constitution, highlighting BJP's long-standing commitment to cultural identity and inclusive development.

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He highlighted that even major global powers are opting for satellite launches through India, reflecting international trust in Indian capabilities. Recalling India's humanitarian role during the COVID-19 pandemic, he

said that India supplied vaccines to numerous countries, many free of cost, showcasing India's leadership guided by the ethos of Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam.

Jugal Kishore Sharma emphasized grassroots economic empowerment, and said that the concept of Swadeshi directly connects with grassroots economic empowerment. He stated that promotion of local products ensures that money circulates within Indian markets, benefiting small traders, artisans, farmers, women self-help groups and startups.

Jugal Kishore Sharma emphasized that under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, focused initiatives such as Vocal for Local, Make in India and Startup India have created unprecedented opportunities for local producers. He urged people to become active stakeholders in nation-building by supporting Swadeshi products, stating that public participation is the key force behind achieving a self-reliant and developed India.

Legal protection against child marriage: Awareness event held at ANMT School Doda

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Doda, December 24: Child Helpline Doda organized an impactful awareness event here at ANMT School to educate students about legal safeguards against child marriage and protection of child rights. The event was hosted under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner, Harvinder Singh and supervision of District Social Welfare Officer, Zubair Ahmad. The visiting team sensitized students and staff to the harmful consequences of child marriage, existing legal safeguards and the significance of reporting such cases. The team also highlighted the vital role of Child Helpline 1098 as a 24x7 support service for children in distress. The program aimed to empower students with knowledge about their rights, foster awareness and encourage active community participation in protecting children from exploitation and abuse.

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Power shutdown

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Similarly, the power supply to Parade area will remain affected on December 24 to 30 daily on as and when required basis.

BJP Mahila Morcha holds Mahila Sammelan at Akhnoor



JJ CORRESPONDENT

Akhnoor, December 24: BJP Mahila Morcha, Jammu & Kashmir organized a Mahila Sammelan on the theme of Atmanirbhar Bharat at Pargwal, Panchayat Gurha Manhasa (Village Krishnapur-Deora), situated along the International Border in Akhnoor district. Adv. Neha Mahajan, President, BJP Mahila Morcha, J&K, chaired the Sammelan and was accompanied by Poonam Gupta, Morcha General Secretary.

Kuldeep Raj Sharma, District President, BJP Akhnoor, was also present in the Sammelan, which witnessed enthusiastic participation from Mahila Morcha workers and women from the border areas. The Mahila Sammelan was organized under the leadership of Rajni Sharma, District President, BJP Mahila Morcha, who ensured smooth coordination and effective grassroots outreach of the programme. Addressing the Sammelan, Adv. Neha Mahajan highlighted the vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, stating that women's empowerment forms the foundation of a strong and self-reliant nation. She emphasized that through various welfare schemes, skill development initiatives, self-employment programmes, and financial inclusion policies, the Modi government has created unprecedented opportunities for women, particularly in rural and border regions. Neha Mahajan further called for a collective resolve to strengthen women-led development and actively contribute towards building a self-reliant and developed India under the leadership of the Bharatiya Janata Party. Kuldeep Raj Sharma said that the programme served as a strong platform to connect women with the ideals of self-reliance, confidence, and national development. Rajni Sharma presented a note of thanks to all present in the Sammelan.

Reasi Administration continues grassroots outreach on Day 6 of Good Governance Week



JJ CORRESPONDENT

Reasi, December 24: On the sixth day of the week-long Good Governance Week campaign "Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore", the District Administration Reasi, under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Reasi, Nidhi Malik, continued its sustained grassroots outreach initiatives aimed at delivering government services at the doorsteps of citizens and promoting responsive, transparent and citizen-centric governance across the district.

As part of the campaign, the Agriculture Department organized a Prashasan Gaon Ki Ore camp at Panchayat Bharkh, Zone Pouni, Sub-Division Reasi, which wit-

nessed enthusiastic participation from a large number of farmers.

During the camp, farmers were sensitized about various flagship schemes of the department, including the Kisan Credit Card (KCC), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) and the Soil Health Card (SHC) scheme. Officials encouraged the farmers to avail benefits under these schemes and three KCC application forms were filled on the spot to facilitate immediate service delivery.

The Jal Shakti Department (Public Health Engineering), Sub-Division Katra initiated door-to-door visits to the households of beneficiaries for the collec-

tion of water revenue and to address issues related to non-regularised water connections.

The field staff engaged directly with residents to ensure public-friendly revenue collection, hassle-free grievance redressal and enhanced accountability at the grassroots level.

Additionally, Aadhaar enrolment and updation camps were organized at various panchayats under the Poshan Project Reasi as part of Sushasan Saptah. These camps aimed to facilitate Aadhaar services for beneficiaries across all age groups, thereby strengthening access to welfare schemes and ensuring inclusion of all eligible beneficiaries.

DC Bandipora Reviews Republic Day Arrangements

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Bandipora, December 24: Deputy Commissioner Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, today chaired a meeting of concerned officers at the Conference Hall to review arrangements for the upcoming Republic Day celebrations in the district. During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner reviewed preparations for the main function at S.K. Stadium, Bandipora, besides celebrations at Sub-Divisions Gurez and Sumbal and other designated locations. She was informed that preparations were well advanced, while emphasizing that there is always scope for improvement to make the

celebrations more interesting and inspirational. The Deputy Commissioner directed departments to ensure seamless arrangements for flag hoisting, Shahnai Vadan, march-past by contingents, cultural programmes, seating and dice arrangements, keeping in view the seating capacity and prevailing weather conditions. She stressed theme-based cultural performances involving educational institutions, NSS volunteers, Scouts & Guides, musicians and local artists, with a District-level Committee tasked to scrutinize and finalise all cultural items. The Deputy Commissioner further directed R&B and

Municipal authorities to ensure proper illumination of government buildings, bridges and roundabouts, with financial institutions assisting in roundabout decorations. Emphasis was laid on transport arrangements for school children, adequate medical and fire services, drinking water availability, heating arrangements, and minimizing waste generation.

The Deputy Commissioner also encouraged involvement of scheme beneficiaries for supplying refreshments and other items for government functions and proposed Bravery Awards for civilians on the occasion.

DM, SSP Bandipora hold NCORD Meeting; Review Action Against Drug Abuse



JJ CORRESPONDENT

Bandipora, December 24: District Magistrate (DM) Bandipora, Indu Kanwal Chib, along with SSP, Aijaz Ahmad Zargar, today chaired a meeting of the District-Level NCORD Committee at the SSP Office, Bandipora, to review the Action Taken Report (ATR) on directions issued in the previous meeting and to strengthen efforts against drug abuse.

During the meeting, SSP Bandipora, Aijaz Ahmad Zargar, presented details of NDPS and PIT NDPS cases, FIRs registered, arrests made, commercial cases, RDA action, installation of CCTV cameras, freezing and attachment of financial assets of drug dealers, installation of GPS anklets for monitoring accused, and inspection of courier service operators. The SSP also emphasized the deployment of watchers and chowkidars in schools during winter vacations. On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the proactive role of the police and stressed the need to analyse emerging hotspots, increase CCTV coverage near shops and

hawkers, and ensure close coordination between the Police and the Drug Control Department during investigations. She also called for the involvement of Mohalla Committees and intensified awareness campaigns in view of the rising use of synthetic drugs. The Deputy Director Prosecution briefed the committee on NDPS cases pending trial, acquittals, bail status, habitual offenders, and training of prosecutors. The Excise Department shared updates on nakas, wild cannabis destruction, and awareness initiatives, while the DC directed engaging religious leaders and holding meetings at the sub-divisional level. The Drug Control Department informed about inspections, monitoring of courier services, CCTV installation, computerized billing, and awareness activities, with directions for night and surprise inspections. During the meeting, the Agriculture Department briefed the committee about proposed chemical control measures for wild cannabis in hotspots areas. While,

Representatives from the Addiction Treatment Facility, Bandipora, also shared details of registrations. The DC directed that necessary clearances from PCC, PHE, and the Forest Department be obtained before proceeding and asked the Chief Agriculture Officer, Bandipora, to seek expert guidance to ensure complete and environmentally safe eradication of wild cannabis. The Deputy District Election Officer (Dy DEO) shared the progress of IEC activities under NMBA. The DC directed all departments to actively participate in upcoming IEC programmes to ensure coordinated and sustained outreach. Among others, the meeting was attended by the Senior Superintendent of Police Bandipora; Deputy District Election Officer Bandipora; Chief Medical Officer Bandipora; Chief Agriculture Officer Bandipora; District Social Welfare Officer Bandipora; District Information Officer Bandipora; Assistant Drug Controller Bandipora; Medical Officer, Addiction Treatment Facility Bandipora, and other concerned officers.

J P World School Celebrates Annual Day Marking 20 Years of Togetherness

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu, December 24, 2025: The school celebrated its Annual Day today, commemorating 20 glorious years of togetherness, with great enthusiasm, warmth, and festive fervour. The event beautifully unfolded the theme "Rekindling the Yuletide Spirit," spreading the message of love, compassion, joy, and togetherness associated with Christmas. The programme commenced with a warm welcome extended to the Management, Chairperson Dr. Panna Manhas Choudhary Ji, Chief Guest Mr. Satish Sharma Ji, Cabinet Minister (Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs, Transport, Science and Technology, Information Technology, Youth Services and Sports, ARI and Training), Government of Jammu & Kashmir, and an esteemed panel of Guests of Honour, including Mr. Rahul Sahai (Chairman, Indian Chamber of Commerce, Jammu & Kashmir), Mr. Ashok Kumar Khajuria (Director Finance, Youth Services & Sports),



Mr. Rayaz Hussain (Director Finance, Industry & Commerce), Mr. Vivek Shekhar (SP North), Mr. Pardeep Dutta (Consulting editor NDTV) along with other distinguished guests, Principal Ma'am Ms. Aparana Kohli, parents, and the entire school community. This was followed by the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, symbolising hope, wisdom, and the triumph of light over darkness. A proud and momentous

highlight of the day was the inauguration of the school's new school song, which echoed the institution's vision, values, and journey of excellence over the past two decades. Following this, the Chairperson Dr. Panna Manhas Choudhary Ji addressed the gathering, congratulating the school on completing 20 successful years of service in education. She emphasized the importance of value-based education, holistic development,

and nurturing compassionate global citizens.

Thereafter, Principal Ma'am Ms. Aparana Kohli delivered an inspiring address, reflecting on the school's remarkable journey, academic achievements, and co-curricular milestones, and expressing gratitude to the management, staff, parents, and students for their collective efforts in making the school a beacon of excellence. The cultural showcase beautifully brought the

theme "Rekindling the Yuletide Spirit" to life through a harmonious blend of music, dance, and drama. Beginning with soulful Christmas carols, the performances unfolded through vibrant dance sequences and engaging theatrical acts such as The Elf Factory, the arrival of Santa, and emotionally moving scenes portraying compassion, kindness, and social responsibility. The presentation highlighted the joy of giving, empathy for the less fortunate, and respect for the elderly, culminating in a high-energy grand finale dance by all participants that left the audience spellbound.

The ceremony also featured the felicitation of international and national players, acknowledging their outstanding achievements, followed by the felicitation of alumni and brand ambassadors, recognising their continued association and contribution to the school's legacy. A special mention was made of Ms. Seerat Baji, IAS Officer from Control Village, Rajouri, Jammu & Kashmir, a proud

alumnus of JP World School, who secured All India Rank 516 in the UPSC Civil Services Examination 2023. Though unable to be physically present due to prior professional commitments, the school was delighted to virtually connect with her, making the moment a source of immense pride and inspiration for the entire school community. Following this, the Chief guest and the Guests of Honour were felicitated as a mark of respect and appreciation.

The Chief Guest Mr. Satish Sharma, addressed the gathering, lauding the school's vision, the meaningful theme, and the students' commendable performances, and was thereafter felicitated by the management.

The event concluded with a sincere vote of thanks, expressing heartfelt gratitude to the management, Chairperson, Chief Guest, Guests of Honour, parents, teachers, students, and all those who worked tirelessly to make the celebration a grand success.

Department of English, Cluster University of Jammu Organises Heritage Visit to Amar Mahal Palace on the Occasion of Dogri Manyata Diwas

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu, Dec 24: On the occasion of Dogri Manyata Diwas, the Department of English, Cluster University of Jammu organised an academic heritage visit to the Museum of Amar Mahal Palace, under the patronage of the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. K. S. Chandrasekar, and under the able guidance of the Dean, Faculty of Arts, Dr. Monika Sharma.

The heritage visit was organised to commemorate the recognition of Dogri as an official language and to sensitise students to the linguistic, cultural, and historical legacy of the Dogra region. Accompanied by faculty members, students explored the palace and gained insights into the cultural history, royal patronage of art, and Dogra heritage, which form an integral part of the region's identity.

Such initiatives help bridge classroom learning with lived cultural experiences, fostering respect for regional languages and heritage. The Department reiterated its commitment to promoting indigenous culture and organising academic activities that celebrate linguistic diversity and cultural consciousness.

The visit was conducted under the aegis of the Department of English, Cluster University of Jammu, with due observance of all rules and guidelines of the heritage site. The visit was conducted under the supervision of Prof. Ruth Masehi, Coordinator, Department of English, Cluster University of Jammu. The event was coordinated by Dr. Jeet Singh, Dr. Tania Baloria, Dr. Heena Feroz, and Dr. Nadeem.

Other countries looking at India for leadership and collaboration in various sectors: Dr Jitendra Singh

JJ CORRESPONDENT

JAMMU, December 24 : Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; Minister of State (Independent Charge) Earth Sciences; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh today said that from relying on foreign imports, India has, under the Modi regime, moved on to become a self-reliant nation and exporter in major sectors.

In crucial areas like defence and health also, India has now become a major exporter living up to the spirit of "Swadeshi" and "Atmanirbhar Bharat", the Minister added.

The Minister said this while inaugurating an exhibition titled 'Swadeshi Mela' aimed at promoting self reliance (atmanirbhar) and sustainability.

Dr Jitendra Singh, while addressing the audience, said that today 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' has become a festival with various exhibitions displaying the spirit of self sufficiency and Swadeshi by artisans and entrepreneurs. He noted that such festivities were inconceivable a decade ago.



Dr Jitendra Singh recalled that prior to 2014 people were unenthusiastic and wanted to settle abroad for better career and life prospects and India was counted amongst the 'Fragile five's economies of the world. He remarked that there has been a remarkable change in the last 12 years where India has transformed its position on the global stage from 'fragile five' to the first four economies of the world. Today nations look upto India

for leadership and collaboration in a range of sectors from medicine and startups to defence and space.

The Minister added that this was due to the hardwork, vision and persistent efforts of PM Shri Narendra Modi who initiated schemes like Startup India and Standup India.

While referring to Operation Sindoor, Dr Jitendra Singh said that the operation was a testimony to the strength and self sufficiency of India

in the defence sector that has been attained in the last decade. He added that the defence exports of India have grown rapidly in the last decade and have reached more than Rs 23000 cr displaying the efficiency and supremacy of Indian weaponry to the world.

Similarly, the Minister said that earlier Indians used to go to other countries for medical procedures. However, this scenario has completely altered now with India exporting medical equipment and devices along with medicines and healthcare services to the world. Exports of medical devices today stand at 3.8 billion and India is rapidly becoming the preferred medical tourism destination for patients from abroad due to their comparatively low costs.

Dr Jitendra Singh also said that India was increasingly becoming a leader in preventive care and was not limited to curative care with strengthening of the medical and research infrastructure of the country making other nations dependent on us for better health care facilities.

While referring to the booming startup ecosystem in the country Dr

Jitendra Singh said that presently there are 1.75 lakh startups in the country out of which around 50 percent are in tier II and tier III cities. He said that these startups constitute the soul of Viksit Bharat and will give a filip to the economy in the years to come.

The Minister said that PM Modi's Atmanirbhar Bharat has given us the confidence, strength and the aspiration that we lacked over the last many years. He added that out of these startups around 60000 are women led startups depicting the rise in confidence of the nari shakti in big and small cities.

Dr Jitendra Singh also mentioned that India has seen a tremendous improvement in the global Innovation Index moving from 80th position to 38th rank in a decade. He added that presently India ranked 6th in patent filing with around 65000 registered patents. He also added that out of these around 55% are by resident Indian Innovators that is a sharp departure from the earlier trend of innovators depending on foreign institutions for research, mentorship and

project completion.

Dr Jitendra Singh said that despite having potential, India could not compete with other countries earlier, due to lack of leadership. With strong and visionary leadership this is changing fast as India is becoming a global leader in various fields.

Concluding, Dr Jitendra Singh said that the golden era for India has now started and it is upto the current generation to make India future-ready and build ecosystems that help future generations realise their potential and live the dream of Viksit Bharat.

MP Raja Sabha, Shri Sat Sharma and MP Loksabha Sh Jugal Kishore were also present on the occasion. Numerous stalls were set up by entrepreneurs displaying their products that included handicrafts, handlooms, herbal cosmetics, bamboo and other sustainable products, handmade items, local cuisines etc. majority of the products were created by women at their homes or with help of small units. Some cooperatives working closely with Handloom and handicrafts departments had also participated.

Awareness programme under Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP)

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Reasi December 24, An Awareness programme under Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) & Jammu & Kashmir Rural Employment Generation Programme (JKREGP) Schemes was held by Khadi & Village Industries Board Reasi at village Sher Pur Block Katra in District Reasi, attracting a large gathering, including a significant number of young youths participants on Wednesday 24-12-2025 to aware general public about the schemes and benefits under Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme and Jammu & Kashmir Rural Employment Generation Programme. Easy loan facilities are available through recognized financial institutions for self employment and self entre-



preneurship. Sh. Narayan Dass /C District Officer KVIB Reasi, while addressing the public informed that in subsidized and technical environment new ventures of manufacturing, service and trading sectors can be opened under PMEGP & JKREGP. He also

sensitized the participants about procedures and various formalities required for registration and uploading of application forms under PMEGP & JKREGP Schemes. The camp was attended by Chief Guest Smt. Nirmal Devi (DDC Member) Reasi,

Ex. Sarpanch Sh. Roshan Lal (Py+ Sherpur) Ex Sarpanch Sh. Ravi Sharma, Ex. Panch Sh. Bindu Ram (Pvt. Sherpur) Sh. Ankush Sharma Functional Manager DIC Reasi, & Cooperative Dept. and branch heads of various financial institutions.

IIM Jammu Concludes Three-Day Training Programme on Contract Management and Arbitration for NHPC

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu: The Indian Institute of Management Jammu concluded the Three-Day Training Programme on Contract Management and Arbitration for NHPC with a valedictory ceremony marked by rich reflections, academic rigor, and positive participant feedback. The programme was designed to strengthen participants' understanding of contemporary contract management practices and arbitration mechanisms, with a strong focus on practical applicability in professional settings. The valedictory ceremony was graced by Professor Sanjeev Pathak, Chairperson, Executive Education and Consultancy; Dr. Parvathy B., Programme Director, IIM Jammu and Dr. Naveen Goyal, Programme Director, IIM



Jammu.

Designed to enhance participants' understanding of contemporary contract management practices and arbitration mechanisms, the programme received highly positive feedback for its structured sessions, practical relevance, and engaging faculty. Participants appreciated the depth of discussions, clarity of concepts, and the faculty's

commitment to ensuring effective learning. The programme also provided a platform for peer learning and exchange of perspectives among participants from diverse professional backgrounds. The overall coordination, learning environment, and hospitality at IIM Jammu were widely commended. Overall, the Three-Day Training Programme on

Contract Management and Arbitration was acknowledged as highly beneficial, well-coordinated, and impactful, reinforcing IIM Jammu's commitment to delivering high-quality executive education and capacity-building programmes for public sector organizations. Coordinated by the Executive Education and Consultancy (EE&C) vertical of IIM Jammu, represented by Shri Pardeep Saini, Program Officer, Business Development, EE&C; Shri Mohd. Arif, Executive; Ms. Rupali Jamwal, Junior Executive; and Shri Anil Singh, Executive Assistant, the programme reflects the institute's unwavering commitment to developing future-ready leaders for India's growth-oriented public sector enterprises through meaningful industry-academia collaboration.

Vi partners with Niyo Zero Forex Markup Cards for travellers

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu, Dec 24: Leading telecom operator Vi has partnered with travel banking fintech Niyo, to Provide Zero Markup Forex Card delivery for Vi customers travelling abroad this holiday season. This first-of-its-kind partnership by a telco, enables Vi customers travelling overseas on holiday, business or higher education to receive a Niyo Zero Forex Markup Card delivered to their doorstep within 24 hours.

With the Niyo partnership, Vi is adding a strong financial convenience layer to this travel ecosystem. Vi Customers can request for the Zero mark-up Niyo Forex card on Vi App. A

Niyo executive will assist Vi users with KYC verification, card setup and a trial

transaction. Customers can input their name and pin code details to deter-

mine if their location is serviced by Niyo Express. For locations outside of the Express purview, customers can download the Niyo App and activate their card digitally.

As a special introductory offer for Vi customers, Niyo is offering their flagship Niyo Premium service (worth Rs 999/ year) completely free, which gives travellers a host of benefits such as:

Rs 10,000 worth of annual savings on travel
Zero convenience fee on visa & flight bookings on Niyo app
Flat 10% off on international hotels on Niyo app
1 free lounge access every quarter

1 free ATM withdrawal every quarter
Accepted in more than 180 countries, the Niyo Forex card processes international transactions at base exchange rates and helps customers avoid the usual 3 to 5 percent forex mark-up that increases the cost of spending overseas.

This new initiative aligns with Vi's continued focus on strengthening its International Roaming proposition combining first in Industry propositions for the benefit of International Travellers. Recently Vi had announced special roaming discounts for secondary members on Vi Family Postpaid plans, whereby Secondary members receive a 10 percent discount and REDX Family users receive a

25 percent discount on IR packs. Vi also partnered with Aditya Birla Health Insurance to offer Travel Insurance cover of Rs.40 Lakh, at an attractive price point - just Rs.285 with all Vi IR Packs. Additionally, Vi's partnership with Blue Ribbon Bags extends delayed/lost baggage protection with compensation of up to Rs 19,800 per bag at just Rs 99.

With the latest Niyo Forex Card offering, Vi has built a comprehensive and convenient international travel experience proposition for its customers, blending seamless connectivity, smarter spending and dependable protection from the moment they leave the country's shores, till their return.

EDITORIAL

NEW GENERATION OF JOURNALISTS

New generation of Journalists has now overshadowed the whole field of Journalism. Most of these journalists are either sponsored by a particular political ideology. This allegation is vindicated by not others but by themselves by biased reporting. Almost each and every story they file or carry is packed with a particular ideology. Hardy they have ever bothered to put both sides of the coin before the public. They behave most of the time as a judge and not as a reporter. Many times they play the role of a particular political party and not of an unbiased reporter. During discussions they act like an authority not as a moderator. More interesting is the attitude of some so-called journalists of the new generation who all the time claim to be 'Dogra'. What makes him repeat this 'dialogue' time and again? Is that his inside fear of telling lies? Journalism is losing day by day not only its credibility but its reliability and charm. For this decline several factors are responsible. Most of the media houses are nowadays controlled either by capitalists or political leaders or by unprofessional journalists. As such the reporters, editors and correspondents engaged by such media houses must be the yes man and not a responsible, experienced and professional one. Another important factor is social media where hundreds of news portals have emerged during the last decade. Many of them are self-styled journalists and others have nothing to do with journalism. In this scenario journalism is losing its image, attraction and also its value. News portals on social media mostly cover the stories or incidents which suit their personal interest and not for the common man.

A King was Born - Reflecting on the Birth of the Lord Jesus Christ

OMKAR DATTATRAY

The festival of Christmas is celebrated worldwide by Christians and non-Christians on 25th December annually with great pomp and show. Christmas is the birth anniversary of Jesus Christ and it was on this date that this prophet of humanity, peace, love and spirituality was born to shepherd parents. The most significant holiday for the Christian world is the birth day of Jesus Christ and it is celebrated across the world with great pomp and show not only by the people of Christian faith but by the non-Christians as well. Even being a traditional Christian holiday, Christmas is widely celebrated worldwide, including in non-Christian countries. Some traditions of the season celebration are so old that goes up to pre-Christian era or secular origins. Nowadays, the most common is the exchange of gifts and cards with beloved ones. Christmas dinner, Christmas carols and other celebrations alongside local traditions, bringing together each place's custom to this time of the year. Although Christians are a minority in India, Christmas in our country is celebrated with enthusiasm in all states and major cities. The country's famous adage "Unity in Diversity" derives the whole festivity. In south India, one of the most common Christmas celebrations is putting a burning earthen lamp on their roofs, symbolizing that Jesus is the world's light. In the northwest, Christians tell Christmas stories and sing carols in their dialects. In some places of northwest, devotees fast from December 1st until December 24 and end it with a sumptuous feast at midnight on December 25. Christmas is celebrated on 25th December every year by the world Christian community. The day holds much significance for Christians as they believe that Jesus Christ was born on the same day at Bethlehem. It is observed as a public holiday in several Christian majority countries. Also, in some countries where Christians are in minority, it is still observed as a holiday. The festival calls for a grand celebra-

tion and is one of the major festivals. The preparations begin much in advance with the shopping enthusiastically for gifts and other articles. Children are happiest around the festival as they get lots of gifts and cakes. Families sing, dance and eat together with family and friends on Christmas. It is the most important festivals of the Christians and also most awaited one. The popularity of the festival could well be ascertained from the fact that every year in the month of December, gifts and other items worth billions are sold across the world, mostly in western countries. Christmas is indeed a festival of great significance for Christians and is celebrated with much gaiety and fanfare by the people especially by the Christians. It is observed to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, whom the Christians believe to be the son of God. The festival calls for a grand celebration and is one of the major festivals. Christmas means Feast day of Christ. Christmas is the festival of joy. It is about sharing and helping others. On this day people remember Jesus Christ and his lessons of life. This festival encourages us to make merry and be happy. Its sole aim is to teach us that the light of the Lord always guards us and thus we must follow the message of Jesus Christ and remember devoid of Christian elements, and marked by an increasingly elaborate exchange of gifts. In this secular Christmas celebrations, a mythical figure named Santa Claus plays a pivotal role. The early Christian community distinguished between the identification of the date of Jesus birth and the liturgical celebration of that event. The actual observance of the day of Jesus birth was long in coming. In particular, during first two centuries of Christianity, there was strong opposition to recognizing birthdays of martyrs or, for that matter of Jesus. Numerous church Fathers offered sarcastic comments about pagan custom of celebrating birthdays when in fact, saints and martyrs should be honored on the days of their martyrdom - their true birthdays from Church's perspective. The precise origin of assigning December 25 as the birth date of Jesus is

unclear. The New Testament provides no clue in this regard. December 25, was first identified as the date of Jesus birth by Sextus Julius Africanus in 221 and later became the universally accepted date. One widespread explanation of the origin of this date is that December 25 was the Christianizing of the dies solis invicti nati (day of the birth of the unconquered sun), a popular holiday in the Roman Empire that celebrated the winter solstice as a symbol of the resurgence of the sun, the casting away of the winter and the heralding of the rebirth of spring and summer. Christmas is an annual festival commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, observed primarily on December 25 as a religious and cultural celebration among billions of people around the world. Christmas is a public holiday in many countries and is celebrated religiously by a majority of Christians, as well as culturally by many non-Christians and forms an integral part of the holiday season surrounding it. Indeed, after December 25 had become widely accepted as the date of Jesus birth, Christian writers frequently made the connection between the rebirth of the sun and the birth of son. One of the difficulties with this view is that it suggests a nonchalant willingness on the part of the Christian church to appropriate a pagan festival when the early church was so intent on distinguishing itself categorically from pagan beliefs and practices. A second view suggests that December 25 became the date of Jesus birth by a priori reasoning that identified the spring equinox as the date of the creation of the world and the fourth day of creation, when the light was created, as the day of Jesus conception that is March 25. December 25, nine months later became the date of Jesus birth. For a long time the celebration of Jesus birth was observed in conjunction with his baptism celebrated January 6. Christmas began to be widely celebrated with a specific liturgy in 9th century but did not attain the liturgical importance of either Good Friday or Easter, the other two major Christian holidays. Roman Catholic churches celebrate

the first Christmas mass at midnight, and protestant churches have increasingly held Christmas candlelight services late on the evening of December 24. A special service of "lessons and carols" intertwines Christmas carols with scripture readings narrating salvation history from the Fall in the Garden of Eden to coming of Christ. The service, inaugurated by E.W. Benson and adopted at the university of Cambridge has become widely popular. None of the contemporary Christmas customs have their origin in theological or liturgical affirmations, and most are of fairly recent date. The Renaissance humanist Sebastian Brant recorded, in Das Narrenschiff (1494 - The Ship of Fools), the custom of placing branches of fir trees in houses. Even though there is some uncertainty about the precise date and origin of the tradition of the Christmas tree. Towards the end of the 18th century the practice of giving gifts to family members became well established. Theologically, the feast day reminded Christians of God's gift of Jesus to mankind even as the coming of Wise Men or Magi, to Bethlehem suggested that Christmas was somehow related to giving gifts. The practice of giving gifts, which dates back to 15th century, contributed to the view that Christmas was a secular holiday focused on family and friends. In European countries, gifts are exchanged on Christmas Eve, December 24, in keeping with the notion that the baby Jesus was born on the night of December 24. The morning of December 25, however has become the time for the exchange of gifts in North America. Given the importance of Christmas as one of the major Christian feast days, most European Countries observe, Christian influence, December 26 as second Christmas Day. In short let us follow the teachings of Lord Jesus Christ and live a life of contentment and resolve to be guided by the life and teachings of Lord Jesus Christ. Christmas greetings to all.

(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist)

The VB-G RAM G Act 2025 fixes structural gaps



SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN

The President of India has assented to the Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, 2025, enhancing the statutory wage employment guarantee to 125 days and strengthening rural livelihoods through empowerment, convergence, and saturation-based delivery for a resilient, self-reliant rural Bharat. A misreading by some Yet, even as the VB-G RAM G Act comes into force, there are some who have advanced a set of assumptions that do not withstand careful scrutiny. It is being claimed that the employment guarantee has been weakened, that decentralisation and demand-based rights have been undermined without consultation, and that the reform represents fiscal withdrawal that is disguised as restructuring. Each of these assertions rests on a misreading of the Act's substance and intent. What has led to this misreading is a deeper conceptual error: the assumption that welfare and development are opposing choices. The new framework is built on the opposite understanding: that welfare, anchored in an enhanced statutory livelihood guarantee, and development, anchored in durable infrastructure creation and productivity enhancement, are mutually reinforcing. Income support, asset creation, agricultural stability and long-term rural productivity are treated as a continuum rather than a trade-off. This is not aspirational rhetoric but an approach embedded in statutory design. The suggestion that the legal right to employment has been diluted is incorrect. The Act retains the statutory and justiciable character of the employment guarantee while strengthening its enforceability. Far from being curtailed, the entitlement has been expanded from

100 to 125 days. Procedural dis-entitlement clauses that previously nullified unemployment allowance in practice have been removed, and time-bound grievance redress mechanisms have been reinforced. The reform directly addresses the long-recognised gap between statutory promise and lived reality. It is also argued that demand-based employment has been abandoned in favour of top-down planning. This rests on a false binary. Demand for work continues to originate from workers. What changes is that demand is no longer addressed only after distress has set in. By anchoring execution in advance, participatory village-level planning, the reform ensures that when workers seek employment, work is actually available rather than denied due to administrative unpreparedness. Planning, in this sense, does not suppress demand; it operationalises it. The charge of centralisation overlooks the architecture of the law. Gram panchayats remain the primary planning and implementing authorities, and gram sabhas retain approval powers over local plans. What has changed is that decentralised planning is no longer ad hoc or episodic but institutionalised as a structured and participatory process. Viksit Gram Panchayat Plans are aggregated at the block, district, State and national levels to enable coordination, convergence and visibility across sectors, not to override local priorities. What is centralised is coherence; the decision-making authority remains local. This corrects fragmentation without undermining decentralisation. Claims that the reform was pushed through without consultation are equally inconsistent with the record. The Bill was preceded by extensive consultations with State governments, technical workshops and multi-stakeholder discussions. Core design features - village planning structures, convergence mechanisms and digital governance systems were shaped by feedback from States and by lessons drawn from years of implementation. An increase in allocations, equity The broader premise that the employment guarantee was systematically weakened over the past decade does not align with facts. Budgetary allocations increased from ₹33,000 crore in 2013-14 to ₹286,000 crore in 2024-25. Person days generated rose from 1,660

crore in the period up to 2013-14 to 3,210 crore thereafter. Central funds released increased from ₹2.13 lakh crore to ₹8.53 lakh crore, and completed works expanded from 153 lakh to 862 lakh. Women's participation rose from 48% to 56.73%. Over 99% of fund transfer orders are now generated on time, and nearly 99% of active workers are linked to the Aadhaar Payment Bridge. These trends point to sustained commitment and improved delivery, not neglect. What became evident over time, however, was that implementation experience had also revealed structural weaknesses in the earlier framework itself-episodic employment, weak enforceability of unemployment allowance, fragmented asset creation and persistent scope for duplication and ghost entries. These weaknesses were visible on the ground during drought years, migration spikes and periods of disruption such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Fiscal restructuring under the new Act is also mischaracterised as abdication. The central government's contribution is increasing - the provision for the Centre's share rises from ₹86,000 crore to nearly 295,000 crore, underscoring continued and enhanced support for rural employment. The 60:40 funding model follows the long-established structure of centrally sponsored schemes, while the northeastern and Himalayan States and Jammu and Kashmir are accorded a differential 90:10 ratio. Far from signalling fiscal withdrawal, this framework reinforces shared responsibility and accountability. Equity is ensured through rule-based normative allocation, with State-wise allocations determined on objective parameters prescribed in the Rules. States are treated not as mere implementing agencies but as partners in development, empowered to notify and operationalise their own schemes within the statutory framework. Flexibility is explicitly preserved: during natural disasters, or other extraordinary situations, States may recommend special relaxations, which includes expansion of permissible works and temporary enhancement of employment. Rule-based allocation and contextual flexibility are thus balanced in a manner consistent with cooperative federalism. The Act empowers States to notify, in advance, periods aggregating to 60 days in a financial year covering

peak sowing and harvesting seasons during which works shall not be undertaken. Differentiated notifications may be issued at the level of districts, blocks, or gram panchayats based on agro-climatic conditions, ensuring that the enhanced employment guarantee complements agricultural operations. The UPA's record From its very first tenure, the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government failed to match rhetoric with delivery under MGNREGA. While the Congress manifesto promised "at least 100 days of work at a real wage of 100 per day", the government capped wages at 100 as early as 2009 and kept them frozen for years, ignoring inflation and rising rural distress. The Centre openly admitted that States were acting arbitrarily under the scheme and justified the wage freeze by blaming State governments for 'indiscriminate increases'. This admission itself exposed a serious governance failure: the Congress-led Centre was unable to control even its own State governments, allowing MGNREGA to become vulnerable to misuse, fake job cards, and financial leakages. The UPA's second term saw a steady decline in commitment to the scheme. Budgetary allocations were cut from 240,100 crore in 2010-11 to 33,000 crore by 2012-13, despite growing demand from States. In a parliamentary reply in 2013, Minister of State Rajeev Shukla acknowledged that employment under MGNREGA had fallen sharply from 7.55 crore workers in 2010-11 to just 6.93 crore by November 2013. Delayed fund releases, lack of transparency in payments, and administrative apathy discouraged workers from seeking employment, directly undermining the legal guarantee promised under the Act. The Comptroller and Auditor General's 2013 report laid bare the true state of MGNREGA during the UPA years. It highlighted widespread corruption and mismanagement: over 4.33 lakh fake or defective job cards, thousands of crores lost to unaccounted withdrawals and irregular work, delayed or denied wages in 23 States, and poor record-keeping in more than half of India's gram panchayats. States with the highest concentration of rural poor- Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra used only about 20% of allocated funds, proving

Winter Hair Care

SHAHNAZ HUSAIN

There's a toxic relationship between winter and hair fall. Winter weather can be tough on your hair, and it's not just about the cold. The drop in temperature, low humidity levels and indoor heating strip out moisture leaving your hair dry and brittle. The drop in humidity during the winter season dries out the air, which in turn, pulls moisture from your mane. Moisture is important, as without it, issues like frizz, breakage, dandruff, and an overall dull appearance can cause excessive hair loss during the colder months. Winter hair care is not limited to your pre- and post-shower routine. Instead, it involves making key adjustments to your overall lifestyle. 1---Use Lukewarm--- Hot showers might feel comforting in the cold, but they can suck out the moisture from the hair, making it more vulnerable to breakage. Hot water and steam can strip away natural oils, leading to hair dryness. Further, it can also cause dandruff and scalp irritation. So, opt for lukewarm/ cold water when washing and rinse off your hair. Always try to finish with a cold water rinse, as it seals down cuticles, locking in the moisture and making the hair look shinier. 2---Avoid excessive heat styling: --- While it's tempting to blow-dry your hair more often in the winter, Excessive use of heat tools like blow dryers, straighteners and curling irons can further dry out your hair potentially leading to breakage and further dryness. Allow the hair to dry naturally and use heat-free styling methods whenever possible. If you like to style your hair with hot tools, apply a heat protectant spray first. A good heat protectant will help keep your hair shiny and smooth, even when using hot styling tools. Switch to shampoos and conditioners that are specifically designed for hydration. Look for ingredients like aloe vera, shea butter, or keratin to nourish your hair and keep it hydrated. Use a lightweight hydrating serum and leave-in conditioners that help to lock in moisture and keep your hair smooth and manageable. Avoid products with sulfates or alcohol that can strip your hair of moisture. Stick to nourishing, alcohol-free styling products to keep your hair soft and hydrated. The right Wintertime hair care products can keep your locks looking their best. It will help you combat frizz and offer sleek, manageable hair. Always go for hair serums with argan oil or silicone,

as these ingredients build a protective layer on the hair, offering extra protection and shine. 3---Eat Healthy--- Healthy hair starts from within. Ensuring proper nutrition is fundamental to maintaining healthy hair, especially during winter. Staying adequately hydrated is vital, as water is crucial in maintaining hair moisture. By nourishing your body from within, you provide the foundation for luscious and resilient hair, even in winter's challenges. Drink plenty of water, juices, and soups and eat a balanced diet rich in vitamins A, C, and E, along with omega-3 fatty acids, to nourish your hair during winter. Vitamin A nourishes the scalp and increases blood into hair follicles, while vitamin E prevents hair breakage. Include fruits, vegetables, nuts, soybeans, and flaxseeds in your diet. 4---Avoid Tight Hairstyles Hairstyles such as ponytails or braids, which pull your hair back harshly can also often lead to weaker hair and breakage from the roots. It can put excessive tension on the hair shafts leading to a good loss, so keeping things loose is a hair idea. A relaxed braid or a low, loose ponytail will keep your hair healthy while looking stylish. This also applies to rubber bands and hair clips, which can also cause damage if too tight. 5---Oil your Hair----- It is all the more important to nourish your hair regularly with natural ingredients. They are non-toxic and do not harm the structure of the hair. Incorporate natural oils into your hair care routine to provide an extra layer of protection and hydration. Sesame oil, argan oil, coconut oil, and jojoba oil are excellent choices. Have hot oil therapy once a week. Heat oil and apply on the hair. If the hair is dry and damaged, pure coconut oil or pure almond oil may be applied. Using your fingertips massage the scalp gently, actually moving the scalp in circular motions. This helps to improve blood circulation to the follicles. Then do the hot towel wrap. 6---Apply Hair Mask Curry leaves are said to contain nutritive elements, including antioxidants, which bring back health to the roots and promote hair growth. Curry leaves contain beta-carotene, which is converted into vitamin A. This vitamin helps in the production of sebum, the natural oil that keeps the scalp and hair roots moisturized. A well-moisturized scalp is conducive to hair growth.

HDFC Bank releases the first edition of CSR Report

Jammu, Dec 24: HDFC Bank, India's largest private sector bank, today announced the release of its first-ever standalone annual CSR Report, showcasing the Bank's decade-long journey of social impact through its umbrella programme, Parivartan. To read the report, click here: Parivartan CSR Report 2024-25.

The Bank reported a spend of Rs 1,068.03 crore on its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives in FY 2024-25, an increase of nearly Rs 123 crore over the previous year. Cumulatively, as of March 31, 2025, the Bank has invested Rs 6,176 crore in CSR programmes. Mr. Kaizad Bharucha, Deputy Managing Director, HDFC Bank, said, "At HDFC Bank, we believe that meaningful change comes from listening, learning and working in partnership with communities. Parivartan represents our sustained effort to play a



small role in enabling people and institutions to unlock their potential and build a better future. Over the past ten years, our efforts under Parivartan have been guided by the philosophy that development must be inclusive, locally relevant and future focused. The last Financial Year also marked 10 years of Parivartan, under which HDFC Bank has touched 10.56 crore lives across 28 states and 8 Union Territories. Projects have been implemented in 102 of

the 112 Aspirational Districts identified by the Government of India. The Bank has also covered 298 border villages under its rural development initiatives. Key Focus Areas of Parivartan; The CSR Annual Report outlines the Bank's work across six core focus areas: Rural Development: The Bank's flagship CSR initiative—the Holistic Rural Development Programme—follows an integrated, cluster-based approach that drives improvements across

rural infrastructure, education, natural resource management, health, and sanitation.

To date, the programme has positively impacted more than 14.92 lakh households. Promotion of Education: This focus area strengthens quality education through scholarships, infrastructure, and digital learning. The Bank has disbursed 29,000+ scholarships, set up 2,600+ SMART schools, and built 930 community libraries. Skill Training & Livelihood Enhancement: The Bank equips youth, women and individuals with vocational training and entrepreneurship support, enabling 7.2 lakh individuals to secure sustainable livelihoods till date. Healthcare & Hygiene: This focus area expands access to preventive care, maternal and child health, and hygiene awareness. Over 3 lakh individuals benefitted from mobile clinics, cancer treatment support, and

maternal care initiatives. Financial Literacy & Inclusion: Under this focus area, the Bank empowers individuals with financial awareness, promotes savings, and provides access to banking and insurance services.

The Bank's flagship Vigil Aunty campaign on digital fraud awareness has reached 21 lakh+ followers online. Natural Resource Management: The newest focus area promotes sustainable practices in water conservation, afforestation, solar solutions and biodiversity conservation, fostering long-term environmental stewardship. The Bank has created 14,520 water conservation structures and installed over 69,000 solar lights till date. Aligned with 10 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, these six focus areas reflect HDFC Bank's integrated approach to inclusive and sustainable development.

Union Bank of India reduces interest rates on home, vehicle & personal loans

Jammu, Dec 24: Union Bank of India has announced a reduction in interest rates on select retail loan products, effective 18 December 2025, compared to its earlier applicable rates. The bank is among the first in the sector to react to recent monetary easing, lowering interest rates across Home Loans, Vehicle Loans, and Personal Loans to enhance affordability for retail borrowers.

Under the revised rate structure, home loan interest rates have been reduced by 30 basis points, and will now start at 7.15% per annum, as against the earlier rate of 7.45% p.a. Vehicle loan interest rates have been cut by 40 basis points, and will now start at 7.50% p.a., compared to the previous benchmark rate of 7.90% p.a. Personal loan interest rates have seen a sharper reduction of 160 basis points, with rates now starting at 8.75% p.a., down from the earlier rate of 10.35%



p.a.

In addition to the base rate reduction, Union Bank of India is offering an additional concession of 0.10% per annum on eligible Green Finance Home Loans and Vehicle Loans.

The revision comes against the backdrop of easing monetary conditions during the year. The Reserve Bank of India reduced the repo rate by 25 basis points to 5.25% on December 5, 2025, marking the fourth rate cut in 2025 and taking the cumulative reduction for the year to

125 basis points. The Union government had also eased GST norms for the automotive sector.

With this revision, Union Bank of India aims to support homebuyers, vehicle purchasers and personal loan customers by lowering borrowing costs while continuing to maintain prudent lending standards. The revised rates are applicable from 18 December 2025 and are subject to customer eligibility, credit profile and other applicable terms and conditions.

Motorola announces sale of its ultra-slim smartphone 'edge 70'

Jammu, Dec 24: Motorola, a global leader in mobile technology and innovation and India's leading AI smartphone brand, today announced the sale of its thinnest and most uncompromised smartphone — the Motorola Edge 70 — at an effective price of just ₹28,999*. Designed to redefine what an ultra-slim smartphone can deliver, the Motorola Edge 70 combines an industry-leading 5.99 mm ultra-thin design with flagship pro-grade cameras, advanced AI intelligence, long-lasting battery life, and military-grade durability.

Powered by the powerful Snapdragon® 7 Gen 4 Mobile Platform, the Motorola Edge 70 introduces next-generation performance and intelligence with a dedicated AI key. The chipset delivers faster CPU and GPU performance along with a significant boost in on-device AI capabilities, enabling seamless multitasking, smooth gaming, and



intelligent everyday experiences.

Users can choose between Moto AI 2.0, Microsoft Copilot, Google Gemini, and Perplexity, unlocking true multi-platform AI freedom. The device is equipped with 8GB LPDDR5X RAM and 256GB UFS 3.1 storage, supported by an advanced vapor-chamber cooling system for sustained performance.

Photography on the Motorola Edge 70 sets new benchmarks as India's only

ultra-thin smartphone with three 50MP AI cameras.

The setup includes a 50MP OIS main camera with 2.0µm Ultra Pixel technology, a 50MP ultra-wide + macro camera, and a 50MP front camera, all supporting 4K 60FPS video recording. Backed by Moto AI features such as AI Video Enhancement, AI Action Shot, AI Adaptive Stabilization, and AI Group Shot, along with Google Photos AI tools like Magic Eraser, Photo Unblur, and

Magic Editor, the device delivers professional-grade imaging with Pantone™ validated colours and accurate skin tones.

Despite its ultra-thin profile, the Motorola Edge 70 houses India's largest 5000mAh silicon-carbon battery in an ultra-thin smartphone, delivering up to 40 hours of battery life*. With support for 68W TurboPower™ fast charging, 15W wireless charging, and reverse charging, users get uninterrupted power throughout the day without compromising on design.

Running on Hello UI based on Android™ 16, the device comes with 3 OS upgrades and 4 years of security updates, along with features such as Moto Secure with ThinkShield®, Family Spaces, Moto Unplugged, and Smart Connect. Motorola further enhances ownership with Moto Premium Care, offering 24x7 support and hassle-free service.

Heartfulness sets new Guinness World Record on World Meditation Day

Jammu, Dec 24: Heartfulness has set a new Guinness World Record for the most viewers for a guided meditation livestream on YouTube on World Meditation Day. The meditation was guided by Revered Daaji, Guide of Heartfulness and President of Shri Ram Chandra Mission, marking a major global moment for collective meditation and wellbeing.

The record-setting session formed the centrepiece of World Meditation Day celebrations led by Heartfulness, during which an estimated 20 million people across 175 countries took part at different times through in-person gatherings, institutional sessions, and online participation.

This is the first time participation at this scale has been recorded across such a wide geographical spread.

The morning meditation at Kanha Shanti Vanam, the world's largest meditation centre, was attended by the Hon'ble Vice President of



India, Shri C. P. Radhakrishnan, the Hon'ble Governor of Telangana, Shri Jishnu Dev Varma, and the Hon'ble Telangana Minister for IT, Shri D. Sridhar Babu, giving the occasion clear national significance. Their presence reflected meditation's growing place in public life, as a practical support for wellbeing and social harmony.

World Meditation Day saw strong institutional participation across India. Dhyana Kendras were organised in over 2,500 Madhya Pradesh police stations, with more than 50,000 police personnel joining the guided meditation simultaneously across

thousands of centres. Meditation sessions were also across all cities and local governments, schools and colleges, private corporations, showing how widely meditation is being embraced across public life and the workplace. At least 200 embassies and consulates and Indian Council for Cultural Relations also participated in this guided meditation.

Heartfulness' global network played a critical role in enabling this unprecedented scale. With the support of over 16,000 trained volunteers, meditation sessions were conducted across 280 ashrams and more than

6,000 Heartfulness centres, ensuring seamless coordination across continents. For the first time, participation of 20 million people was recorded from 175 countries, highlighting the truly global nature of this peace initiative.

The event also drew wide media coverage, with over 100 television channels covering the morning meditation and related events, amplifying the message of inner peace and collective consciousness to audiences nationwide.

Daaji's guided meditation included Pranahuti (yogic transmission), a core element of the Heartfulness practice.

This transmission supports a natural shift towards calmness, clarity and emotional balance. Rooted in the teachings of Lalaji Maharaj and Babuji Maharaj, Heartfulness continues to grow as a global movement under Daaji's guidance, touching lives across cultures and belief systems.

India's BFSI deal activity triples in 2025: Report

New Delhi, Dec 24: The number of deals in the banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) space rose threefold in CY 25, a report said on Wednesday.

The report from financial services firm Equirus Capital said that the year saw 30 deals compared to 10 deals in 2024, with banks and non-bank financial companies accounting for mergers, acquisitions and strategic deals worth Rs 42,939 crore.

Other BFSI segments recorded deals worth Rs 43,014 crore, it added. The firm highlighted that NBFCs outperformed public sector banks, large and small private banks in terms of share price movement over the past 12 months.

On a price index set to 100, among public sector banks, Indian Bank, Canara Bank



and Bank of India were the best performers at 151, 144 and 136 on the same index.

Among NBFCs, L&T Finance led the rally, nearly doubling to 204. Among large private banks, the strongest share-price performers were IDBI Bank, IDFC First Bank and Yes Bank. Small private banks that outperformed included RBL Bank, South Indian Bank and DCB Bank, the report said.

Leading fund houses had recently said that they are overweight on banks and non-bank financial companies (NBFCs), arguing net interest margins for banks

should improve in FY27. Private banks' asset quality is expected to recover and drive mid-teens earnings growth in FY27 after a slow FY26, a recent report said.

NBFCs are delivering strong earnings growth driven by strong credit demand and improving margins on the back of decline in interest rates, it noted.

Public sector banks gained share in personal, home and auto loans while private banks strengthened share in consumer durables, credit cards and two-wheelers, the report said. Personal loan disbursements grew about 23 per cent and 35 per cent YoY in H1FY26 and Q2FY26 respectively, with PSBs' disbursements up 77 per cent and their market share by value rising to 36 per cent in Q2FY26.

New Delhi, Dec 24: Jyotiraditya Scindia, Minister for Development of North Eastern Region, on Wednesday held discussions on drawing up a strategy for strengthening the agri-horti ecosystem of the North Eastern states to enhance the incomes of farmers.

The minister participated in the high-level task force meeting on agriculture and horticulture, convened by Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang in the national capital. The Tripura Chief Minister Manik Saha, Agriculture Ministers of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim and senior ministry officials also attended the meeting.

The task force deliberated on need for addressing key gaps in the value chain and market linkages across the



North-Eastern Region. The discussions focused on strengthening the agri-horti ecosystem by leveraging the region's inherent strengths, with specialisation, quality, and the ability to stand out as the unique selling proposition of agri-horti products from the North East Region, according to an official statement.

Reducing post-harvest loss-

suitable investment mechanisms.

The importance of charting a clear roadmap that progresses from foundational interventions to full-scale value chain integration was also deliberated upon during the meeting. This includes developing a strategic infrastructure map to support export readiness, recognising priority commodities for each state, and promoting cluster-based development for each identified product to ensure scale, efficiency, and market alignment, the statement said.

A blueprint-based approach was proposed, beginning with the selection of one product and addressing its end-to-end value chain through clearly defined short-term, medium-term, and long-term plans with

product-wise targets and investment requirements. The approach also emphasised assessing, for every product, the number of farmers engaged across the North Eastern Region and evaluating how farmers would benefit on a product-wise and state-wise basis. Once these interventions are implemented, the focus would be on measuring the resulting increase in farmers' incomes, the statement explained.

The task force reaffirmed that a focused, product-specific, and cluster-driven strategy would enable measurable and sustainable outcomes, strengthen market linkages, reduce inefficiencies across the value chain, and ensure long-term income enhancement for farmers across the North Eastern Region, the statement added.

India's top office markets' net absorption hits record 55.16 mn sq ft in 2025

New Delhi, Dec 24: Net office absorption across India's top seven cities touched a record high of around 55.16 million square feet in 2025, despite headwinds including IT layoffs and tariff tensions, a report said on Wednesday.

The report from real estate services firm Anarock showed a 10 per cent year-on-year rise from roughly 49.95 million sq ft in 2024. Bengaluru led office leasing with about 14.15 million sq ft but saw a 5 per cent annual decline in net leasing, while

Pune posted the strongest growth in net absorption at 63 per cent, rising to about 7.8 million sq ft from 4.8 million sq ft.

Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), Chennai, Hyderabad and Delhi-NCR recorded a jump in net of 15 per cent, 12 per cent, 9 per cent and 7 per cent, respectively.

New office completions across the seven cities rose 8 per cent to about 51.83 million sq ft, with Bengaluru adding approximately 13.5 million sq ft. Pune recorded a

massive 103 per cent yearly jump in new office supply to over 10.60 million sq ft, while Kolkata saw the highest 317 per cent percentage jump in completions.

"India's office real estate market veritably boomed in 2025, with net absorption and new completions both surging thanks to the country's robust economic growth," said Peush Jain, MD-Commercial Leasing and Advisory, Anarock Group.

"GCCs are leading the charge, capturing a record 41 per cent share of gross

absorption — up from 36 per cent in 2024. Drawn by India's economic strength, stability, and cost advantages, major US corporates are snapping up massive office spaces across our key cities," he added.

IT/ITeS accounted for 27 per cent of leasing, followed by coworking at 23 per cent and BFSI at 18 per cent. Office space vacancies eased to 16.10 per cent from 16.50 per cent, and average monthly rentals rose about 6 per cent to Rs 92 per sq. ft, said the report.

Gujarat hosts SpaceTech round table, strengthens India's space economy vision

Gandhinagar, Dec 24 : The state government organised the Gujarat SpaceTech Round Table in Gandhinagar on Wednesday.

The high-level event resulted in the signing of six key Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) and facilitated direct Business-to-Government (B2G) engagements with eight leading companies, aimed at accelerating innovation, investment and collaboration in the space technology sector.

Held at the boardroom of Pandit Deendayal Energy

University (PDEU), the roundtable brought together senior government officials, space technology experts, industry leaders, and entrepreneurs for strategic discussions and collaborative initiatives.

The event marked a milestone in Gujarat's ambition to emerge as a national and global leader in SpaceTech. The round table commenced with an informal networking session, followed by an opening address by Neha Kumari, IAS, Mission Director of the Gujarat State Electronics

Mission (GSEM), who outlined Gujarat's comprehensive SpaceTech initiatives and its vision to contribute significantly to India's space sector.

Key perspectives on national space advancements were shared by D.K. Patel from SAC-ISRO and Rajiv Jyoti, Technical Director at IN-SPACE. Science and Technology Minister Arjun Modhwadia, along with P. Bharati, IAS, Secretary, Science and Technology Department, presented Gujarat's strategic blueprint

for fostering growth and innovation in the space sector.

Addressing the gathering, Modhwadia reiterated the state government's commitment to building a robust SpaceTech ecosystem backed by strong policy frameworks, industry partnerships and infrastructure support.

Highlighting the broader national context, the minister said India is transforming the leadership of the Prime Minister, marked by responsive governance and proactive administrative follow-up.

LVM3 rocket's success, a confidence booster for Gaganyaan mission, ISRO eyeing SSLV launch from new spaceport in early 2027

Sriharikota, (Andhra Pradesh), Dec 24: The success of India's heavy lift rocket launcher LVM3, which had precisely injected the heaviest US Satellite Bluebird-2 into the intended Orbit, will be a confidence booster for the future launches including the maiden human spaceflight mission Gaganyaan, ISRO Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space, Dr V Narayanan said today.

He said ISRO is planning its maiden rocket launch from the second spaceport at Kulasekarapattinam which is under construction in the southern Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu, in February-March 2027.

Addressing the scientists from the Mission Control Centre after the successful launch of the US-based AST SpaceMobile's communication satellite Bluebird-6 by the LVM3M6, he said the homegrown LVM3 rocket has once again proved its impeccable record and reliability with its ninth consecutive successful mission.

The accuracy with which the rocket injected the satellite was the best ever achieved by ISRO, he said.

He said today's was the

ninth successful flight of LVM3 and its 100 per cent reliability serves as a confidence booster for future endeavours, including the Gaganyaan mission, planned in 2026 end or early 2027.

Recounting India's space journey right from the initial days of relying on US rockets for launching satellites in 1960s, Dr Narayanan said India has made significant progress in its space endeavours by launching heaviest satellites for international customers.

He said till date, ISRO has launched 434 foreign satellites from 34 countries, including multiple satellites in a single mission, and today's 104th launch from SHAR Range here, further cemented its position in the global commercial space market, besides showcasing India's growing clout as a reliable launch service provider.

Dr Narayanan said work on the Second spaceport at Kulasekarapattinam in the coastal Thoothukudi district, was progressing well and ISRO's is eyeing the first Small Satellite Launch Vehicle (SSLV) mission in February-March 2027.

The Kulasekarapattinam



spaceport will mainly cater to SSLV launches, while Sriharikota will continue to remain as the primary launch centre for all other missions, using PSLV, GSLV and LMV rockets.

According to ISRO said this spaceport will mainly cater to SSLV missions in view of the heavy demand for launching small satellites in a 500 km Planar Orbit, with the participation of the private sector, which will also be involved in the SSLV rocket project.

SSLV can carry Single/Multi Satellites-- Nano, Micro and Mini satellites. It can carry Single satellite weighing up to 500 kg in 500 km planar orbit. It can also carry three Multiple satellites ranging from 10 kg

to 300 kg into a 500 km Planar Orbit

SSLV is a 3 stage Launch Vehicle configured with three Solid Propulsion Stages and liquid propulsion based Velocity Trimming Module (VTM) as a terminal stage.

SSLV is 2m in diameter and 34m in length with lift off mass of 120 tonnes. The key features of SSLV are Low cost, with low turn-around time, flexibility in accommodating multiple satellites, launch on demand feasibility, minimal launch infrastructure requirements, etc.

The facility is being constructed over 2,350 acres at south coastal village of Kulasekarapattinam, where the works are going on in full swing following the comple-

tion of land acquisition process with the assistance of the Tamil Nadu government.

The groundbreaking ceremony was performed on February 28, 2024. To mark this historic occasion, ISRO launched a RH-200 Rohini Sounding Rocket from the launch complex on that day.

This was the first rocket launch from the spaceport. The Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (VSSC), Thiruvananthapuram, provided the rocket and the meteorological payload, while SDSC, SHAR Range, installed the launch facilities including radars, launchers, and electronic systems for this launch mission.

It may also be noted that the primary spaceport SDSC, Sriharikota's location on the Bay of Bengal provides a good launch azimuth corridor and ensures safety through rockets launched over the ocean.

However, the launch corridor is insufficient for smaller rockets carrying payloads to a Polar Orbit (circling the Earth above the poles), since the Island Nation of Sri Lanka is directly to the South of Sriharikota.

To avoid the risk of flying over another country, pay-

Gujarat: 21 cases registered against narcotic networks; drugs valued at Rs 1 crore seized

Ahmedabad, Dec 24: In a major offensive against the city's narcotics network, the Ahmedabad Crime Branch and the Special Operations Group (SOG) have carried out a series of coordinated, high-intensity raids over the past week, registering 21 criminal cases and seizing drugs valued at over Rs 1 crore.

The joint operation, officials said, reflects a zero-tolerance approach towards drug trafficking and consumption, with enforcement teams targeting every layer of the illegal supply chain, from street-level peddlers to those financing the trade.

According to police, 25 accused, including key drug peddlers, have been arrested during the seven-day drive. Substantial quantities of narcotic substances such as Mephedrone (MD), ganja and charas were recovered and seized as muddamal during raids conducted across multiple locations in the city.

In a strategic shift, investigators are now placing special emphasis on tracking narcotics networks linked to the seized consignments.

Officials said efforts are underway to trace money trails, identify laundering channels and freeze assets generated from the drug trade. By disrupting the financial backbone of these syndicates, the

agencies aim to prevent criminal networks from regrouping and resuming operations.

Police have also moved away from limiting action to large commercial consignments.

Even small quantities of narcotics are being targeted to dismantle local distribution hubs that fuel addiction and trap vulnerable youth at the grassroots level, officials added.

While reiterating strict action against drug peddlers, the Crime Branch underlined a humanitarian approach for individuals suffering from addiction.

Authorities said genuinely addicted persons willing to undergo de-addiction treatment will be supported under legal provisions.

Under Section 64A of the NDPS Act, addicts booked for offences involving small quantities or consumption under Section 27 may be granted immunity from prosecution if they voluntarily seek medical treatment from a government-recognised de-addiction centre.

"Our objective is to make Ahmedabad drug-free. We are striking at the financial roots of drug networks while offering a second chance to those who want to break free from addiction," a senior Crime Branch official said, urging families and individuals to come forward and opt for rehabilitation.

Maha Cabinet clears Karmayogi 2.0 and Sarpanch Samvad

Mumbai, Dec 24: To ensure effective implementation of development programs at the village, taluka, and district levels, the Maharashtra Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, on Wednesday approved the launch of Zilla Karmayogi Program 2.0 and the Sarpanch Samvad Program.

Both initiatives will be executed through the MITRA institution.

Training will be provided to approximately 85,000 officers and staff, ranging from ground-level workers to district-level officials (including Agriculture Officers, Gram Sevaks, Talathis, Engineers, and Health Workers).

This aims to enhance skills to boost district GDP by supporting MSMEs and Farmer-Producer Organisations (FPOs). It aims to improve Government-to-Business (G2B) services and strengthen inter-departmental coordination.

The training for 20,000 Sarpanches will be provided via a tripartite agreement between the Quality Council of India (QCI), MITRA, and the VSTF Foundation, said the government release.

The training includes financial autonomy, effective implementation of government schemes, long-term planning for Gram Panchayats, and empowerment of women members through e-learning, webinars, and workshops, said the government release.

Further, the state cabinet today authorised Divisional Commissioners to regularise the appointments of 291 bonded Health Assistants (Female) who are currently working or have retired under District Councils (Zilla Parishads).

Previously, these assistants were appointed for two years from government nursing colleges. While Divisional Commissioners earlier had the power to grant 11-month

temporary extensions based on local needs, this power was revoked in 2018.

The new decision restores the authority to Divisional Commissioners to regularise the services of those appointed before April 15, 2015, ensuring job security and administrative resolution for these health workers.

Additionally, the cabinet also approved the allotment of one acre of land to the Dharashiv Municipal Council for the installation of a statue of the legendary literature and social reformer, Lokshahir Annabhau Sathé.

The land is part of the Dairy Development Department (Government Milk Cooling Centre) at Survey No. 426 in Dharashiv city.

Following demands from public representatives and various organisations, the cabinet decided to provide this land free of cost for the memorial.

Nitish Kumar inspects under-construction buildings of two varsitaies in Patna

Patna, Dec 24: Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Wednesday inspected the under-construction buildings of the Bihar University of Health Sciences and the Bihar Engineering University (BEU) at Mithapur in Patna.

During the inspection, the Chief Minister was briefed on the progress of construction work of the BEU by Pratima S. Verma, Secretary of the Science, Technology and Technical Education Department, while Lokesh Kumar Singh, Secretary of the Health Department, informed him about the construction status of the Bihar University of Health Sciences building.

The Chief Minister said that both universities have been established to provide high-quality technical and medical education to students in Bihar.

He directed the officials to ensure that the construction



of all structures of both universities is completed efficiently and within the stipulated timeframe.

Highlighting the development of the Mithapur area, CM Nitish noted that several prominent educational institutions such as the Chandragupta Institute of Management, Aryabhata Knowledge University, National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Chanakya National Law

University, and Maulana Mazharul Haque Arabic and Persian University have already been established there.

He said that the completion of the two new universities would further strengthen the educational infrastructure of the area.

The BEU was established on July 27, 2022, and five acres of land were allotted in Mithapur for the construction of its campus.

The main university building will be four-storeyed with a total built-up area of 1,11,732 square feet. The ground floor will house the Dean's office, Registrar's office, cafeteria, and other administrative offices.

The first floor will include the Vice-Chancellor's office, a meeting hall, and an evaluation centre.

The second floor will have office rooms, an evaluation centre, and a store room. The third floor will contain five archive rooms and a store room. The fourth floor will house an evaluation centre and two large multipurpose halls.

Additionally, a guest house with eight rooms and four suites, along with a caretaker's residence, is also being constructed on the campus.

Meanwhile, the construction of the new building of the Bihar University of Health Sciences is underway

under the state government's ambitious Seven Resolutions-2 scheme, aimed at strengthening medical education in Bihar. The total area of the project is 27,567 square metres.

The main university building, spread over 12,645 square metres, will include administrative and academic blocks, examination halls, a dispensary, a multipurpose stage, waiting rooms, an information centre, an enrolment branch, the Chancellor's office, and a training and placement branch.

The ancillary buildings, covering 14,922 square metres, will include the Vice-Chancellor's residence, a university guest house, and a multipurpose auditorium.

The Chief Minister reiterated that the timely completion of these projects would significantly enhance the quality of higher education in Bihar.

Punjab has set new benchmarks in farm prosperity, crop diversification and sustainable practices in 2025; Agri Minister

Chandigarh, Dec 24: As the year 2025 concludes, Punjab's agricultural landscape stands significantly transformed, driven by the bold initiatives of Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann-led state government. The year has been marked by record farmer remuneration, major strides in crop diversification, and a steadfast commitment to sustainable agricultural practices, setting new benchmarks for farm prosperity in the state.

Punjab's Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Minister, Gurmeet Singh Khudian, highlighted the year's landmark achievements, stating that the government's resolve to empower farmers is matched by its strong commitment to ecological sustainability.

"Our schemes have driven transformative change, and the record sugarcane price reflects our pledge to reward farmers' hard work," he said.

In a historic decision, the state government announced the highest State Agreed Price (SAP) for sugarcane in the country at Rs 416 per quintal—an increase of Rs 15 over the previous year. This move ensures that Punjab's cane growers are the best compensated nationwide.

A major environmental success has been the 53 per cent reduction in stubble-burning incidents during the Kharif season, with cases declining to 5,114 this year from 10,909 in 2024. This achievement has

been supported by the provision of more than 1.58 lakh subsidised Crop Residue Management (CRM) machines to farmers since 2018, with over 16,000 sanction letters issued during the current year alone.

Crop diversification also witnessed robust growth, with the area under cotton expanding by 20 per cent to 1.19 lakh hectares.

This growth was supported by a 33 per cent subsidy on PAU-recommended BT cotton seeds. More than 52,000 farmers registered online to avail of this benefit, reflecting strong confidence in the government's initiatives.

The Agriculture Minister further informed that the state government's push for water-saving Direct Seeding of Rice (DSR) technology, backed by an incentive of Rs 1,500 per acre, saw widespread adoption.

The area under DSR increased by 17 per cent—from 2.53 lakh acres in 2024 to 2.96 lakh acres this year—marking a crucial step in Punjab's efforts to conserve its rapidly depleting groundwater resources.

Meanwhile, the area under Basmati rice cultivation recorded a modest increase, rising to 6.90 lakh hectares this year from 6.81 lakh hectares last year. This growth underscores the aromatic crop's continued reputation as a lucrative option for Punjab's farmers, catering to both domestic and export markets.

BMC polls: Thackeray cousins' emotional appeal set to clash with BJP's organisational might

Mumbai, Dec 24: The alliance between Shiv Sena (UBT) and the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena has made the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) elections significantly more competitive. However, Uddhav Thackeray and Raj Thackeray face a steep uphill task against the high-momentum BJP-led Mahayuti, setting the stage for a contest where emotional appeal will be tested against organisational strength.

Political observers describe the upcoming BMC battle as an acid test of whether the much-talked-about "Thackeray magic" can checkmate the BJP's formidable electoral machinery. The reunion is politically crucial for both cousins, as their long-standing split had historically fractured the Marathi vote -- often benefiting the BJP in tight contests.

A united Sena (UBT)-MNS front is expected to prevent such vote-splitting, particularly in central Mumbai and traditional Marathi strongholds such as Dadar, Parel and Girgaon. Additionally, Uddhav Thackeray has managed to retain a significant share of the Muslim vote, as reflected in the 2024 Lok Sabha results. When com-

bined with Raj Thackeray's aggressive Marathi outreach, this could create a distinctive electoral bloc aimed at challenging both the BJP and the Shinde-led Shiv Sena faction.

Insiders from both Sena (UBT) and MNS believe the emotional pull of the "Brand Thackeray" will be a key factor. For many loyalists, the public reunion of the cousins symbolises a fight to "protect Mumbai" from what they describe as Delhi-driven political dominance -- an emotional narrative seen as their strongest counter to the BJP's financial and organisational resources.

However, senior leaders privately acknowledge that emotion alone may not be enough to overcome the BJP-led Mahayuti's robust grassroots network. This concern is underscored by the coalition's dominant performance in the recently concluded civic elections, where the Mahayuti won 207 of the 288 president posts across 246 nagar parishads and 42 nagar panchayats. The BJP alone secured 117 posts, while the Sena (UBT) was reduced to single digits.

The contest is further complicated by the Congress's decision to contest the BMC polls independently, effec-

tively turning the election into a triangular -- or even quadrilateral -- fight. In such a scenario, the BJP is expected to capitalise on a split in anti-incumbency and opposition votes.

There are also potential ideological fault lines within the Thackeray alliance. Raj Thackeray's past anti-migrant rhetoric and his recent proximity to Hindutva politics could sit uneasily with Uddhav Thackeray's current inclusive and secular positioning, particularly in Mumbai's cosmopolitan wards.

Adding to the challenge is Deputy Chief Minister and Shiv Sena chief Eknath Shinde, who controls the official party name and the 'bow and arrow' symbol. In civic elections where local corporator networks are critical, Shinde's ability to attract former UBT corporators remains a significant threat.

Against this backdrop, observers say the Thackeray cousins are likely to focus on checkmating the BJP in Marathi-dominated wards, while the BJP will rely on its strong organisational presence in Gujarat, Rajasthan and North Indian pockets -- along with the Congress contesting separately -- to maintain its edge in the BMC race.

Bengaluru, Dec 24: The Karnataka BJP on Wednesday alleged that the drug menace is rampant in the state and accused the Congress government of failing to curb organised crime and lawlessness.

Addressing a press conference, Leader of the Opposition R. Ashoka claimed that drug mafias were operating openly in Karnataka, forcing police teams from other states to come and make arrests.

"When I raise the issue of drugs, the Home Minister talks about what is happening elsewhere in the country. The police department itself is caught up in a transfer racket," he alleged.

Ashoka claimed that criminal activities had increased since the Congress came to power and accused the government of misusing legislation brought in to curb hate speech.

"In the name of preventing hate speech, a law has been introduced that curtails freedom of expression. Congress imposed the Emergency in the past, and now this law is aimed at jailing opposition leaders and targeting the media," he said.

Stating that the BJP would oppose the move, Ashoka said the party would appeal to the Governor not to give assent to the Bill once it is forwarded.



The BJP leader also launched a broad attack on the government's handling of wildlife conservation, claiming that more than 206 elephants had died during the Congress regime. He alleged that 61 leopards, 19 peacocks and several deer under the Forest Department's custody had died, and claimed that illegal wildlife trade was thriving.

"Instead of addressing these issues, the government has cancelled safaris. No other state has done this. Wildlife conflicts are not caused by safaris. Around 6,000 people working in jungle resorts have been affected, tourism has declined, and farmers and local residents are suffering losses," Ashoka said.

Referring to the recently concluded Assembly session, Ashoka said discussions were held on issues related to North Karnataka but accused Chief Minister Siddaramaiah of making no fresh announcements for the region. He alleged delays in the disbursement of funds under the Gruha Lakshmi scheme,

claiming that 1.26 crore women had been affected.

"The government has not explained why payments for February and March were delayed. This is a major scam. We will continue our agitation until the women receive their money," he said, also alleging that there was no opportunity to raise issues such as misuse of Dalit funds, ration card cancellations and human-wildlife conflict.

Ashoka further alleged that the Congress was riddled with internal divisions, claiming there was confusion over leadership in the state. "Even Congress leaders have publicly admitted failures within the government. Due to this infighting, development work has been hampered," he charged.

Accusing the state government of failing to effectively coordinate with the Centre, Ashoka claimed that central schemes were not being implemented properly and that funds were withheld due to procedural lapses.

"They have not even sent a delegation to the Union government. They only issue statements," he said.

Citing the recent town panchayat elections, Ashoka claimed that the BJP's performance reflected public discontent against what he described as the Congress government's misrule.

Farewell ceremony organised to honour outgoing Chief Secretary UT Ladakh

LG Kavinder hails Dr Kotwal's exemplary service, administrative acumen

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Kargil, Dec 23: Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor of Ladakh, Kavinder Gupta, attended the farewell ceremony to honour the outgoing Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh, Dr. Pawan Kotwal, IAS, on the occasion of his superannuation, in Kargil. The event was organised jointly by the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) Kargil, District Administration Kargil, and District Police Kargil. The farewell dinner was a special tribute to Dr. Pawan Kotwal, IAS, whose journey with the Ladakh Administration commenced on 12 April 2021, when he joined as Principal Secretary, shouldering critical responsibilities across key departments such as Planning, Development & Monitoring; Health & Medical Education; Forest, Ecology & Environment; and Revenue. His visionary leadership and sharp administrative acumen, his reform-oriented strategies were instrumental in the triumphant execution of numerous landmark initiatives spanning these vital sectors. Progressing further, he assumed the pivotal role of Advisor to the Hon'ble Lieutenant Governor on 9 June 2023. In a significant milestone, on 12 February 2025, the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, formally redesignated



the post of Advisor to Lieutenant Governor as Chief Secretary, UT Ladakh, thereby appointing Dr. Kotwal as the very first Chief Secretary of the Union Territory of Ladakh.

Addressing the distinguished gathering, the Hon'ble Lt Governor extended profound praise for Dr. Pawan Kotwal's exemplary service, exceptional leadership qualities, and sharp administrative acumen. He underscored Dr. Kotwal's indispensable role of seamless teamwork in driving inclusive and sustainable development across the rugged terrains of Ladakh.

Shri Kavinder Gupta elaborated that Dr. Kotwal's tenure stood out for its hallmark of effective governance, deep empathy towards the people, and a truly people-centric administrative approach, which

played a pivotal role in fortifying the administrative frameworks throughout the Union Territory. He further illuminated how the tangible and visible progress witnessed in Ladakh today stems directly from the coordinated synergy between the Central Government, the UT Administration, and dedicated district-level officers.

Hon'ble Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Kargil, Dr. Mohd Jaffer Akhoun, congratulated Dr. Pawan Kotwal on his superannuation, recalling their long association from Jammu & Kashmir days. He praised Dr. Kotwal's impartial treatment of Leh and Kargil, structural reforms, and the historic 2024 creation of five new districts (Drass, Zaskar, Sham, Nubra, Changthang), terming his legacy a "golden chapter."

Member of Parliament,

Ladakh, Mohmad Hanifa Jan, highlighted Dr. Kotwal's pivotal foundational role in Health, Revenue, Planning, and Ecology & Environment, stating his contributions to Ladakh's development would be remembered for decades.

In his poignant farewell address, Chief Secretary Dr. Pawan Kotwal conveyed his deepest gratitude to LAHDC Kargil, the District Administration, and District Police Kargil for orchestrating such a memorable ceremony. As one of the founding pillars of the UT Administration, he shared profound reflections on the extraordinary transformation in developmental activities since Ladakh's elevation to Union Territory status. Acknowledging the myriad challenges surmounted, he observed that UT Ladakh has now

attained a robust, stable footing to deliver efficient, truly citizen-centric governance.

Dr. Kotwal applauded the proactive dynamism of district officers from both Leh and Kargil, spotlighting the near-completion of land records digitisation—a transformative step that will empower citizens to effortlessly access precise digital land records. He further celebrated the enactment of the domicile law and the 95 per cent reservation policy as epoch-making achievements, especially empowering the youth of Ladakh.

Concluding with emotion, he remarked that the boundless love and respect showered upon him by every stratum of Ladakhi society would endure as a treasured lifelong memory.

The occasion was graced by an august assembly, including Hon'ble Executive Councillors and Councillors of LAHDC Kargil; Shri Sanjeev Khirwar, IAS, Principal Secretary; Deputy Commissioner and CEO, LAHDC Kargil, Shri Rakesh Kumar, IAS, Senior Superintendent of Police, Kargil, Shri Nitin Yadav, IPS; heads of prominent religious and social organisations; senior district officers; and a host of other distinguished guests, including family members of Dr Pawan Kotwal.

Standeeds and banners highlighting the significance of 'Veer Bal Diwas' displayed at railway stations in Jammu Division



JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu: A comprehensive awareness campaign has been launched in the Jammu Division to inform and educate the citizens of the nation, especially the younger generation, about the exemplary courage and sacrifice of the Sahibzadas. Under the direction of the Railway Board, special standees and banners have been put up at major railway stations in the Jammu Division to highlight the significance of 'Veer Bal Diwas'

(December 26). 'Veer Bal Diwas' is observed every year on December 26 to commemorate the martyrdom of Sahibzada Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba Fateh Singh Ji, the sons of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. This day is an opportunity to instill values of bravery, sacrifice, and nation-building among young learners.

These banners aim to raise awareness among passengers and railway employees about the great legacy of the Sahibzadas, who dis-

played immense courage in the face of religious fanaticism. Uchit Singhal, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager of Jammu Division, said, " 'Veer Bal Diwas' symbolizes India's identity and glorious history. Through these standees and banners, we aim to integrate the story of these young heroes into the national consciousness and encourage the youth of the country to draw inspiration from their ideals."

Successful Conclusion of Pulse Polio Immunization Campaign at Jammu Railway Station



JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu, 24 December, Pulse Polio Immunization Campaign was successfully conducted at Jammu Railway Station from December 21 to December 23. This campaign, organized by the Railways in collaboration with the Family Welfare Department, concluded successfully on December 23.

During this campaign, all targeted children aged zero to five years were administered the "two drops of life" polio vaccine. Under the National

Pulse Polio Immunization Campaign, polio booths were clearly established at the entrance and platforms of Jammu Railway Station.

During this campaign, it was ensured that no child, especially those traveling with their families, missed receiving the polio vaccine at the main booths of the railway station and on the trains.

Under this three-day Pulse Polio Immunization Campaign, more than 713 children were administered the polio vaccine.

Commenting on the campaign, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Mr. Uchit Singhal, said, "The railway administration provided all possible assistance to the health workers and volunteers. Announcements were made at Jammu Railway Station, and relevant banners were also displayed. He further added that the Railways successfully achieved the target for the immunization drive. This achievement reflects the Railways' commitment to keeping India polio-free."

Sun Pharmaceutical Limited, Samba Unit Donates Desks to Government Schools in Samba under CSR Initiative

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Samba: Under its Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiative, Sun Pharmaceutical Limited, Samba Unit, implementation support provided Care For You NGO, has extended vital infrastructure support to government schools in remote villages of Samba block to enhance the learning environment for students.

As part of its educational initiative, SunVidya, Sun Pharma CSR recently provided 50 desks to the Government Higher Secondary School, villages in the Samba block, Jammu-areas with limited road access. This effort has significantly improved learning conditions for students who earlier studied sitting on mats, even during harsh winters, by enabling them to learn in more comfortable and dignified classroom settings. Shri Kewal Krishan, Chief Education Officer, expressed sincere gratitude to Sun Pharma and senior authorities for their support in creating



better classrooms for these children, acknowledging the positive impact on both students and the overall school environment.

In addition, Sun Pharmaceutical Limited, Samba Unit, implementation support provided by Care For You NGO, today donated 50 school desks to Government Higher Secondary School, Sarna, further strengthening educational infrastructure in the region. The programme was warmly wel-

comed by the school authorities and students. To mark the occasion, students presented cultural performances and an NCC parade, reflecting their enthusiasm and gratitude for the support extended to the institution.

The function was graced by the Chief Guest, CEO Samba, Shri Kewal Krishan Ji, who appreciated the CSR efforts of Sun Pharmaceutical Limited and the implementation support provided by Care For You

NGO. He emphasized the importance of public-private partnerships in strengthening educational infrastructure in government schools.

Principal, Government Higher Secondary School Sarna, Smt. Anita Sharma, expressed heartfelt thanks to Sun Pharmaceutical Limited and Care For You NGO for this meaningful initiative, stating that the donated desks would greatly benefit students and improve classroom facilities.

Representing Sun Pharmaceutical Limited, Priyanka Talwar, Executive CSR, was present during the programme. From Care For You NGO, Founder President Mr. Touseef Malik and State Technical Head Mr. Syed Ashfaq Andrabi & Ramiz raja state coordinator attended the event, reaffirming the NGO's commitment to educational and community development.

Also present on the occasion were Firdous Akthar, Representative from the CEO's Office, along with lecturers, teachers of the school, and PRI members of the village, who collectively appreciated the CSR-driven infrastructure support. This initiative reflects Sun Pharmaceutical Limited's continued commitment towards social responsibility and Care For You NGO's dedicated efforts in implementing impactful development programmes in the education sector, particularly in remote and underserved areas.

IIM Jammu Welcomes Students from Delhi Public School Udhampur, Brahmurishi Bawra Shanti Vidya Peet, Udhampur and Jammu Sanskriti School, Jammu for an Academic Visit and Campus Tour

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu: IIM Jammu hosted an academic visit and campus tour for students from Delhi Public School Udhampur, Brahmurishi Bawra Shanti Vidya Peet, Udhampur and Jammu Sanskriti School, Jammu on 24th Dec 2025. The delegation from Delhi Public School included 38 (26 Students from Humanities and 12 Students from Commerce) students from Classes XI Humanities, accompanied by Shri Sachan Kotwal, Ms. Sonia Suwal and Mr. Chirag Mehra. Brahmurishi Bawra Shanti Vidya Peet, Udhampur was represented by 39 students from Class XI and XII, accompanied by two teachers, Mr. Akash Kerni and Mr. Pooja Vaid. Jammu Sanskriti School, Jammu included 31 Students and accompanied by teachers Ms. Puja Sharma and Mr. Amardeep Singh.



The students and teachers received a warm welcome at IIM Jammu, beginning their visit at the iconic Clock Tower, followed by a comprehensive campus tour covering the Grand Reception Area, Mandapam Auditorium, Vedanta MDP Block, Smart Classrooms, Nalanda Library, Rangmanch Amphitheatre, and Japan Kendra. At the Vedanta MDP Centre, they were briefed on IIM Jammu's Executive Education and Consultancy

Division and its training programs. They also observed the detailed campus-scale model, showcasing the institute's world-class infrastructure and future expansion plans.

During the academic interaction, the delegation learned about IIM Jammu's diverse academic programs and its Centres of Excellence that promote innovation, research, and social impact. The visit to the Nalanda Library, equipped with digital resources,

advanced reading spaces, and Bloomberg Terminals for real-time financial analysis, highlighted the institute's commitment to global education standards.

They also viewed audio-visual films depicting IIM Jammu's journey since its inception in 2016, its rise in academic excellence, and its contribution to nation-building. The visitors explored IIM Jammu's official website and social media platforms, encouraging continuous

engagement with the institute's latest developments in admissions, scholarships, and student initiatives.

One of the main highlights of the three-school visit was the interaction between IIM Jammu students and students from Delhi Public School, Udhampur; Brahmurishi Bawra Shanti Vidya Peeth, Udhampur; and Jammu Sanskriti School, Jammu. During these sessions, the school students interacted with first-year MBA students of IIM Jammu, Deepankar Kumar, Vibhanshu Tayade, Anjul Kumar, and Vibhanshu who shared valuable insights into student life at the institute.

The discussions covered pathways to enter IIMs through CAT, preparation strategies, and the possibility of pursuing professional courses such as CA alongside an MBA. The IIM Jammu stu-

dents also spoke about the various student clubs and committees at the institute and explained how they effectively balance these responsibilities with academic assignments and studies. They further highlighted IIM Jammu's case-based teaching pedagogy and explained how it helps students develop a holistic perspective on management. The MBA students shared how they are trained to work under pressure, stretch beyond their comfort zones, and consistently deliver results without excuses, thereby preparing themselves to thrive in highly competitive professional environments.

The students and teachers were also informed about IIM Jammu's dual international accreditations, BGA Institutional Accreditation and EFMD Programme Accreditation for its MBA program, placing it among the top

five IIMs in India with such distinction and the only second- and third-generation IIM to attain it. IIM Jammu is now progressing toward AACSB Accreditation, which will place it among the global elite Triple Crown Accredited business schools.

The visit concluded with an interactive session where the students engaged with IIM Jammu representatives on opportunities in management, entrepreneurship, finance, analytics, and leadership. The interaction also highlighted IIM Jammu's ongoing efforts to build strong community engagement and contribute to development across the Himalayan region. The visit, along with the briefing on various academic programs and career counselling, was coordinated by the Media and Publication Division, IIM Jammu.

T20 World Cup defence, ODIs aplenty and tough Test assignments: India men's cricket team faces a packed 2026

New Delhi, Dec 24: After a roller coaster 2025, the Indian men's cricket team faces a jam-packed 2026, headlined by a home T20 World Cup defence, lots of ODI matches, and some tough World Test Championship (WTC) assignments in overseas conditions.

It was a memorable 2025 for India, as they won the Champions Trophy in Dubai, especially with their four-pronged spin strategy bearing fruit. In terms of T20s, the side's upswing continued with wins in bilateral series at home and abroad, including the Asia Cup, although they have yet to hold the trophy in their hands.

But in terms of the Test team, results were mixed: a defeat to Australia in Sydney meant India lost the Border-Gavaskar Trophy series 3-1 and bid goodbye to their hopes of entering the World Test Championship final. Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma, and Cheteshwar Pujara retired from the format to mark the start of a big transi-



tion in the Test team.

Shubman Gill became the new Test skipper and later took over as ODI captain. After a hard-fought 2-2 draw in England, India got an easy 2-0 series win over the West Indies at home. However, the ghosts of the 3-0 series loss in New Zealand came back to haunt them when South Africa condemned them to a 2-0 defeat. India's batting order in Tests remains in flux, with persistent experimentation raising questions about role clarity and long-term planning.

But come 2026, the short-

2024 and try to make history as the first hosting side to win a Men's T20 World Cup. If that happens, India will also become the only team to have three titles in the T20 World Cup.

The post-T20 World Cup schedule, once the IPL 2026 jamboree is over, resumes in June with Afghanistan arriving in India for one Test (not under WTC cycle) and three ODIs. India will then quickly leave for a white-ball tour to England in July, featuring three ODIs and five T20s.

India's World Test Championship assignments for 2026 begin in August with a two-Test series in Sri Lanka, a trip which will be a big examination for the side, who are yet to come to grips with how to play against spinners on spin-friendly pitches.

A brief three-match T20I stopover against Afghanistan in the UAE is on the cards in September. The likelihood of it happening is larger than the postponed tour to Bangladesh, which looks shaky to take place due to the

recent tensions in the country. India will also travel for the Asian Games T20 event in Aichi-Nagoya, Japan, from September 19 to October 4, where a second-string squad is expected to participate.

India will begin their 2026 home season when the West Indies arrive for three ODIs and five T20s in September and October. After that, they will depart for a marquee overseas assignment in October and November – an all-format tour of New Zealand comprising two Tests, three ODIs and five T20s.

India will wrap up the year by hosting Sri Lanka for three ODIs and three T20s in December, as they continue to fine-tune their preparation for the 2027 Men's ODI World Cup.

India's players and various stakeholders will have to be at their best in terms of workload management across all three formats while pursuing a silverware quest and constant victories in various bilateral series.

Rohit, Kohli smash centuries on Vijay Hazare Trophy return

New Delhi, Dec 24: While the first half of the opening day of the Vijay Hazare Trophy was all about record-breaking centuries, Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli stole the limelight in the second half with their respective hundreds on their return to the premier one-day domestic tournament.

Rohit scored a century for Mumbai off just 62 balls against Sikkim, and Kohli followed soon, hitting an 83-ball ton against Andhra Pradesh, as both players dominated their opponents.

Rohit made a sensational comeback to domestic cricket, scoring a century in what was his first Vijay Hazare Trophy match in seven < years for Mumbai on Wednesday.

Chasing Sikkim's 236 runs in Jaipur, Rohit began confidently, hitting a series of sixes and fours that made the target seem easy to reach. Approaching 14,000 runs in the 50-over format, this century marked the former India skipper's 37th in List A cricket, adding to his tally of 33 international centuries



for India.

Following Rohit's impressive 155 for Mumbai, Kohli marked his return to the Vijay Hazare Trophy after 15 years with a typical century during a 299-run chase against Andhra at the BCCI's Centre of Excellence in Bengaluru.

Kohli confidently led the chase, showcasing his usual flair, and scored a dazzling hundred.

This marked his 58th List A century and his third century in four innings since the South Africa series earlier this month.

With his first run of the innings, Kohli joined an elite club as the ninth player ever

to reach 16,000 List A runs, with more than 14,000 coming while playing for India since his debut in 2008.

During the game, Kohli also etched his name in cricketing folklore by completing 16000 List A runs.

Kohli's 16,000-run feat makes him only the second Indian player, after legendary batter Sachin Tendulkar, to reach this figure in List A cricket.

The 37-year-old now stands as the ninth player overall to breach this milestone, joining the ranks of cricketing legends like Tendulkar, Ricky Ponting, Kumar Sangakkara, Sir Vivian Richards, and others.

Bihar script history with highest List A team total in Vijay Hazare Trophy

Ranchi, Dec 24: Bihar are on a roll in its Vijay Hazare Trophy, having registered the highest team total in List A cricket during the Plate League opener against Arunachal Pradesh on Wednesday.

Batting first, Bihar posted a staggering 574 for the loss of six wickets, surpassing the previous List A record of 506/2 set by Tamil Nadu against Arunachal Pradesh in the 2022 Vijay Hazare Trophy.

Teenager Vaibhav Suryavanshi's blistering 190, coupled with a captain's knock of 128 not out from Sakibul Gani and a fluent 116 from Ayush Loharuka, powered the team to a record-breaking total in a dominant batting display.

Suryavanshi smashed a century off 36 balls to become the youngest centurion in List A cricket. His century was the second-fastest by an Indian man overall in List A cricket, after Punjab batter Anmolpreet Singh's 35-ball century against Arunachal in the Vijay Hazare competition last season.

Overall, Suryavanshi's 36-ball ton ranks joint-fourth-fastest ever in the world in List A cricket.

Ishan Kishan becomes second-fastest Indian to smash century in List A history

Ahmedabad, Dec 24 : Jharkhand wicketkeeper-batter Ishan Kishan produced a breathtaking display of power-hitting, smashing a 33-ball century against Karnataka in a Vijay Hazare Trophy fixture in Ahmedabad on Wednesday.

The innings ranks as the second-fastest hundred by an Indian in List A cricket, falling just one ball short of the national record set earlier the same day by Bihar skipper Sakibul Gani, who reached the milestone in 32 deliveries against Arunachal Pradesh.

Kishan's latest feat adds to an extraordinary run of form for the left-hander. Only days ago, he was a surprise inclusion in India's squad for the upcoming T20 World Cup, shortly after captaining Jharkhand to their first-ever Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy triumph.

During the SMAT campaign, Kishan topped the charts with 517 runs and played a decisive role in the final against Haryana, where he struck a blistering century. His hundred came off just 45 balls, making him only the second player to



score a ton in a Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy final and registering as the third-fastest century in a men's T20 final.

With five centuries in the tournament, he now shares the record for most hundreds in SMAT history with Abhishek Sharma.

Kishan's explosive credentials are well established at the international level, too. He holds the record for the fastest double century in One-Day Internationals, reaching the landmark in just 126 balls against Bangladesh in 2022.

The Vijay Hazare Trophy witnessed several breathtaking performances on Wednesday. It all started

with youngster Vaibhav Sooryavanshi grabbing headlines with his 36-ball century for Bihar, which he later converted into an 84-ball 190 before his knock came to an end.

What followed next in the same innings was Gani's record-breaking ton and Ayush Loharuka's 56-ball 116 as Bihar finished with a massive 574 runs on the scoreboard against Arunachal Pradesh.

Then, Kishan came close to breaking Gani's record, falling short by the barest of margins with his 33-ball ton. He eventually finished with 125 runs to his name from 39 deliveries as Jharkhand posted 412/9.

Pant, Bumrah apologised after saying something in their language about me, says Bavuma

New Delhi, Dec 24: South Africa captain Temba Bavuma has revealed that India duo of Rishabh Pant and Jasprit Bumrah apologised to him after making remarks in their own language during the first Test at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata.

Bavuma, who captained South Africa to 2-0 Test series win over India, noted that while such words are not easily forgotten, he harbours no ill will. A stump mic incident during day one's play caught Bumrah and Pant referring to Bavuma as 'bauna' while appealing for an lbw off him in the 14th over.

The term is generally used for people suffering from dwarfism, but can be deemed offensive when directed at individuals of short stature. "A series against India is always going to be intense, and when it's heated, it makes it even more of a spectacle and motivates the players further."

"As long as the respect is still intact between players, it's all good with whatever happens on the field. I know from my side there was an incident where they said something in their language about me. At the end of the



day two senior players, Rishabh Pant and Jasprit Bumrah, came and apologised.

"When the apology was made, I was in the dark about what it was about, I hadn't heard it at the time and I needed to check in with our media manager about it. What happens on the field, stays on the field but you don't forget what is said. You use it as fuel and motivation, but there are no grudges per se," Bavuma was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo on Wednesday.

He also acknowledged that head coach Shukri Conrad could have used a better word instead of 'grovel' during the second Test in Guwahati. "Shukri also took some heat for his 'grovel' remark. I was

and Conrad made plans for months to ensure South Africa, the current World Test Championship holders, emerged victorious on their Test trip to India after previous failures in 2015 and 2019.

"In terms of coach Shukri getting the best out of us as players, that groundwork has been in place since we started. Shuks instils confidence in the players and makes them believe that they are the best. The premise is that if we play at our best, no one can stand near us."

"We have always wanted to prepare ourselves for these types of encounters. Between the two of us, there were months on end speaking about India. What type of team and players did we want? And what did we need to do to be successful? It wasn't a case of getting to India and saying, 'Okay, how are we going to do things?'"

"The seed was planted long before the Test series. The fact that we did it two and a half decades later speaks to the magnitude of our performance and overall achievement. It's another feather in our cap as a side, and we're growing very well as a Test team," he concluded.

Virat Kohli completes 16,000 List A runs on Vijay Hazare Trophy return

Bengaluru, Dec 24: Virat Kohli has once again etched his name in cricketing history, reaching the remarkable milestone of 16,000 List A runs during his return to the Vijay Hazare Trophy on Wednesday.

Playing for Delhi in their clash against Andhra Pradesh here at the BCCI's Centre of Excellence, Kohli achieved the feat with his first run in the team's chase of 299. This landmark moment further cements his status as one of the greatest ever in the 50-over format.

Kohli's 16,000-run feat makes him only the second Indian player, after legendary batter Sachin Tendulkar, to reach this figure in List A cricket. The 37-year-old now stands as the ninth player overall to breach this milestone, joining the ranks of cricketing legends like Tendulkar, Ricky Ponting, Kumar Sangakkara, Sir Vivian Richards, and others.

Kohli's last appearance in the Vijay Hazare Trophy came during the 2010-11 season, where he captained Delhi. He would go on to play in the NKP Salve Challenger Trophy in 2013-14 but had not participated in the Vijay Hazare for nearly a decade before this comeback. His return to the competition was eagerly antici-



pated, and his achievement was a fitting start to Delhi's campaign.

While the milestone of 16,000 List A runs stands as a testament to Kohli's excellence, his ODI record continues to shine even brighter. He remains the second-highest run-scorer in ODI history, behind only Sachin Tendulkar.

With 14,557 runs in 308 matches at an extraordinary average of 58.46, Kohli is the fastest player to 14,000 runs in ODI cricket. He also boasts the most centuries in the format, with 53 to his name.

Despite his long and storied career, Kohli is still chasing Tendulkar's record of 60 centuries in List A cricket. He currently holds 57 centuries, four ahead of Tendulkar's former record of 53 in the ODI format.

Having made his List A debut back in 2006 for Delhi in the Ranji One-Day Tournament, Kohli's career has been nothing short of spectacular.

Soorma Hockey Club set sights on Women's Hockey India League title after near miss last season

New Delhi, Dec 24: After topping the points table in the inaugural season before narrowly missing out in the final, Soorma Hockey Club will enter the second season of the Women's Hockey India League (HIL) determined to go one step further and mount another serious title challenge.

One of Soorma Hockey Club's greatest strengths is its goalkeeping department. The team boasts legendary goalkeeper and co-captain Savita, who recently reached the landmark of 300 international caps for India, underscoring her longevity and impact at the highest level. She was also named 'Goalkeeper of the Tournament' last season and will continue to guide the team from the post.

Savita will be supported by Nidhi, the first-choice goalkeeper for the Indian Junior Women's Team, who delivered a strong performance at the recently concluded FIH Hockey Women's Junior World Cup in Chile. Having the first-choice goalkeepers for both the Indian senior and junior women's teams gives Soorma Hockey Club a significant advantage between the posts.

In defence, they will once again rely on the experienced Australian Penny Squibb and



India's rising talent, Jyoti, who returns after an outstanding previous season in which she was named 'Player of the Tournament'. Joining them this season will be Japan's Shihori Oikawa, another seasoned international with 193 caps and 56 goals for her country. Jyoti Chhatrui will provide additional support in the backline.

The midfield will be spearheaded by India captain Salima Tete, who will continue to lead Soorma Hockey Club this season as co-captain. Known for her high work rate, leadership and ability to control the tempo of the game, Salima will be key to linking the defence and attack.

She will be supported by her national teammates, Vaishnavi Vitthal Phalke and Baljeet Kaur, along with Ajmina Kujur, Binima Dhan,

form from last season.

Soorma Hockey Club will once again be guided by Head Coach Jude Menezes, whose tactical masterclass and calm leadership were key to the team's consistency last season. He will be keen to build on last season's positives and push his squad to finish the job this time around.

Strength: Soorma Hockey Club's primary strength is their set of experienced Indian and international players across all departments. With veterans such as Savita in goal, Penny Squibb and Shihori Oikawa in defence, Salima Tete controlling the midfield, and Maria Jose Granatto in attack, the team is extremely strong on paper.

Weakness: Soorma Hockey Club will need to address the loss of key international players from last season, including Charlotte Englebert, Sophie Louise Hamilton and Maria Verschoor. Englebert, who finished as the league's joint top scorer with five goals, leaves a significant goalscoring void. It will be crucial for their forwards to hit the ground running and start scoring early in the tournament to gain an advantage over their opponents.

Kirstie Gordon returns to international cricket with Scotland, ends time with England

Edinburgh (Scotland), Dec 24: Kirstie Gordon, the captain of Nottinghamshire's Blaze team in English domestic women's cricket, has decided to return to international cricket with Scotland, over six years after her last appearance for England.

The 28-year-old left-arm spinner, who was born in Huntly, began her international career with Scotland at just 14 years old. However, in 2018, she chose to focus on a full-time cricket career with the English domestic system.

During her time with England, Gordon earned selection for the 2018 T20 World Cup and played in a one-off Test against Australia in 2019.

"It's always been in the back of my mind in the last couple of years to return to Scotland, and it has helped having Craig Wallace (Scotland head coach) in my ear! He's been on the phone a few times and I feel like I've really connected with him and his vision for the team. If you couple that with the chance to play again with two of my best mates in Kathryn (Bryce) and Sarah (Bryce), it feels like it's the right moment to come home," Gordon said in a

Cricket Scotland statement.

"I made my Scotland debut very young, and I was fortunate to go to the first global qualifiers in Thailand in 2015, so I had some awesome experiences with Scotland at that time, but I was really keen to try and take my cricketing career as far as I could. Going to Loughborough for university, the opportunities and avenues to play at a higher level really opened up from there. I eventually decided to stop my Scotland career and become a local player in order to play for Loughborough Lightning."

"I guess I did that while not really knowing what the prospects were, but I then was selected for England at the World Cup in the West Indies. It was probably always on my radar that I wanted to play at the highest level, so I absolutely loved it, and I'm really grateful for those opportunities," she added.

Between 2012 and 2017, Gordon represented Scotland in 60 international matches before switching to England. Now, after recovering from a back injury, she plans to be ready for the start of the 2026 domestic season and will be available for future Scotland selections.

Sakeena Itoo reviews action plan for achieving Chief Minister's Vision 2030 goal in Health sector

Stresses on efficient resource utilization, people-centric approach in healthcare delivery to meet objectives of Vision 2030

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu, Dec 24: In line with the Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah's Vision 2030 for health sector, aligned with J&K Vision Document @2047, Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today chaired a detailed review meeting at Civil Secretariat here to assess the Health Department's action plan for achieving this goal, primarily aimed at strengthening the public healthcare system across Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was attended by Secretary, Health and Medical Education, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah; MD NHM, Baseer ul Haq Chaudhary; CEO State Health Agency, Ananth Dwivedi; Managing Director, JKMSCL, Tariq Hussain Ganai; Commissioner Food and Drug Administration, Smita Sethi; Director SKIMS, Dr. Ashraf Ganig; Director Finance Health, Director Planning Health, Director Health Services Kashmir/Jammu, Director Coordination, New GMCs, Director Family Welfare and Immunization, Principals of all Medical Colleges and other concerned officers,



either in person or through video conferencing.

During the meeting, Minister Sakeena held detailed assessment of key priority areas like upgradation of healthcare infrastructure, strengthening primary and secondary healthcare services, human resource optimization, adoption of modern medical technologies, and improved availability of essential medicines and diagnostics. She also laid special emphasis on ensuring last-mile delivery of health services, particularly in rural and far-flung areas.

The Minister emphasized upon the officers that the action plan for achieving the Vision 2030 must be meticulously designed to translate the Chief Minister's vision of accessible, affordable and quality healthcare for all into

tangible outcomes on the ground. "Time-bound implementation of ongoing initiatives, efficient resource utilization and people-centric approach in healthcare delivery is vital for achieving the objectives of Vision 2030", Minister Sakeena stated.

Minister Sakeena stressed on the importance of inter-departmental coordination and continuous monitoring to achieve the targets set under Vision 2030. She directed officials to adopt innovative solutions, leverage digital health initiatives, and enhance accountability mechanisms to improve patient outcomes.

While reviewing the overall functioning of health sector across J&K, the Minister emphasized on the procurement of quality equipments for the health facilities which

meet the dire needs of general public. She also called upon officers to maintain transparency in tender procedures as well as timely deployment of procured machines and equipments in hospitals.

She further directed the officers for immediate deployment of newly procured Ambulance fleet in hospitals, highlighting that the Ambulances are basic need for improving health care services.

To plug the gaps of manpower, doctors and paramedical staff, in rural and far-flung areas, the Minister called upon the department to frame an incentive scheme, so that doctors and other staff posted in rural and far-flung areas get additional benefits while they are serving in these areas. She also

called upon the Secretary Health to rationalize the NHM doctors and other staff, and post them at places facing staff crunches. She also asked the Secretary to cancel attachments of all NHM doctors and post them at their respective place of postings.

The Minister also asked the CEO State Health Agency to strengthen the Anti Fraud Unit of the organisation so that the frauds involved in Sehat Scheme are timely tapped and due action is taken against the violators. She asked the CEO to break nexus between doctors and private hospitals involved in deceiving of patients under Sehat Scheme.

While reviewing the functioning of Food and Drug Administration, the Minister called upon the Commissioner for constant

Sakeena Itoo holds virtual Public Darbar with South Kashmir residents

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu, Dec 24: Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo today held a virtual public darbar with residents of several areas of South Kashmir districts, reaffirming the Omar Abdullah led Government's commitment to responsive and people-centric governance.

During the interactive session, the Minister patiently listened to public grievances and developmental concerns raised by participants from various districts of South Kashmir. The participants raised issues related to healthcare facilities, power, drinking water,

ration and other basic civic amenities.

While interacting with the participants, the Minister emphasized on the importance of public outreach, highlighting that these public darbars have emerged as an effective tool to bridge the gap between the Government and the people, ensuring transparency, accessibility and swift service delivery, especially in far-flung areas.

During the Darbar, the Minister issued on the spot directions to concerned officers for time-bound redressal of genuine issues. She asked the officers to address grievances in time bound manner, particularly regarding Power and PHE sectors

during winters.

The Minister directed the officers of PDD to provide electricity as per the established schedule and also rectify the defects in transformers timely. She also asked the officers to utilise the buffer stock at times when the repairing time of transformers takes more than a day.

On the sidelines of the public darbar, the Minister also e-inaugurated several public welfare projects of significant public importance, aimed at strengthening essential services and improving the quality of life for the local population, reflecting the government's focus on inclusive and sustainable development.

surveillance of food and eatery products being brought in to Jammu and Kashmir. She underscored that the market checking squads need to be strengthened at block, tehsil and district levels to maintain the food standards across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Minister also asked the

Commissioner to actively pursue the cases against the violators and take due action as per law against them.

Reiterating the Omar Abdullah led Government's commitment to accessible, affordable health care services, the Minister said that the Health Department remains focused on building a

resilient, inclusive and responsive healthcare system that meets the evolving needs of the population and upholds the promise of universal health coverage.

During the meeting, Director Planning Health gave a detailed presentation on the action plan for achieving objectives of Vision 2030.

Deputy CM calls for pro-public decisions on Gair Mumkin Khads issues

Chairs Sub-Committee review meeting

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu, Dec 24: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today chaired a meeting of the Sub-Committee constituted to examine the issues related to Gair Mumkin Khads in Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting, held at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu, was attended by Minister for Jal Shakti, Forest, Ecology & Environment and Tribal Affairs Departments, Javed Ahmad Rana and Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Cooperative and Election Departments, Javid Ahmad Dar, as members of the Sub-Committee.

Additional Chief Secretary, Jal Shakti Department, Shaleen Kabra, briefed the Sub-Committee on the current status of Gair Mumkin Khads and the challenges associated with their identification, protection and management.

Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Chief Minister



emphasized the need for taking pro-public and pragmatic decisions to ensure amicable redress of genuine issues faced by the people. He stressed that the policy interventions must strike a balance between the environmental protection and safeguarding the livelihoods and property rights of citizens.

The Sub-Committee discussed in detail the existing status of Gair Mumkin Khads, Daryas and Nallahs, along with related concerns with the objective of providing relief to the general public wherever required.

The Deputy Chief Minister called for sensitization of all stakeholders and directed for proper scientific mapping of Gair Mumkin Khads, Nallahs and adjacent non-cultivable

waste lands. The meeting also discussed climatic challenges and measures being taken to mitigate climatic impact on the environment, human life and properties.

The Deputy Chief Minister asked for comprehensive mapping of flood-prone areas to strengthen the disaster preparedness and mitigate risks. He further instructed the concerned departments to take stringent action against the illegal encroachments and ensure retrieval of encroached land across Jammu and Kashmir in a time-bound manner.

The members of the Sub-Committee put forth their valuable suggestions and highlighted various public concerns requiring urgent

Deputy Chief Minister felicitates Rollball World Cup gold medallists

JJ CORRESPONDENT

Jammu, Dec 24: Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today felicitated the winners of the 7th Rollball World Cup, held in Dubai from December 14 to 18, 2025, for their outstanding performance at the international level.

Representing India, Hiteshwar Singh and Suvidha Sarin, who competed in the Men's and Women's categories respectively clinched gold medals in their respective events, bringing immense pride and laurels to the Jammu and Kashmir.

Congratulating the players on their remarkable achievement, the Deputy Chief Minister lauded their dedication, discipline and perseverance.

He said that their success reflects the immense sporting potential of the youth of Jammu and Kashmir.

"J&K youth possess exceptional talent and the ability



to compete at any national and international level. With the right platform, encouragement and institutional support, they can excel and bring glory to the region," the Deputy Chief Minister said.

He reiterated the Government's commitment to promoting sports culture in Jammu and Kashmir and assured all necessary support to budding sports persons to help them realise their full potential.

The Deputy Chief Minister added that achievements like these serve as an inspiration for young athletes and strengthen Jammu and Kashmir's presence on the global sports map.

Principal Secretary Finance chairs FRC meet at Jammu

Jammu, Dec 24: Principal Secretary Finance, Santosh D Vaidya chaired a high-level meeting of the Fare Revision Committee (FRC) at Civil Secretariat here to deliberate upon the issue of revision of passenger transport fares across the Union Territory.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Transport, Avny Lavasa; Acting Transport Commissioner, J&K, Anju Gupta; Managing Director JKRTC Abdul Rashid War; Representative of Headquarters Northern Command (C/o 56 APO); Regional Transport Officer, Kashmir; Regional Transport Officer, Jammu, Additional Secretary GAD; members of the Committee, including representatives of various Transporters' Associations of the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir.

During the meeting, the representatives of the transporters submitted a proposal seeking a hike of 40% in passenger fares, citing a substantial increase in operational costs.

The Committee held a detailed and threadbare discussion on the matter, taking into account multiple factors such as the sharp rise in the cost of spare parts, fuel-related expenses, taxes, maintenance costs, and other operational inputs. A comprehensive cost analysis exercise was also examined during the deliberations.

While acknowledging the genuine concerns raised by the transporters, the Committee also carefully considered the socio-economic impact of fare revision on the general public, with particular emphasis on ensuring that the common man is not subjected to an undue financial burden.

After extensive deliberations and consensus among all stakeholders, it was unanimously decided that an 18% increase in passenger fares would be implemented across all categories of passenger vehicles operating in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir and the revised fares shall come into effect from 01.01.2026.

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