

DENGUE WARNING SIGNS

Many people with dengue can be cared for at home with adequate rest and hydration. But, if you experience any warning signs, go immediately to the nearest medical center.

Watch out for dengue warning signs!

A drop in body temperature accompanied by any of the following symptoms:

- Severe and continuous headache
- Joint and muscle pain
- Present vomiting
- A sharp rise in temperature
- Disorientation
- Bleeding from gums or nose, blood in stool, urine or vomit
- Redness on the skin

If you have any of these symptoms, go to the nearest medical center IMMEDIATELY

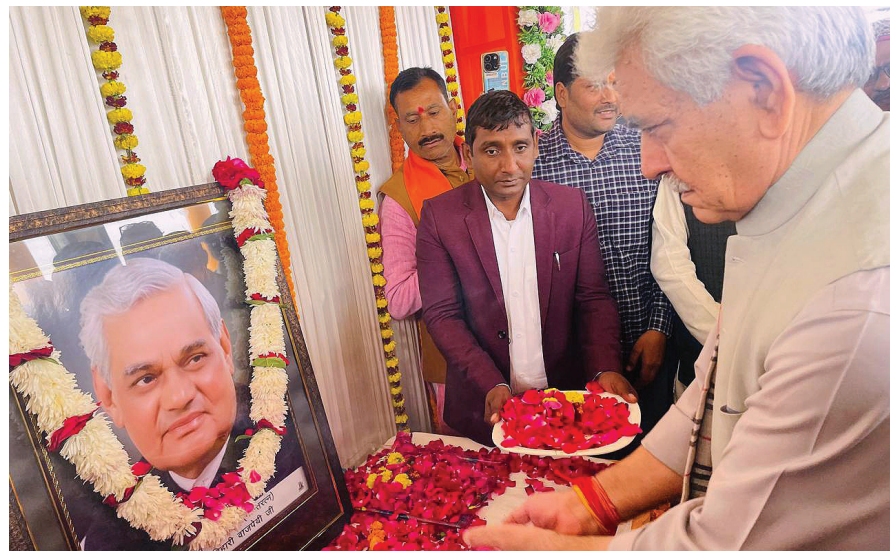
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Every section of society should work together to make the country self-reliant with undivided loyalty: LG Sinha

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DECEMBER 25

Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today paid tribute to former Prime Minister Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya on the occasion of their birth anniversary. Addressing a commemorative event at Pt. Madan Mohan Malaviya Inter College in Ghazipur, the Lieutenant Governor said, Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya and



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CM Omar Abdullah conducts surprise checks at Kashmir's premier Medical Institutions

JINNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 25

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today conducted surprise inspections of premier Health Institutions in Srinagar to gain firsthand knowledge of the facilities and services being provided to patients and their attendants. Chief Minister visited the Bone & Joint Hospital, Barzulla, one of the region's top Orthopaedic healthcare facilities. During his inspection, he toured various sections and wards, interacting with patients and attendants to understand their



concerns. Accompanied by Minister of Health, Sakeena Itoo, Senior Faculty Members and Doctors, the Chief Minister engaged with hospital staff to assess the winter arrangements, treatment facilities and the availability of medical professionals and paramedics.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah also inspected the state-of-the-art additional block of the hospital, constructed under the Jhelum Tawi Flood Recovery Project (JTFRP) with funding from the World Bank. Designed with earthquake-resilient technology, the block will add 160 beds, increasing the hospital's total capacity from 150 to 310 beds. During his visit, the Chief Minister emphasized the need to expedite the completion of the new block, which is critical for addressing

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Prez, VP and PM Modi pay tributes to Atal Bihari Vajpayee on his 100th birth anniversary

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25 (IUN)

President Droupadi Murmu, Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other senior leaders on Wednesday paid floral tributes to former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee at Sadaiv Atal Sthal, New Delhi, on his 100th birth anniversary. The occasion also marked the celebration of 'Good Governance Day,' honoring Vajpayee's enduring legacy. Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Home Minister



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Christmas celebrated in valley with enthusiasm despite missing snowfall

JINNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, DEC 25

Kashmir Valley celebrated Christmas with great enthusiasm and joy, even as the region missed the blanket of snow that typically marks the festive season. While the residents had their hopes up for a white Christmas, it did nothing to dissuade them from all that merriment, and the holiday spirit came alive in all its shades across the valley. According to the news agency the festival was full of cheer and glee in Srinagar. Churches all across the valley were donned with twinkle lights and Christmas trees. Hymns and prayers filled the churches, as families congregated together to celebrate. Despite blue skies, nothing could be as warm as this community and its festive atmosphere. Punam from Srinagar



said Christmas is much more than what the snow would offer. It is togetherness, love and the joy of the season. Gulmarg was almost a quiet tourist destination as there was not enough snowfall. However, the locals used this time to come together for special prayers and performances, making the festive spirit still very much alive. Agnes from Delhi said, "Even if there is no snow, we have made the best of this day. Christmas joy is in the hearts of people, not just in the snow."

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Deficit rainfall goes up to 81% in J&K in 3 months

JINNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, DEC 25

With no letup in the cold wave conditions across the Valley, Jammu and Kashmir has continued to witness an increase in the deficit rainfall as the Union Territory has recorded a precipitation deficiency of 81 per cent in the past three months. From October 01 to December 25, 2024, Jammu and Kashmir has recorded a deficit rainfall of 81 per cent as against the normal precipitation of 110.0 mm; the UT has recorded only 21.0 mm rainfall during the period. According to the data available with the news agency, Shopian in South



recorded a deficit rainfall of 92 per cent each, the data reads, adding that Budgam in Central Kashmir has recorded a deficit rainfall of 91 per cent during the period. Kupwara in north Kashmir has recorded below 50 percent deficiency as against the normal precipitation of 133.7mm, the region has recorded a rainfall of 69.6 mm. However, Samba is the only weather station across J&K where above normal rainfall has been recorded during the period as against the normal precipitation of 42.2mm, it has recorded a rainfall of 47.0mm. Anantnag in South Kashmir

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Vaishno Devi Ropeway project: 72-hour shutdown begins in Katra, security forces stage flag march

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

The 72-hour shutdown called by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti against the proposed ropeway project commenced in the holy town of Katra on Wednesday. Witnesses told news agency that Police resorted to lathi-charge to disperse protestors opposing the proposed Rs 250-crore ropeway project. Some demonstrators were also detained. The project, which is intended to link Tarakote Marg and Sanji Chhat over a 12-km route, has sparked wide-



spread protests from the locals. Natives, including business owners, pony wallas, shopkeepers and others fear that the proposed ropeway project may have adverse impact on the environment and would hit their livelihoods. As part of the shutdown, all commercial activities in Katra have come to a halt. Following the bandh call

hundreds of people led by Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti leaders Bhupinder Singh and Sohan Chand took out a protest march in the city. "The protesters raised slogans against the Shrine Board and the administration and accused them of adopting an adamant attitude. When the policemen stopped the protesters from moving forward, a clash broke out between the two sides," witnesses said. "The police detained many protesters including Singh and Chand and took them away in a

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Successful train runs on Katra-Reasi track bring rail closer to Kashmir

JINNEWS SERVICE
KATRA, DEC 25

As Kashmir is all set to get rail connectivity, Northern Railway is giving final touches to the ground-work. As a part of the preparations a successful train run, comprising an engine and goods train, was conducted on the 17-kilometer Katra-Reasi track on Wednesday. "Another trial run of a tower wagon was also conducted on India's first cable-stayed railway bridge at Anji Khad, which is part of the USBRL (Udhampur-



Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link) project," a senior Northern Railway official told news agency. "The engine trial train ran at 30 km/h, and the goods train at 20 km/h. The trial will continue until the final inspection," he added. Another official, who is

also part of the train operations on the USBRL project, said that the speed of the engines will be increased in future. "Very soon electric engines will also chug on this line," he added. Union Minister for Railways, Ashwini Vaishnaw, posted on X: "Trial run of

tower wagon on India's First Cable-Stayed Railway Bridge at Anji Khad for USBRL Project in J&K." While giving the details of the upcoming railway operations on the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link officials told KNO that from January

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LG Manoj Sinha invited to "Veer Baal Diwas" commemoration in Jammu



JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

A delegation of All Jammu Kashmir Sikh Coordination Committee led by its Chairman S. Ajit Singh called on

Lieutenant Governor, Shri Manoj Sinha, today. The delegation extended an invitation to the Lieutenant Governor for "Vishesh Shahidi Samagam" on "Veer Baal Diwas", at Gurud-

wara Digiana Ashram, Jammu, tomorrow (on 26th December). The UT-level programme to mark the occasion and commemorate the sacrifices of Mata Gujri Ji and the

revered Sahibzades of Guru Gobind Singh Ji is being organised by All J&K Sikh Coordination Committee, under the guidance of Mahant Manjit Singh Ji of Dera Nangali Sahib.

Farooq Nazki Honored Posthumously as Bandipora's Literary Forum Announces 2025 Awards

J1 NEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, DEC 25

The Literary Forum Bandipora (LFB) on Wednesday announced its prestigious yearly literary awards for 2025, recognizing two renowned Poets and Scholars of Kashmiri literature.

The late poet and former Director of Door-darshan, Farooq Nazki, has been posthumously awarded the Nazki Award for his exceptional contributions to Kashmiri literature. Prof. Naseem Shifaye has been chosen for the Charaag-i-Sukhan Award for her acclaimed book "Bu Vanyeth Zaan Kass".

The announcement was made after a day-long meeting and consultation session chaired by Mir Tariq Rasool, Vice President of LFB and Chairman of the Awards Committee. Other notable members



present included Mubashir Saleem Nazki, Dr. Adil Mahiuddin, Sufi Showkat, Rouf Ghayal, Dr. Bashrat Fakir, Dr. Asrar, Mansur Muntazir, and others.

"We have nominated Farooq Nazki for Nazki Award and Prof Naseem Shafie for her book after a detailed discussion and deliberations after receiving name of many poets and writers" Mir said adding " the awards are

conferred on merit, content and contribution," Mir said while speaking on the selection process.

Mir said LFB has been honouring eminent writers at award functions being held in Bandipora for the past 10 years. The award was instituted, in 2015, in memory of Prof Rashid Nazki a poet, academician and founder of Adbi Markaz Kamraz.

The Nazki Award, estab-

lished in memory of Prof. Rashid Nazki, a poet, academician, and founder of Adbi Markaz Kamraz, honors poets and writers who have made substantial contributions to literature.

The Charaag-i-Sukhan Award recognizes poets or writers for outstanding publications in the preceding year.

Speaking on the Occasion Mir highlighted that

previous recipients of the Nazki Award include luminaries like Prof. G. R. Malik, Prof. Shafi Shouq, and Shahnaz Rashid.

He said the grand award ceremony will take place during the annual Nazki Day event, now scheduled for the last week of February 2025 in Bandipora. Initially planned for January 5, the event has been deferred due to severe weather conditions.

"Nazki Day is a yearly tradition to honor the memory of Prof. Rashid Nazki and celebrate literary achievements. Proper invitations will be sent to the awardees or their representatives for the ceremony," Mir said. He said this year's awards reinforced Bandipora's role as a hub for literary and cultural enrichment, furthering the district's legacy and Forum's will in promoting Kashmiri literature.

BJP organizes Exhibition on life and works of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

J&K BJP organized an exhibition on the life and works of Bharat Ratna and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji at BJP headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

J&K BJP President Sat Sharma accompanied by General Secretary (Org.) Ashok Koul, MP Lok Sabha Jugal Kishore Sharma, former Dy CM Dr. Nirmal Singh, former Dy CM Kavinder Gupta, Leader of Opposition Sunil Sharma, MLA Vikram Randhawa, former Minister Priya Sethi, Tilak Raj Gupta, Balbir Ram Rattan, Dr Pardeep Mahotra, Prof Kulbhushan Mohtra, and other senior leaders of the party inaugurated the Exhibition.

Sat Sharma, while inaugurating the exhibition, said that while Atal ji's life stands as an exemplary work for the whole gen-



eration, it marks our foremost duty to tell the future generations and fellow countrymen about his life and life works. He said that Atal ji led a life of simplicity with high thinking and revolutionized the Indian political system, giving structure to the most formidable opposition to the ruling party in the nation. He gave voice to the voiceless and ensured reach to the needy and the underprivileged by ensuring the 'Antodaya' reached the last person living in the most neglected sections of society. His life and thoughts need to reach everyone in society, stated Sat Sharma,

and prompted the party leaders to take the life history and the lessons of his life to the society through similar Exhibitions across the region.

The Exhibition was organized by the Department of Publication led by its Incharge Rajnish Jain and Co-Incharges S. Varinderjeet Singh and Pawan Sharma. The organizers shared that similar Exhibitions would be displayed at the district-level programmes around the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir for the whole year to mark this as the birth centenary year of Bharat Ratna Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji.

JKUT Senior Basketball Championship concludes

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

The J&K UT Senior Basketball Championship, organized by the J&K Basketball Association under the aegis of the J&K Sports Council, concluded at MA Stadium from December 23rd to 25th, 2024. Various teams, both men and women, participated in the championship, representing different districts of J&K. District Jammu won the closely contested final match against STC, Jammu.

A total of 15 teams participated in the championship, with 11 men's teams and 4 women's teams. In the women's category, the championship was won by the Warriors, with Reasi placed as the first runner-up. The first match of the day for the 3rd place in the men's section was played between Udhampur and J&K Police, with JKP winning with a final score of 77-70. The final match



between the STC and District Jammu team was a nail-biting affair, swinging either way, but ultimately, the District Jammu team emerged victorious with a score of 72-69.

Dr. Vikram Handa, President of the J&K Basketball Association, welcomed the Chief Guest Ms. Nuzhat Gul and thanked her for her continuous support towards sports and particularly the Basketball fraternity.

Ms. Nuzhat Gul, Secretary of the Sports Coun-

cil, congratulated all the players and remarked on the electrifying energy of the players on the court during the close final match. She assured that the Sports Council would soon provide basketball courts in every district of J&K. Dr. N.S. Bhutyal, Superintendent of GMC Jammu, was the Guest of Honour for the day.

Aman Sharma, Secretary of the J&K Basketball Association, updated the gathering about the championship and presented

the annual report of the JKBA's activities. Other notable dignitaries included Rajeev Sharma, member of the JK Sports Council; Kuldeep Gupta, Technical Director of the Kabaddi Federation; Suraj Bhan, Manager of the Indoor Stadium; DSO Baljinder Singh; Ashok Jamwal, Senior Vice President of JKBA; Faisal Hameed, Treasurer of JKBA; Sushma Jamwal, Chief Coach of JK Sports Council; Shubham Sharma, Mentor of Khelo India; and coaches and officials like Rohan Kundal, Kunal, Manoj Kumar Solanki, Rajesh Bhandral, and Harpreet Singh. The championship not only provided a competitive platform but also fostered a spirit of sportsmanship and camaraderie among all participants.

Randhawa participates in Nagar Kirtan in memory of Chaar Sahibzaade on Safar E Shahadat

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

Vikram Randhawa, senior BJP leader and MLA Bahu Constituency, today took part in the Nagar Kirtan held in connection with the 7-day long Safar E Shahadat. The procession was dedicated to the supreme sacrifice of Sahib Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji's four sons (Chaar Sahibzaade) and his mother Mata Gujri, along with all the martyrs who laid down their lives for the cause of truth and justice.

The Nagar Kirtan procession commenced from Gurudwara Sri Guru Angad Dev Sahib Ji, Preet Nagar, and concluded at Gurudwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha Sahib Ji, Nanak Nagar, Jammu. The procession was a powerful tribute to the courage and valor exhibited by the Chaar Sahibzaade, whose sacrifices continue to inspire



generations. During the procession, the MLA felicitated the Panj Payaras by presenting Saropas.

Speaking on the occasion, Vikram Randhawa emphasized the bravery and selflessness of the Chaar Sahibzaade, urging people to draw lessons from their sacrifices and incorporate their ideals of courage, righteousness, and service to humanity into their daily lives. He said, "The sacrifices of the Chaar Sahibzaade are a shining example of valor and commitment to truth. Their legacy should be cherished and celebrated every day, not just on special occasions."

The senior BJP leader further praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi for declaring Veer Bal Diwas in the memory of the Chaar Sahibzaade of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, acknowledging this historic step as a recognition of their unparalleled bravery and martyrdom.

Randhawa also appealed to the youth of Jammu and Kashmir to remain steadfast in their commitment to the values of peace, unity, and love for the nation. He urged them to take inspiration from the lives of the Chaar Sahibzaade and uphold the ideals of sacrifice and duty towards society.

Shelving Vaishno Devi Ropeway Project: Bhalla criticizes "use of force" against protesters, their detention

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

JKPCC Working President Raman Bhalla today strongly resented detaining peaceful protesters by police during a protest in Katra demanding to shelve the proposed ropeway project observing a 72-hour shutdown from Wednesday. He alleged that the government was derailing the issue and forcing the people of Katra to come on the roads. They are demanding the shelving of this project to save the jobs of thousands of people. Instead of holding talks with them, as promised by the administration, they are using police to detain them. This is unfortunate", he said. Former minister criticized the "use of force" against the protesters.

Sahil Gupta pays tribute to Atal Bihari Vajpayee on 'Good Governance Day'



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Sahil Gupta paid rich tributes to former Prime Minister and Bharat Ratna awardee, the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, on the occasion of his birth anniversary, celebrated as 'Good Governance Day.' Gupta expressed his heartfelt respect and admiration for Vajpayee's contributions to the nation, describing him as a beacon of exemplary leadership and visionary governance.

The program was organized under the leadership of BJP Mandal President Sushil Sharma, who highlighted the significance of Good Governance Day and the values Vajpayee instilled in Indian politics.

He emphasized the importance of following Vajpayee's principles of integrity, development-oriented policies, and inclusive governance.

Sahil Gupta, while addressing the gathering, spoke about Vajpayee's legacy and the inspiration he continues to provide to leaders and citizens alike. Gupta said, "Atal Ji was a leader who transcended political boundaries and worked tirelessly for India's progress. His dedication to good governance, nation-building, and his unwavering commitment to democratic ideals will always be remembered."

The event witnessed active participation from party members and local residents. Prominent attendees included Ganga

Ram, Rohit Kumar, Anshu Kumar, Aryan, Sumit, Rajni Devi, Harbans Lal, Shantanu, Tushar, Vansh Mehra, and others.

The program concluded with a collective pledge by all present to uphold the values of good governance and to work towards the betterment of society in the spirit of Atal Bihari Vajpayee's vision. Participants also shared anecdotes and speeches highlighting Vajpayee's contributions to the nation's development, leaving a profound impact on everyone present.

The gathering served as a reminder of the enduring legacy of Atal Bihari Vajpayee and his invaluable contributions to Indian democracy and governance.

Madhuparamhans Ji delights congregation with amrit shower of discourses at Akhnoor

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

On 25 December 1992, Sadguru of Sahib Bandagi Shri Madhuparamhans Ji Maharaj laid the foundation of Akhnoor Ashram. Today, on the auspicious occasion of the 32nd Foundation Day, a huge Satsang and Bhandara were organized. Delighting the congregation with the Amrit Shower of discourses, Sahib Ji said that there is great power in request. Sahib himself is telling Dharamdas that I cannot resist hearing the request. You should pray every day.

Scientists also believe that the word that comes out of your mouth never ends. As long as the universe exists, that word will remain. That is why scientists are on a quest. They are searching for the teachings of Vasudev Shri Krishna in the Gita. They have also discovered some verses. But they are not able to prove it, because they do not have a copy of Vasudev Krishna's voice.

There is proof of this. When Osama Bin Laden said something in a hospital in Peshawar, American scientists captured it. By the time they reached there, Osama had fled. The reason for this was that they had a copy of Osama bin Laden's voice. They



had installed such devices that they would catch him speaking in any corner of the world.

When the words coming out of a person's mouth are not destroyed, then it is a proof that your prayers are not destroyed. They reach God. Scientists have proved this. That is why Sahib is saying that I cannot stop myself from hearing the prayers. Goswami ji has also filled prayers in Vinay Vitika. Goswami ji came in the era of Akbar. Kabir Sahib came in the era of Sikandar Lodhi. About 200 years ago. That is why he is called Adi Kavi. Dohe, Chhand, Sorath, Chopaiyaan etc. are all the gifts of Kabir Sahib. If you churn the poet Rahim, Kabir Sahib will come out from within.

Aarti means the prayer

of the oppressed. O Lord, I have fallen in Maya. I cannot escape by my own strength. You only be merciful and show mercy and free your servant. Such are the prayers. O Lord, there is no one as forgiving as you and no one as devious as me. There are millions of disasters on the way. I myself will not be able to come to you. Please have mercy.

You see for yourself that after getting the name, your fear of death is over. You are confident that I will cross over. Just like food is necessary for the body, similarly Sumiran is necessary for the purification of the heart. Japa, Tapasya, Sanyam, Sadhna all come under Sumiran. Whatever you are thinking apart from the name, is all the game of time.

Dr. Rameshwar resumes work on Billawar-Bani Road after Forest Deptt unwarranted interference



J1 NEWS SERVICE
BANI, DEC 25

Dr. Rameshwar Singh, MLA Bani has taken decisive action to ensure the completion of the much-awaited Billawar-Bani road. This critical road, which connects various villages via Dherigala, Dhaman, and Dhaggar, has been delayed for an extended period. After his victory, he initiated the roadwork to address the pressing transportation needs of the region.

However, a few days ago, the Forest Department interfered and halted the work, causing distress among the local residents who depend on this road for their daily commute. In response to this setback, Dr. Rameshwar personally visited the site and resumed the work without further delay. He strongly criticized the actions of the Forest Department, questioning why the work had been stopped when the necessary funds and

liabilities had already been allocated to them.

Dr. Rameshwar warned the Forest Department not to interfere further with the project and not to harass the public. He emphasized that the work would continue until the road reaches its destination, ensuring it serves the long-term interests of the public. The MLA also urged the authorities to prioritize public welfare over self-interest and work together to fulfill the region's infrastructure needs.

Dr. Rameshwar Singh's firm stance reflects his commitment to improving the lives of his constituents and ensuring that development projects are not hindered by unnecessary bureaucratic obstacles. The Billawar-Bani road project is expected to significantly enhance connectivity and provide better access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities for the people of the region.

Symposium on Corruption in India: a Menace to Good Governance held at GCW Udhampur

JI NEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, DECEMBER 25

The Department of Political Science, Govt. College for Women (GCW), Udhampur, under the aegis of IQAC and the patronage of the principal of the college, Dr. Nalini Pathania, organised a symposium on the theme "Corruption In India: A Menace To Good Governance" at college campus on yesterday.

The purpose of the competition was to inculcate among the students the sense of Integrity, Honesty, Ethics, Values and Vigilance and to make them aware about the role of good administration and civil Society in the development of our nation.

Principal of the college, Dr. Nalini Pathania, the chief guest on the occa-



sion, in her Speech, congratulated the HOD and other staff of the department for organising such a brain-storming event. He exhorted upon the importance of realising the importance of Ethics, Values and Integrity for the administration, Government as well as for the citizens at large and for realising the principles of democracy in India. She advised the students to take part in such events in future also which will inspire them to develop in themselves the good

moral character and ethics.

Earlier, the Programme began with the formal welcome address by Prof. Swarna Devi, HOD, Political Science. She highlighted the concept of Corruption and its adverse effects on good governance. She focussed that corruption does not mean giving or taking bribe only but if a teacher does not come in the class on time or if a student bunks his or her class, is also a kind of corruption. She advised the students that we should

avoid such behaviour in order to eradicate corruption in all forms and also to remain vigilant towards such acts by the administrators and to report any such event if it happens anywhere at any time. Total 12 students participated in the symposium competition. All students presented their view points in their own different ways. Jahnvi Bakshi Stood first, Diksha stood second and Tania Patyal secured 3rd position. Dr. Ravinder Kumar, HOD Mathematics, Prof. Yash

Paul, HOD History, Prof. Shama Rani, Asstt. Prof. Dogri, were the Jury members in the event. They judged the programme in a judicious manner. The proceedings of the event were carried out by Dr. Tanveer Ahmad Lone, Lecturer, Political Science. The programme concluded with the vote of thanks by Dr. Roohul Amin Malik, Lecturer, Political Science.

The whole event was organised by Prof. Swarna Devi, HOD, Political Science, Dr. Nazim Mohi Ud Din, Dr. Tanveer Ahmad Lone and Dr. Roohul Amin Malik. Other members, who were present on the occasion, were Dr. Indu Khajuria, Dr. Monika Gupta, Dr. Sanjeet Kour, Prof. Dr. Ravinder Kumar, Prof. Yash Paul, Prof. Shama Rani, Prof. Pooja Bharti, Mr. Gohar Ahmad, Mr. Sareer etc.

Countless devotees visited holy Samadhi of Shri Dwarka Nath Shastri Ji

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

Today, 25 December is the birthday of Shri Dwarka Nath, who is also known as Shastri Maharaj Tapdi Bala Baba and Tatan Bala, on whose occasion four types of 9- day Havan Yagna, Gyan Yagna, Anna Yagna and Rashtra Bhakti Yagna are being held. A kilometer long huge fair is also being organized from his holy Samadhi to the Yagna Shala, in which there are various types of swings and hundreds of shops.

There is a surge of genuine love and devotion in the hearts of millions of people towards this saint with a public image. To get a glimpse of their beloved on his birthday and to pay their respects to him, innumerable devotees from various states visited the holy Samadhi and attended the Gau Gopal



Yagna. According to an estimate, more than 3 lakh devotees came on his birthday alone.

Pujya Shri Gangadhar Ji, the organizer and guide of the Maha Yagya, along with spirituality and devotion, pays special attention to making the environment clean, beautiful and healthy and prohibits all the gentlemen from using polythene. Its effect

is also visible in the Yagya that when people gather at one place, cleanliness is visible all around. Truly, this Yagya is also an ideal example for human society. As the number of devotees has reached millions, langar arrangement for food prasad has been made at both the holy Samadhi and Yagyashala places from December 24 onwards.

VKMI organizes seminar on Holistic Health, Mental Clarity, Emotional Balance & Spiritual Enlightenment

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

Leading a disease-free, healthy life involves adopting a disciplined, holistic approach that incorporates physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

Dr. Shreyansh Kumar Jain State yoga Commissioner and President Vichar Kranti Manch International, was the main speaker in the seminar, on how you can achieve holistic health & mental clarity through yogic practices, natural cures, homemade remedies, and lifestyle discipline:

Dr. Jain said about Physical Health includes...

Daily Routine: Follow a strict routine with fixed sleeping and waking times (Brahmuhurta is ideal for waking up).

Drink warm water with lemon or honey in the

morning to detoxify your body.

Diet:

Eat a balanced diet rich in fresh, seasonal fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, and seeds.

Avoid processed foods, sugar, and excessive oil.

Follow the principle of Mitahara (moderation in eating).

Exercise: Regularly practice yogasanas for flexibility, strength, and vitality.

Recommended Yogasanas:

Surya Namaskar (Sun Salutations): Full-body workout.

Trikonasana (Triangle Pose): Improves digestion and strengthens legs and torso.

Bhujangasana (Cobra Pose): Enhances spinal health.

Tadasana (Mountain Pose): Improves posture and balance.

Vrikshasana (Tree Pose): Enhances balance and concentration.



Mental Health

Meditation: Spend 10-20 minutes daily in mindfulness meditation. Techniques like 'deep and long breathing', to concentrate on body parts or on chakras (Arohan Avrohan) practice are highly effective.

Practice Yoga Nidra (deep relaxation) to rejuvenate the mind.

Pranayama: Perform breathing exercises to enhance lung capacity, reduce stress, and balance the nervous system.

Recommended Pranayama:

Anulom Vilom (Alternate Nostril Breathing): Balances mind and body.

Bhramari (Bee Breath): Relieves anxiety and improves focus.

Kapalabhati (Skull Shining Breath): Detoxifies lungs and energizes.

Ujjayi (Ocean Breath): Calms the nervous system.

Emotional Health

Gratitude and Journaling: Maintain a gratitude journal. Reflect on positive moments of your day.

Positive Company: Surround yourself with positive people and limit interactions with toxic

influences.

Acts of Kindness: Engage in selfless service (Seva) to nurture emotional resilience.

Spiritual Health

Chanting and Mantras: Chant mantras like Om, Soham, or Gayatri Mantra to connect with universal consciousness.

Study Spiritual Texts: Read scriptures or books that inspire higher values (e.g., Bhagavad Gita, Upanishads).

Yogic Lifestyle: Follow the principles of Yama (ethical restraints) and Niyama (positive observances).

Natural Cures

Hydrotherapy:

Use water for detoxification (cold showers, soaking feet in warm salt water).

Sunlight and Fresh Air: Spend time outdoors for vitamin D and oxygen. Morning sunlight is especially beneficial.

*Homemade Remedies: Turmeric Milk added with black pepper for immunity.

Honey and Ginger Tea: For colds and coughs.

Amla Juice: Rich in Vitamin C, boosts immunity.

Tulsi Water: For detoxification.

*Discipline

Time Management: Allocate specific times for work, rest, exercise, and leisure.

Digital Detox: Limit screen time, especially before sleeping.

Self-Control: Avoid habits like smoking, alcohol, or overeating.

Dhyana (Meditation):

Practice simple meditation (focus on natural breath and sound "So-Ham").

By integrating these practices into your life, you can achieve holistic health, mental clarity, emotional balance, and spiritual enlightenment. Start gradually and remain consistent.

Others presented their viewpoints on the subject, including Sh. Ashok Kumar Gupta, Vice President VKMI, Narinder wadhwa, a Naturopath & Social Activist, Smt Anju Bansal, Former president Bharat Vikas Parishad Shivalik, Mrs Vandna Maini, English teacher & Philontherapist. Incidentally, it was Happy Birthday of Sh Vikram Honda, Director & Principal Tiny Tots Higher Secondary School, a life sketch in poetry of Mr Vikram was composed by Dr Jain, was presented to him. Mrs Veena Honda, Chairperson Tiny Tots, presented a vote of thanks.

Congress criticises arrest of Katra leaders

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

Congress has strongly criticised the administration for the arrest of several leaders in view of the ongoing agitation in Katra against the ropeway project.

In a statement JKPC Working President Raman Bhalla, Chief Spokesperson Ravinder Sharma & Incharge Party HQ Ved Mahajan Ex MLC have strongly criticised the move of the administration and termed the same as illegal and arbitrary.

The Congress leaders have taken strong exception to the action of administration and said that administration should have solved the genuine demands of agitating labour class and other residents instead of reporting to arbitrary and harsh actions.

Kashmir Bakers and Confectioners Association holds annual executive meeting

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, DEC 25

The Kashmir Bakers and Confectioners Association (KBCA) held its annual executive body meeting in Srinagar. The event was attended by a wide array of distinguished guests, including executive members, district presidents, and other key participants, all of whom came together to reflect on the organization's progress and future endeavors.

The meeting was chaired by President Shahid Hussain Mir, who expressed his gratitude for the continued support of the association's members and the community. He emphasized the importance of unity within the bakery and confectionery industry, stating that collaboration and collective effort will drive growth and prosperity for all members involved.

In his remarks, President Shahid Hussain Mir said: "This has been a year of achievement and change for the Kashmir Bakers and Confectioners Association. Our new executive body has worked tirelessly to strengthen the foundation of this association. We are committed to promoting



the interests of our members, fostering innovation in the industry, and ensuring a brighter future for all those in the bakery and confectionery business".

He further highlighted the association's commitment to addressing the challenges faced by its members and ensuring sustainable growth for the industry in the region.

The meeting was attended by various executive members, including Senior Vice President Javed Ahmad Khan, Vice President Himayoun

Yousuf Jan, General Secretary Bilal Ahmad Khan, Chief Advisor Mohammad Saleem Khan, Advisors Umar Mukhtar Bhat, Sufi Bashir Ahmad, Atta Mohammad Sofi, Chief Organizer Ashiq Hussain, Organizer Ajaz Ahmad Sofi, Organizer Mushtaq Ahmad Sofi, Chief Coordinator Bashir Ahmad Sofi, Coordinator Mohammad Shafi Sofi, Spokesperson Ghulam Mohiuddin Sofi, Treasurer Sajid Ayoub Sofi, Secretary Ubaid Nazir, Tariq Ahmad Rather (Executive

Member), Shahid Saleem Khan (Executive Member), Arjumand Khan (Executive Member), Bilal Ahmad Kuchay (Executive Member) and Hilal Ahmad Sofi (Executive Member). Additionally, several district presidents and members participated, including Abdul Majeed Sofi (District President, Kupwara), Shareef Ahmad Wani (Tehsil President, Chadoora), Majid Ahmad Sofi (Anantnag), Showkat Ahmad Sofi (Ganderbal), Ashiq Hussain (Pulwama), Farooq Ahmad Khan (Ban-

dipora), Mohammad Rafiq Sofi (Tehsil Handwara), Mohammad Iqbal (Tehsil Magam) and Parvaiz Ahmad (Tehsil Ompora), along with other members.

The association continues to focus on elevating the standard of the bakery and confectionery sector in Kashmir, supporting members with resources and advocating for their rights and welfare.

The event also served as a platform for the announcement of new initiatives aimed at enhancing the industry's infrastructure, ensuring compliance with safety standards and promoting Kashmiri bakery products on national and international scales.

The meeting concluded with the association members expressing their collective vision for the future and reinforcing the importance of working together for the betterment of the entire industry.

The Kashmir Bakers and Confectioners Association (KBCA) works towards fostering industry growth, providing support to its members, and ensuring that the region's rich culinary heritage continues to thrive.

The monthly meeting of Akhnoor Ex-Servicemen Association was held under the Chairmanship of S. Lakhbir Singh, Naval Veteran. Various issues concerning welfare of Ex-Servicemen, Veer Naris and widows were discussed. The Chairman educated the ex-servicemen about the latest rule positions with regard to different schemes.

Two minutes silence was observed to pay tribute to the five soldiers killed in road accident at Poonch on 24 Dec, 2024. The ex-servicemen also prayed for speedy recovery for the injured.

Ex-Servicemen holds monthly meeting



JI NEWS SERVICE
AKHNOOR, DEC 25

and they have repeatedly requested the administration to look into this on priority but no action has been taken in this regard so far. A lot of time of commuters is wasted in the jam. The patients. Students and employees are most sufferers as they cannot reach their destinations on time. The Officers of the concerned departments are once again requested to kindly look into this and take appropriate action on priority. Our suggested alternatives are either the exiting road in Akhnoor town be widened or an outer road link be created with the construction of new bridge over Chenab river near Partap Canal head to ease out the traffic flow in Akhnoor town. While addressing the meeting the Chairman said that our

delegation will soon meet the hon'ble Lt. Governor and will raise all issues of ex-servicemen, veer naris and widows living in remote and border areas of Akhnoor

The meeting was conducted by Sub Maj (Retd) Mani Ram Bhagat, Gen Secy, who narrated complete details with regard to activities/events undertaken during the previous month.

Prominent among others who attended the meeting included Capt Santosh Kumar, Bodh Raj, Gurmukh Singh, Jugal Kishore, Shanti Swaroop, Karan Singh, Puran Chand, Parkash Chand, Kaka Ram, Bharat Bhushan, Jagdev Singh, Gafoor Ahmed, Babu Ram, Rajinder Singh, Gudeep Singh, Om Parkash, Puran Chand.

Multispeciality medical camp held in Akhnoor in remembrance of Madan Lal Sharma



JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

In a heartfelt tribute to the late Madan Lal Sharma Ji, esteemed MLA and MP, SIBA Event Management and Innovations Cooperative Ltd. in collaboration with Unati Multistate Cooperative and under the guidance of Sh. Vikrant Dogra Chairman Unati, JKDCF and Sh. Satish Sharma, Cabinet Minister Jammu & Kashmir successfully organized a Multispeciality Medical Camp at ND Resort, Thangar, Akhnoor, on the 23rd of December, 2024, between 10:30 AM to 2:00 PM.

The camp, held on the Remembrance of our beloved leader, MLA & MP Sh. Madan Lal Sharma Ji, aimed at providing free medical checkups and healthcare services to the underprivileged villagers in the region. Thousands of local residents, including senior citizens, women, and children, benefitted from consultations with medical experts in various fields such as general medicine, tests, pediatrics,

ophthalmology, gynecology, eye checkup and dental care.

Notable doctors and healthcare professionals from Team SIBA volunteered their services, offering free health screenings, medications, and guidance to the attendees, this team includes Family Health Care Dr. Digvijay, Sharp Sight Eye Hospital Mr. Chetan Sharma, Deepak Sharma, Diksha Dental Section (Dr Sara Jandial, Dr. Rashika), Redcliffe Labs Mr. Deepak & Rahul. This event not only addressed the immediate health concerns of the rural population but also raised awareness about the importance of preventive healthcare.

Speaking at the event, representatives from SIBA Event Management and Innovations Cooperative Ltd. and Unati Multistate Cooperative expressed their deep gratitude to the community for participating and shared their commitment to continue organizing such events in the future in memory of the late Madan Lal Sharma Ji, who was always deeply

dedicated to the welfare of the people.

The event was a testament to the enduring legacy of Madan Lal Sharma Ji, whose vision of community welfare continues to inspire initiatives aimed at improving the quality of life for the residents of Akhnoor and surrounding areas. The camp saw overwhelming participation, making it a huge success and a significant moment for the local community.

The organizers of Team SIBA Sidharth Verma & Baljeet Singh co-founders along with team members Ramneek kour, Meenakshi Verma, Jasmeet kour, Adv. Sumit Verma, Vishwas, Sumit, Amarjeet Singh, Aakash Singh, Manmeet and Ishan Gupta managed the event and expressed their gratitude and extended their heartfelt thanks to all the medical professionals, volunteers, and sponsors who made this event a grand success and reaffirmed their commitment to the service of the people in the years to come.

J&K Congress intensifies protest against Amit Shah's remarks on Dr. BR Ambedkar

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

The Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) today intensified its protest against Home Minister Amit Shah's controversial remarks against the Father of Indian Constitution Dr. B.R Ambedkar. The protest, led by Hari Singh Chib, Vice President of JKPCC, witnessed a gathering of Congress workers near the Police Station Janipur in the Jammu North Assembly segment.

The protest saw Congress workers raising slogans condemning the remarks and expressing solidarity with the ideals of Dr. BR Ambedkar.

Speaking to the media persons here, Hari Singh Chib strongly criticized the statements made by



the Home Minister during a Constitution debate in the Rajya Sabha. "Amit Shah's remarks on Dr. BR Ambedkar undermine the dignity and legacy of one of India's greatest leaders. Dr. Ambedkar's contributions to shaping modern India and empowering marginalized sections of society remain unparalleled," Chib asserted.

The senior Congress

leader demanded an unconditional apology from Amit Shah, emphasizing the need for accountability from leaders holding high offices. He further called for the Home Minister's resignation, stating, "Such remarks are not only disrespectful to the Father of the Indian Constitution but also an insult to the democratic values he

stood for."

The protesting Congress workers vowed to continue its protest until the Home Minister issues a formal apology and takes responsibility for his statements.

Hari Singh Chib also urged people across Jammu and Kashmir to join the Congress in defending the dignity of national icons and

preserving the values enshrined in the Constitution. "The Congress party will never tolerate attempts to tarnish the image of a visionary leader like Dr. BR Ambedkar. We will remain steadfast in upholding his legacy and fighting for justice," he added. Among those who joined the protest include Som Nath Sharma, H.S Baghi, Parshotam Singh, Surinder Kumar, Om Parkash, Dr Raj Pal, Fakir Chand, Kaka Ram, Balwan Singh, Jung Bahadur Singh, Rishiv, Billa, Chopra ji, Tarun Vaid, Virender Mehta, Shahbaz, Parveen Akhtar, Bal Krishan Sharma, Raghbir Singh, Harbans Lal, Rishu Kumar, Shinda, Ramesh, Kamal Singh, Summy, Surinder Singh, Madan Singh Chib, Tony Chib and others.

Yuva Rajput Sabha to intensify Statehood demand: Raghbir Singh

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

Re-elected Chairman of the Yuva Rajput Sabha (YRS), Raghbir Singh, stated that both the Centre and the Union Territory administration have failed to fulfill the promise of restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. He declared, "YRS will intensify its protests across the Union Territory in support of the statehood demand."

He was speaking at the Turban Ceremony held at Patta Bohri, Jammu, in the presence of thousands of people from the Rajput community. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation and highlighted the unity and strength of the community.

During the ceremony, YRS President Vikram Singh Vicky, along with other stakeholders, felicitated the founder members of the



YRS, including Chairman Raghbir Singh, Rajinder Singh, Ranjeet Singh, and Rajesh Singh. Committee members Mohan Singh, Ramesh Singh, Shamsher Singh, Rajveer Singh, Sanjeev Singh, Rajan Singh, Surinder Singh, Dharminder Singh, Mohinder Singh, Balbir Singh, Nitu

Singh, Pushvinder Singh, Balwinder Singh, Rakesh Singh, Komal Singh, Ballu Singh, Bittu Singh, Jai Dev Singh, Prem Singh, Manjeet Singh, and Bahadur Singh were also honored for their contributions.

As part of the ceremony, Vikram Singh ceremonially tied the turban on Chair-

man Raghbir Singh's head, signifying respect and responsibility. He praised the Chairman and core committee members, calling them the backbone of the Sabha. He emphasized that their vision, decisions, and unwavering support have enabled Team YRS to raise its voice

for statehood and work for the betterment of the Dogra and Rajput communities. Raghbir Singh expressed his commitment to serving the Rajput and Dogra communities and standing firm for the rights and welfare of Jammu and Kashmir. He called on the community to unite and take a stand for their future, particularly to safeguard employment opportunities for the younger generation.

"The Rajput community has shed its blood for the betterment of Jammu and Kashmir. In the coming days, YRS will focus on heritage preservation, securing Dogra certificates, and addressing employment issues," Raghbir Singh asserted. The ceremony concluded with all members of YRS and attendees pledging to take a united stand for the rights and development of Jammu and Kashmir.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

Every section of society...

Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee represent the conscience of Bharat.

He said the vision of the two giant leaders paved the way for socio-economic transformation of the nation.

"Mahamana's relentless pursuit to public welfare and nation building had shaped the idea of self-reliant, modern and united India. The vision of Mahamana had opened up new frontiers in education, technology and industrial development of the country," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Paying homage to Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee, the Lieutenant Governor spoke on the lifelong campaigns of the former Prime Minister dedicated to nation building and public welfare.

"Nation should be supreme for an individual. To ensure this Atal Ji gave us the principles of 'Indianization' and 'Nation-First'. Every section of society should work together to make the country self-reliant with undivided loyalty," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor called upon the people, especially the youth to rededicate themselves to the ideals of Mahamana and Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee and strive to build a progressive society and work unitedly to realise the vision of Viksit Bharat.

"We do not have to live in the past but we must take inspiration from history to build a brighter future," he said.

He highlighted that the Youth have a very important role to play in taking public services to the grassroots levels. To achieve this, we need to start shaping a new framework for Jan-Bhagidari and use new technologies for transparency and accountability at all levels, he added.

"Unity is our greatest strength. Young generation must unite the society with determination. I want to see every hand working like a skilled sculptor to create a beautiful, victorious and prosperous India. I want to see a sense of responsibility, steadfastness towards duties and steely determination in every youth towards nation-building," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor emphasised that our cultural ideals and values should be paramount for the new political and economic system.

"Today is the opportunity for us to build a brighter tomorrow for the country and to ensure that societal attitude is changed towards responsibilities. Whole of Government Approach should be adopted to achieve socio-economic goals," the Lieutenant Governor observed.

CM Omar Abdullah conducts...

the space crunch caused by a fire incident in 2022 that reduced the hospital's original capacity of 200 beds.

He directed the executing agencies to ensure its swift

operationalization by January 2025 to enhance patient care and to dedicate the facility to public service.

Chief Minister also inspected the 500-bedded Children's Hospital in Bemina, where he interacted with patients, attendants, and hospital staff.

During his visit, attendants from far-flung areas raised concerns about the lack of a Sarai (inn) for their stay.

The Chief Minister immediately directed the concerned authorities to construct a Sarai to accommodate attendants and alleviate their difficulties.

The hospital staff highlighted the challenges of expanding super-specialty facilities due to express space constraints.

The Chief Minister assured them that the issue would be addressed on priority.

He also promised to resolve the shortage of medical staff, including doctors and paramedics, not only at this hospital but across healthcare facilities in Jammu and Kashmir.

Furthermore, the Chief Minister instructed hospital authorities to ensure the timely availability of medicines and other essential facilities for patients.

During the inspections, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah reiterated his government's commitment to improving healthcare infrastructure ensuring better facilities for the public and addressing manpower shortages in health institutions across Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chief Minister was accompanied during his visits by Minister of Health Sakeena Itoo, Medical Superintendent of the Children's Hospital, senior faculty members and other concerned officials.

Prez, VP and PM Modi...

Amit Shah, and Bharatiya Janata Party Chief JP Nadra were among the top leaders who also paid tributes to the ex-prime minister.

Remembering Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Prime Minister Narendra penned an article calling him the "architect of India's transition into the 21st century that set stage for country's economic surge."

"He stands tall as a statesman who continues to inspire countless people," Modi wrote.

In the article, Modi also shared pictures of the moments he shared with Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

Modi said it was a privilege for many Bharatiya Janata Party members like him to learn from and interact with a person like Vajpayee.

"Our nation will always be grateful to Atal Ji for being the architect of India's transition into the 21st century. When he took oath as PM in 1998 our nation had passed through a period of political instability," PM Modi said.

"It was Atal Ji who turned this tide by providing stable and effective governance. Coming from humble roots, he realised the struggles of the common citizen and the transformative power of effective governance," PM Modi wrote in the note.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee was born on December 25, 1924,

in Gwalior in present-day Madhya Pradesh. He went on to serve as the Prime Minister of India on three occasions, first in 1996 for a term of 13 days, followed by a 13-month term between 1998 and 1999, and later a full term of five years between 1999 to 2004.

Vajpayee was even honoured with Bharat Ratna, the country's highest civilian honour, in 2015.

Christmas celebrated...

A priest at a church in Srinagar said, "Christmas is not about the weather or decorations, but the message of hope and love that it brings to all. That message remains unchanged."

The holiday was marked with family gatherings and special church services across the towns and villages of Kashmir. The locals exchanged gifts, shared meals and reflected on the meaning of Christmas.

Deficit rainfall goes...

also recorded a deficit rainfall of 89 per cent while Bandipora and Baramulla recorded a low precipitation of 76 per cent and 73 per cent respectively.

Meanwhile, the cold wave conditions are expected to continue till tomorrow at isolated places.

As per the details, Srinagar has recorded a low of minus 7.3 degree Celsius while Qazigund, a gateway of Kashmir has recorded a low of minus 6.6 degree Celsius. Kupwara has recorded a low of minus 6.4 degree Celsius while Pahalgam, a famous tourist destination and Gulmarg, a famous ski-resort have recorded the minimum temperatures of minus 8.4 degree Celsius and minus 6.6 degree Celsius respectively.

Moreover, the weatherman here has predicted generally cloudy weather conditions from December 27 to 28 with the possibility of light rain over plains of Jammu and light snow over the higher reaches of Chenab valley & Pirpanjal Range.

Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that the weather would remain generally dry from December 29 to 31st.

However, he said that from January 1 and 2, there is a forecast of light snow at isolated places while the light snowfall is expected at isolated to scattered places from January 3 and 4.

Vaishno Devi Ropeway project...

vehicle," they added. Bhopinder Singh alleged that the government is "compelling" the people of Katra to come on the streets.

"We are demanding the closure of this project to save the jobs of thousands of people. Instead of talking to us as promised by the administration, they are using the police to detain us. This is unfortunate," he said.

Former minister Jugal Kishore criticised the "use of force" against the protesters. "We strongly condemn the

administration's move to use force against peaceful protesters. Their action is aimed at aggravating the situation in Katra, which is unacceptable," he told reporters.

Earlier, in response to growing protests against the proposed ropeway project connecting Tarakote Marg to the Vaishno Devi shrine, security forces conducted a flag march in Katra to maintain law and order.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Reasi, Paramvir Singh while talking to KNO said, "People have been protesting here for the past three days, and we have been managing the situation. Today, some of them pelted stones at the police team. We are trying to handle the situation, and hopefully, normalcy will be restored soon."

Meanwhile, all business establishments remained closed and public transport was off the roads in the city following the protest call. It may be recalled that Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha while referring to the proposed ropeway project had stated that "any losses suffered would be addressed."

Last month, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board announced plans to set up a ropeway to facilitate senior citizens, children and others who face challenges in walking the 13-km-long path to the cave shrine.

Successful train...

5 to January 6, 2025, statutory inspections will be conducted for the opening of the Katra-Reasi (16.501 km) section. "This section is part of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla New Broad Gauge (B.G.) Rail Link Project. The inspection will start at 20:50 hrs on January 5 and conclude at 07:55 hrs on January 6," they added.

The Commissioner of Railways Safety (CRS) is expected to submit an inspection report to the Union Government on January 8.

Its in place to mention here that the Phase-I of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) Project, covering the 118-km-long Qazigund-Baramulla section, was inaugurated in October 2009. Subsequent phases included the inauguration of the 18-km-long Banihal-Qazigund section in June 2013 and the 25-km-long Udhampur-Katra section in July 2014.

In February, the first electric train trial run on the Banihal-Katra section of the USBRL project was successfully conducted on approximately 40 km of track and tunnels between Banihal and Sangaldan Railway Stations in Ramban district.

The USBRL Project involves 38 tunnels with a combined length of 119 km. The longest tunnel, T-49, measures 12.75 km, making it the country's longest transportation tunnel. The project also includes 927 bridges with a combined length of 13 km.

Among these is the iconic Chenab Bridge, with an overall length of 1,315 m, an arch span of 467 m, and a height of 359 m above the riverbed. This bridge stands about 35 meters taller than the Eiffel Tower and is recognized as the world's highest arch railway bridge.

Billawar celebrates Birth Anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Atal ji will continue to guide countrymen on path of National service till eternity: Satish

JINNEWS SERVICE
BILLAWAR, DEC 25

BJP Billawar Unit under the leadership of MLA Billawar Satish Kumar Sharma on Wednesday celebrated the 100th birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee as Good Governance Day reflecting Vajpayee's enduring legacy and commitment to transparent and accountable governance. The commemoration began at BJP head office with party members paying floral tributes to former Prime Minister Vajpayee.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA said Atal ji made cultural nationalism a work culture and always kept the country's security and public welfare paramount. He made the BJP popular with the masses with his purity and self-restraint in political life. Like the Pole Star, Atal ji will continue to guide the



countrymen on the path of national service till eternity," he said. "Revered Atal Ji gave new heights to the tradition of integrity and service in Indian politics. His contribution to establishing the country as a global superpower is unforgettable," MLA said. He further described Vajpayee's life as "an inspiration" and extended greetings on 'Good Governance Day,' stating that the day reflects Vajpayee's dedication to all-round national development.

MLA in paying trib-

utes, referred Vajpayee as "a pillar of independent Indian politics." "Atal ji set new standards in both politics and diplomacy, working throughout his life with the resolve to build a strong and prosperous India," he said, adding, "His significant contribution to India's progress cannot be appreciated enough. Today, on his 100th birth anniversary, I pay my humble tribute to him." "Vajpayee, remembered as a statesman and visionary leader, served as India's Prime Minister

three times and played a pivotal role in shaping modern India. His leadership continues to inspire millions across the country," added MLA. Satish said Union Govt under PM Modi has been working very dedicatedly to bring about all-round development of the people of J&K belonging to every section of the society."

He highlighted the contributions to India's development by Vajpayee which emphasized his visionary initiatives, including the Golden Quadrilateral project, advancements in information technology, and efforts to strengthen India's global standing. "Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee was a statesman whose leadership continues to inspire the nation and his dedication to good governance and development has set a benchmark for all of us," Satish said.

The event also featured discussions on the significance of Good Governance Day, underscoring the party's commitment to uphold the principles of transparency, accountability, and citizen-centric administration. MLA reiterated his resolve to work towards realizing Vajpayee's vision of a prosperous and inclusive India. As part of the celebrations, he announced a series of initiatives including outreach programs to engage with citizens, workshops on effective governance practices, and campaigns to raise awareness about government schemes and services. The BJP remains steadfast in its commitment to the ideals espoused by Vajpayee and continues to strive towards building an India that embodies the principles of good governance, development, and inclusivity, MLA added.

JINNEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, DEC 25

In its tireless efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Police have arrested nine drug peddlers in various districts of Kashmir valley and recovered contraband/psychotropic substances from their possession.

In Srinagar, a Police party of PS Nowhatta, during routine naka checking at Ganj Baksh Park, apprehended two drug peddlers identified as Khalid Ahmad son of Mohd Ismail Rather resident of Rashan Ghat, Soura, and Basit Ahmad Dar son of Bilal Ahmad Dar resident of Usmaniya Colony, Wantpora, Eidgah. During search, substantial quantity of contraband substances was recovered from their possession.

In Baramulla district, a Police party of Police Station Baramulla at a check-

point established at Azadgunj Chowk Baramulla, intercepted a person identified as Mubashir Mohiuddin Dar son of Gh Mohiuddin resident of Azadgunj. During search, 200 grams of Charas was recovered from his possession. He has been subsequently arrested. Meanwhile in Bandipora, during naka checking at Papachan bridge, officials of PS Bandipora apprehended a drug peddler and recovered 47 Bottles of Codeine Phosphate bottles from his possession. He has been identified as Irshad Ahmad Wani son of Habibullah Wani resident of Hajin. Similarly, during naka checking at Shokbaba Sumlar another drug peddler was arrested along with 40 grams of Charas was recovered from his possession.

He has been identified as Ab Rashid Sheikh son of Sonaullah Sheikh resident of Arin. Moreover, a police

party at a checkpoint established at Check Chandergger, intercepted a vehicle (Maruti Alto Car) bearing registration No. JK15C-0747 driven by Mohmad Aqib Wani son of Gh Mohd Wani resident of Hajin. During search, 98 bottles of Codeine Phosphate were recovered from his possession. The driver has been arrested and the vehicle used in the commission of crime has also been seized.

In a similar action by Sopore Police, a Police party of Police Post Putkha at a checkpoint established at Trumung Crossing arrested two drug peddlers identified as Aamir Farooq Dar son of Farooq Ahmad Dar resident of Ningli Sopore and Javaid Ahmad Gujri @Diya Gooor son of Ghulam Nabi Gujri resident of Jamai Qadeem Sopore. During search, 20 grams of Brown Sugar was recovered from their possession.

Indian Army organizes Veterinary Camp for Bakarwal Deras at Chowki Choura, Akhnoor



JINNEWS SERVICE
AKHNOOR: 25 DEC 2024

In a commendable initiative to support the livelihoods of the nomadic Bakarwal community, the Chenab Gunners of the Cross Swords Division organized a two-day veterinary clinic near Pardaya Mode, Chowki Choura. This effort exemplifies the Indian Army's dedication to community welfare and sustainable development. The camp included sessions on immunization, disease prevention, and advanced livestock management practices,

followed by thorough medical examinations and the distribution of free medicines for livestock. The veterinary team also extended their services to remote Bakarwal deras, ensuring no animal was overlooked. Over 300 animals, including sheep, goats, horses, and dogs, were treated during the camp. The initiative was executed in collaboration with expert veterinarians and veterinary assistants from the Animal and Sheep Husbandry Departments of Akhnoor and Chowki Choura. The event was graced by dig-

nitaries, including the Tehsildar and Naib Tehsildar of Chowki Choura, TSO Chowki Choura, BDC Chairman, Sarpanches, and locals, who lauded the Chenab Gunners for their impactful outreach. Concluding with tea and refreshments, the camp left a positive and lasting impression on the Bakarwal community, who expressed sincere gratitude for this significant gesture. This initiative underscores the Indian Army's commitment to fostering goodwill and addressing the needs of underserved communities.

Dr Mustafa Kamal, Rattan Lal join Christmas celebrations at St Paul's Church in Jammu

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

Senior leaders of the Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) marked the auspicious occasion of Christmas by participating in prayer meetings and celebrations at prominent churches in Jammu. Dr. Mustafa Kamal, Additional General Secretary JKNC and former Minister, was accompanied by Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President, Sheikh Bashir Ahmed, Provincial Secretary, and Waris Gill, President of JKNC Christian Cell.

The senior NC leaders attended a solemn prayer meeting at St. Paul's Church, Residency Road, Jammu, where they joined the Christian community in offering prayers for peace, harmony, and prosperity. They later participated in festive celebrations at another church located in New



Plot, Jammu.

Extending his heartfelt Christmas greetings, Dr. Mustafa Kamal said, "On this joyous occasion, I convey my warm felicitations to the Christian community and the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Christmas embodies the

universal values of peace, goodwill, and compassion, which resonate deeply with the ideals of our party. We must collectively strive to strengthen inter-faith harmony and negate any attempt to create discord in society. May this Christmas bring happiness

and prosperity to all." Rattan Lal Gupta, while addressing the gathering, emphasized the significance of unity in diversity. "The spirit of Christmas reminds us of the importance of love, generosity, and unity. Jammu and Kashmir has always been a symbol of communal harmony, and it is our duty to uphold these cherished values," he said. He reiterated the commitment of National Conference in fostering communal harmony and wished the Christian community a blessed Christmas.

Sheikh Bashir Ahmed highlighted the National Conference's commitment to inclusivity and respect for all faiths. He added, "Our party has always stood for the rights and dignity of every community. Celebrating such occasions together reinforces

our shared bond." Waris Gill, Chairman of the JKNC Christian Cell, expressed gratitude to the party leadership for their active participation. "The National Conference has always been a beacon of support for minorities. Today's celebrations are a testament to our collective vision of peace and progress," he said.

Those who were present on this occasion: Bimla Luthra, Vijay Laxami Datta Senior leader, Rita Gupta, Dilshad Malik, Vice Presidents Central Zone, Sardar Tejinder Singh District President Jammu Urban YNC, Sapna Gill Block President Jammu East Women wing, S. Gurnam Singh Block President Jammu West, Vijay Luthra, Mohinder Kumar Rana Joint Secretary Central Zone, Jyoti Akbar, Mr Akbar Som Raj Taroch, S. Attal Singh Block President Jammu North A YNC and others.

J&K Students Association Expresses Strong Resentment Over Government's Ambiguity on Reservation Policy

JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

The Jammu and Kashmir Students Association Wednesday strongly criticized the Jammu and Kashmir government for its lack of clarity and transparency regarding the contentious reservation policy. Following a meeting between a five-member delegation of the students and Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, the latter assured that a cabinet sub-committee would submit its review report within six months. However, the association has termed this assurance insufficient and lacking immediate impact.

National Convener of the Association, Nasir Khuehami, said, "Even after two days have passed since the meeting with the Chief Minister, there have been no minutes of the meeting nor any official statement from the government regarding the commitments made during the discussion. This absence of communication reflects the government's lack of clarity and seriousness on such a

critical issue. We have discussed the issue with various groups of students and stakeholders. They have expressed complete dissatisfaction with the government, saying they are not serious about addressing their concerns."

The association has demanded that the government should release an official statement outlining the Chief Minister's commitments, particularly the assurance that the reservation issue would be resolved within six months. "Students deserve transparency. The government must officially clarify its position and ensure accountability for the promises made during the meeting," it added.

He emphasized, "There will be no talks or deliberations with the government until the sub-committee is streamlined. We want the committee to be streamlined, inclusive, similar to Parliament's Joint Parliamentary Committees (JPC), which include members from both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, as well as representatives from the government and the

opposition. The current sub-committee's composition is deeply flawed, as two of its members belong to the reserved category. How can open merit students expect justice from a committee that is inherently biased towards one side?"

He further added, "If the government is genuinely serious about resolving this issue, they must ensure that the process is fair, streamlined, and inclusive. The sub-committee must represent all stakeholders, including students, aspirants, retired Judge and independent voices, to instill confidence in its ability to deliver fair and just recommendations."

The association also reiterated its demand for an immediate halt to all ongoing recruitments under the disputed policy until the review is completed. It insisted that the review process should be expedited and concluded within three months, as six months is too long to wait for a resolution.

The association said that the Chief Minister had promised mass

recruitment soon after government formation. Does this mean that students will have to wait for six months now while all these mass recruitments are carried out under the current reservation policy? This would be a gross injustice. The government must ensure that no recruitments take place under the existing reservation policy until the review is completed, and a fair, transparent system is put in place. Any further delay could lead to greater resentment and a loss of trust among the student community. The association expressed concerns over the lack of any guarantee that the committee's report will ultimately favor students or bring meaningful reforms. The government has not assured whether the report will address the grievances of students or simply maintain the status quo. This uncertainty only adds to the frustration and mistrust among the affected communities.

Khuehami asserted that adding to the confusion are contradictory statements from leaders and Ministers of the ruling National Conference. While the Chief Minister assured a review, Minister Javid Rana categorically said that "nobody can touch ST-1 and ST-2," signaling resistance to any potential changes. Education Minister Sakina Yattoo, on the other hand, refrained from commenting, citing the matter as sub-judice.

"Dodging questions on reservations under the pretext of a sub-judice matter is unfair. The Supreme Court, in the case of Amit Sahni vs. Commissioner of Police & Ors. (2020), while addressing the Shaheen Bagh protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), clearly observed: We had noted in our order dated 17.02.2020 that despite the law facing a constitutional challenge before this Court, that by itself will not take away the right to protest of the persons who feel aggrieved by the legislation. This judgment affirms that the sub-judice status of a matter does not eliminate the right to debate, protest, discuss, or deliberate upon it in a

democratic setup." Ummar Jamal, President of the Association, criticized these inconsistencies, calling them indicative of the government's lack of a cohesive approach. Attempts to suppress discussions in the guise of judicial processes not only weaken democratic values but also reflect poorly on the intent and commitment of the government towards public interest and fair governance, it added.

"This incoherence and lack of communication reflect poorly on the government's commitment to resolving the issue. The government must immediately release an official statement, halt ongoing recruitments, and make the sub-committee more inclusive and impartial," he emphasized. Jamal emphasized that continued delays, ambiguity, and lack of transparency could lead to further distress among students and the larger public. "The youth of Jammu and Kashmir demand decisive action, not hollow promises. The government must act now, it further added.

Drug abuse alarming threat to youth: Kavinder



JINNEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DEC 25

Today at Vivek Hotel Jammu, while addressing the joint delegation of youth activists of Rajasthan based social organisation "SAMARTH SEVA SANG" and J&K based reputed and state awardee social organisation or SAHYOG INDIA - former Dy. Chief Minister Mr. Kavinder Gupta sensitized the masses in general and the agencies at the helm of affairs to curb drug menace that drug abuse is the major threat to nation particularly engulfing the youth to destabilise the equilibrium of developing and progressing Bharat which is going to be the third powerful nation of world.

As a regular feature, the youth from Rajasthan and J&K focusing

the public places, slum areas etc. alternate years to aware man to man regarding drug abuse. Mr Gupta appreciated the initiatives of both organisations SAMARTH and SAHYOG INDIA involving energetic youth, the true ambassadors of movement who are instrumental in setting the ill-fated n involved youth on right track towards healthy and fit India.

The dignitaries who also addressed are Mr. Vinay Gupta, Dr. Ashwani Jajra Founder SAHYOG INDIA, Mr. Ashwani Gupta and Mr. Sunil Gupta Advisors SAHYOG INDIA, Mr. Vivek Gupta, Mr. Amit Gupta. The delegation leader Mr. Vansh Suman also addressed and conveyed the message of Reputed social activists of Rajasthan Mr. Prem Chand Suman and Dr. Ramji Chandrawal.

EDITORIAL

A New Dawn for Kashmir's Connectivity

Kashmir, a land of unparalleled beauty and strategic significance, stands on the cusp of a transformative moment in its history. The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project, a marvel of modern engineering, is inching closer to completion, promising to revolutionize connectivity, foster economic growth, and bring the people of this region closer to the rest of India.

The recent successful trial run on the 17-kilometer Katra-Reasi section and the inaugural tower wagon trial on India's first cable-stayed railway bridge at Anji Khad mark significant milestones in this ambitious project. These trials signal the culmination of decades of effort to overcome daunting geographical and climatic challenges in building one of India's most complex rail networks.

The USBRL project is a testament to human ingenuity and determination. Spanning rugged terrains and seismic zones, the project includes 38 tunnels with a combined length of 119 kilometers and 927 bridges stretching 13 kilometers. Among these structures, the Chenab Bridge stands out as a global icon. Soaring 359 meters above the riverbed, it eclipses the Eiffel Tower in height and embodies the spirit of modern India's engineering prowess.

Another highlight is Tunnel T-49, the country's longest transportation tunnel at 12.75 kilometers. These feats are not merely technical achievements; they are milestones that underscore India's commitment to integrating its farthest regions through world-class infrastructure.

The benefits of rail connectivity in Kashmir extend beyond convenience. The USBRL will serve as an economic lifeline, enabling faster movement of goods and people, boosting tourism, and creating new opportunities for local businesses. For a region often constrained by its geographical isolation, this project heralds a future of inclusion and growth.

The introduction of electric trains on this route, as highlighted in February's trial run on the Banihal-Katra section, signals a shift towards sustainable transport. This eco-friendly approach aligns with India's broader goals of reducing carbon emissions and modernizing its railway network.

The journey to this point has not been without challenges. The region's harsh winters, seismic activity, and complex terrain have tested the mettle of engineers and workers. However, their perseverance ensures that the USBRL project remains on track for completion. The upcoming statutory inspections and safety clearances for the Katra-Reasi section in January 2025 will be pivotal in achieving operational readiness.

Beyond its physical infrastructure, the USBRL project symbolizes hope and unity. It bridges not just distances but also the aspirations of millions in Kashmir and beyond. With the world's highest rail bridge and cutting-edge technology, it serves as a reminder of what is possible when vision meets execution.

As the trains prepare to chug through the breathtaking landscapes of Kashmir, they carry with them the promise of a brighter, more connected future. The USBRL project is more than a railway; it is a lifeline, a symbol of resilience, and a harbinger of prosperity for generations to come.

Centenary birth anniversary of A.B.Vajpayee

OMKAR DATTATRAY

It was exactly 100 years ago on December 25, 1924 that Atal Behari Vajpayee was born. Atal Ji was a seasoned politician, leader of masses, tallest statesman, a poet of repute, best orator and above all a good human being. Atal Ji can best be described as the Prime Minister who shaped the destiny of India and he was the moderate Hindutva icon and a great nationalist and a tall leader of the 21st century India and he will remain to inspire generations of Indians. He was the statesman of India, Hindutva advocate and an icon of Bhartiya. His contribution in shaping the destiny of India will be written in golden letters in the history of the subcontinent. Vajpayee was a very popular leader and politician and even his opponents listened to his addresses with rapt attention irrespective of the political affiliations. It was often said of him by the opposition that Atal Ji was a right man but in the wrong party. As India commemorates the 100th birth anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, we celebrate the life and legacy of one of the nation's most beloved statesman and leader. A towering figure in Indian politics, Vajpayee was not just a leader of the masses but also a visionary who upheld the ideals of Hindutva while fostering inclusivity, secularism, unity in diversity and national pride. As Bharat approached the 100th birth anniversary of A.B.Vajpayee on 25th December 2024, it is a time to revisit the extraordinary

life of a leader and politician who stood as a beacon of national pride, Hindutva, nationalism, cultural pride and a moderate leader who was loved equally by his supporters and opponents in political and public life. Vajpayee was not merely a statesman, he was an ideologue, poet, visionary and an institution in himself who firmly believed in the ideals of a strong and self-reliant Bharat rooted in its Sanatan values. Vajpayee was the true upholder of secularism and pluralism who was an example of Raj Dharma in politics and his vision of good governance transformed the Indian public life, boosted its economy as well as societal values. It was Vajpayee as the prime minister who laid the strong foundation of infrastructure which helped and catapulted the economic, social, technological and cultural development of India. Through his unimpeachable leadership, Vajpayee nurtured secularism, democracy, humanity and above all his honesty inspired countless people. Born in Gwalior MP on December 25, 1924 into a family steeped in values and education, Vajpayee imbibed the essence of nationalism from an early age. His father, Krishna Bihari Vajpayee, a school teacher and a scholar, was instrumental in shaping Atal's intellectual and spiritual pursuits. He was influenced by the views of Savarkar and Jansung Ideologue Lt. Dr Shyama Prasad and was an active member of RSS and he boasted of his Sangh credentials. Vajpayee was the great advocate, votary and epitome of

good governance and stood for it throughout his career as the prime minister. The good governance Day or Sushasan diwas, is marked on December 25 every year in India to commemorate the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister A.B.Vajpayee. This day is observed to create awareness among the masses, especially among the young generation, about the accountability of government and administration. It promotes citizen-centric as well as efficient and transparent governance to improve service delivery. This year, India is observing the 100th birthday anniversary of Vajpayee. This day aims to promote awareness among citizens about government accountability and administration while also instilling "good governance" as a practice for Indian civil servants. It is observed to guarantee that the nation's citizens are treated equitably by the government and that they get a chance to avail themselves of the benefits of diverse government services. A poet-politician, Atal Ji was born on December 25, 1924, in Gwalior, MP, which is why good governance Day is celebrated every year in India on December 25, and in 2024, it was observed on Wednesday. Atal Ji, the first leader of the BJP, served as the India's Prime Minister three times, briefly in 1996, for 13 months in 1998 and 1999, and for full-time from 1999 to 2004. Vajpayee revolutionized and transformed infrastructure, agriculture, economy, public life and even politics and took many great steps and

strides. Wednesday, December 25, marked the 100th birth anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee, a recipient of India's highest civilian honor, the Bharat Ratna, is celebrated for his outstanding political contributions, including his leadership in shaping India's post-independence political and economic landscape. President Droupadi Murmu, PM Narendra Modi and NDA cabinet members paid homage to former Prime Minister and BJP founding president Atal Ji at his memorial, "Sadaiv Atal," on his 100th birth anniversary. Vajpayee served as Prime Minister of India three times and played a pivotal role in elevating the BJP to national prominence, driving major political and economic reforms during his tenure, significantly shaping India's trajectory. Vajpayee served as India's external affairs minister in 1977 under Morarji Desai's Janata Party government. His diplomatic approach contributed to India's foreign policy during a turbulent time in the country's political history. First elected to Lok Sabha in 1957 from Balrampur, UP, Vajpayee became the only leader to win elections from six different constituencies across Uttar Pradesh, MP, New Delhi, and Gujarat solidifying his influence in Indian politics. Despite fluency in English, Vajpayee's speeches shone brightest in Hindi. Known as "Shabdo Ka Jadugar", his oratory in Hindi is equally famous. Vajpayee became an activist of RSS at very young age and it instilled in him the principles of self-

less service, cultural pride and unwavering commitment to Bharat Mata. Even as a student, Vajpayee exhibited remarkable oratory and writing skills. His essays and speeches reflected his deep understanding of Hindutva, nationalism, and governance. His formative years in RSS and his association with stalwarts like Guru Golwalkar laid the foundation for his lifelong dedication to the cause of Hindutva and Bharat's resurgence. Vajpayee's entry into politics began with the formation of the Bharatiya Jan Sangh -BJS in 1951 under the leadership of Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. As a founding member, Vajpayee became the voice of a nationalist Bharat, tirelessly advocating for cultural and ideological unity. His speeches in parliament were a masterpiece in statesmanship, blending intellectual rigor with ideological conviction. These were a clarion call for India to reclaim its civilizational heritage while navigating modern challenges. His consistent advocacy for the abolition of Article 370 and his vision for a united India underlined his unwavering commitment to cultural nationalism. In emergency of 1975, Vajpayee's unwavering commitment to democratic values and Hindutva were spectacular. As Prime Minister, Vajpayee exemplified the ideals of Hindutva through his bold decisions, whether it was defending India's borders, asserting its nuclear sovereignty and fostering economic independence. His tenure -1996,1998-2004 was a testament to his vision of India

as a global leader grounded in its cultural identity. The Pokhran-II nuclear tests of 1998 were a defining moment in India's history. By making Bharat a declared nuclear weapons state, Vajpayee ensured that the nation could defend itself against any external threat. His statement, "It is not aggression but self-defense," reflected Hindutva's ethos of strength toughened with responsibility. Despite international sanctions, Vajpayee's diplomacy turned adversities into opportunities, strengthening India's global alliances while upholding its sovereignty. Vajpayee's economic policies, including the Golden Quadrilateral highway project and IT advancements were not just infrastructural milestones but expressions of his belief in a strong and self-reliant Bharat. He championed privatization and globalization, ensuring that Bharat's economy resonated with its civilizational values of enterprise and innovation. Vajpayee's humor was legendary and often disarmed critics. But alas! this multifaceted leader and statesman passed away at the age of 93 years on 18 August 2018 after a brief illness. Vajpayee will remain live in the memory of millions of Indians for generations. The best tribute to this great man of masses and politician is to live up to his ideals and make him our ideal and role model. On his 100th Jayanti, let us rededicate ourselves to realizing his ideals and fulfilling his vision for India.

The author is a columnist, social and KP activist.

The Eternal Wisdom of Sundar Kand

RAVIVALLURI

The faithful recognize the profound benefits of chanting or reading sacred texts, mantras, and scriptures like the Hanuman Chalisa and Sundar Kand. These practices are especially embraced by large numbers on auspicious days such as Tuesdays and Saturdays. The vibrations generated by reading these sacred books and meditating on the mantras foster positive thoughts, beautify the mind, and empower us to overcome internal obstacles and dispel negativity clouding our perspective. Yet, many of us struggle to engage in these practices regularly, often citing demanding sched-

ules and lack of time.

As spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar observes, "The time given to the Divine is the least." Consequently, we neglect to devote quality time to the Lord, remembering Him only in moments of distress. Even when time is found, many face difficulties focusing, maintaining clarity, or chanting with proper intonation. The mind frequently drifts into worldly concerns.

To aid this practice, here is a simple version of Sundar Kand:

Ram Ram Jai Ram
Ram Jai Ram Ram
Peaceful, Compassionate,
Sinless,

One served by Brahma
and Shambhu,
One who appears in

human form by Maya,
O Raghuvhar, I bow to you.

You are my innermost Self.

Liberate me, O Lord,
Instill devotion within me.

O Lord Hanuman, epitome of strength, knowledge, and wisdom, emboldened by Jambavanth's counsel, set out to cross the mighty ocean in search of Sita. He triumphed over the demones Surasa and reached Lanka under the cover of night. Guided by divine intuition, he discovered Sita and presented her with Lord Ram's ring, bowing at her feet and seeking her blessings. Hanuman then wreaked havoc in Ashok Vatika - eating fruits, breaking

branches, and shaking trees.

Allowing himself to be captured by the asuras, he was taken to Ravana's court. There, he urged Ravana to repent and return Sita to Lord Ram. Ravana, consumed by ego, refused and instead set Hanuman's tail ablaze. In response, Hanuman used the fire to destroy Lanka's golden city. Before departing, Hanuman comforted Sita and took her Chudamani (jewel) as a token for Lord Ram. On returning, he presented it to Ram, who embraced him, deeply moved by his devotion and bravery. When asked how he accomplished the task, Hanuman humbly replied that nothing is impossible with

the grace of Lord Ram. Lord Ram then instructed Sugreev to assemble the army and seek the ocean's permission to cross into Lanka. Meanwhile, Mandodari, Ravana's queen, warned him of the dire consequences of his actions and implored him to release Sita, but he refused. Ravana's virtuous brother Vibheeshan also advised him to repent, cautioning that even Lord Shiva would disapprove of his deeds.

Ignoring all advice, Ravana's stubbornness led Vibheeshan to abandon Lanka and seek refuge at Lord Ram's feet. Recognising his righteousness, Lord Ram crowned Vibheeshan as the future king of Lanka. Ravana sent

spies disguised as messengers to gather information on Lord Ram's plans. They returned with alarming news and urged Ravana to free Sita, but he remained defiant. With the help of Nal and Neel, Lord Ram constructed the Setu bridge to cross the ocean. Along the way, he released the river Sarayu from its curse and advanced toward Lanka. This timeless Sundar Kand, penned by Tulsidas, continues to inspire and guide devotees on their spiritual journey.

(The writer is the CEO of Chhattisgarh East Railway Ltd. and Chhattisgarh East West Railway Ltd. He is a faculty of the Art of Living; views are personal)

Dreaming of a White Christmas in New York City

SHREYA DAYAL

The first time I saw New York City during the holidays, I was 19, a college freshman on a whirlwind trip with my friends. It was my first real taste of winter-snow, bitter cold, and the kind of brisk air that turns your cheeks red. Coming from a place where Christmas meant palm trees with twinkle lights, the sight of NYC blanketed in snow felt like stepping into a new world. I didn't know it then, but that trip would spark a love affair with the city that would eventually bring me back here five years later.

My First Snow, My First NYC Christmas

I still remember how the snow caught me off guard. It wasn't the gentle, picture-perfect kind I'd imagined from movies. It was harsh, relentless, and absolutely freezing. Walk-

ing through Times Square that Black Friday, bundled up in layers that still didn't feel like enough, I saw the city come alive in a way that felt electric.

It wasn't just the towering billboards or the endless sales signs luring shoppers into stores at all hours of the night. It was the energy-the palpable hum of people chasing holiday deals while dodging each other in the snow. It was chaotic, overwhelming, and unforgettable. Somewhere in the madness of flashing lights and icy sidewalks, I knew I wanted to come back someday-not as a visitor, but as someone who belonged here.

The Magic of NYC's Holiday Icons

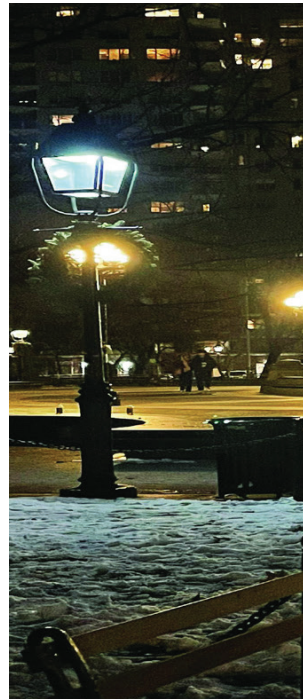
During that trip, we did all the things you're supposed to do when you're experiencing Christmas in New York for the first time. We saw the Rockefeller Center tree, tower-

ing above the skating rink, every inch of it glowing like it had been plucked from a fairytale. The cold bit at my fingers as we stood there, taking it all in. For a moment, the crowds and the cold faded away, leaving only the soft twinkle of the lights and the awe of standing in front of something so iconic.

The Met was another world entirely. As someone who'd only read about it in books, stepping into its grandeur felt surreal. Wandering through the exhibits, I found myself captivated by the way history and art came alive here. Outside, the snow was falling again, but I was too caught up in the beauty around me to notice the cold.

The Broadway Moment That Changed Everything

That trip wasn't just about the sights; it was about the moments that stayed with me long after I



left. One of those moments was seeing Phantom of the Opera on Broadway. Sitting in that theater, watching the chandelier crash and the Phantom's haunting story unfold, I felt a

kind of magic I couldn't quite explain. It was more than just a show-it was a moment that made me feel alive in a way I hadn't before.

Walking out of the the-

ater into the snowy night, the sounds of the orchestra still echoing in my mind, I felt a connection to the city that I couldn't shake. It was as if New York had opened its arms to me and

whispered, "Come back."

Coming Full Circle

Five years later, I did come back. I'd dreamed of living in New York ever since that first trip, and now here I was, not as a wide-eyed tourist, but as someone calling the city home. It's funny how those early memories still feel so vivid, like they're a part of me.

Walking through Times Square today, I still think about that freezing Black Friday night when I braved the snow for the first time. Seeing the Rockefeller tree now brings back flashes of that first trip-standing in awe of its beauty and dreaming about a future that somehow feels like the present now. Even when I catch a Broadway show, I can't help but remember how Phantom of the Opera made me fall in love with this city in the first place.

The Spirit of a NYC Christmas

There's something timeless about Christmas in New York. No matter how many years pass or how many times you see it, the magic never fades. The snow still glistens, the lights still dazzle, and the city still hums with that unmistakable holiday energy.

For me, it's not just about the sights or the snow-it's about how this city makes you feel. It's about the way it wraps you up in its chaos, its beauty, and its magic, and leaves you with memories that last a lifetime.

A White Christmas in New York City isn't just a holiday-it's a story. And for me, it's the story of a 19-year-old who fell in love with the snow, the lights, and the city that would one day become home!

(The writer is a researcher at Johns Hopkins University; views are personal)

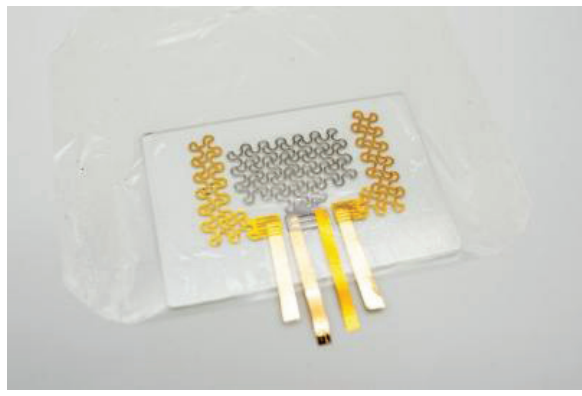
Wearable heart sound devices represent key shift in cardiac care: Study

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

Wearable heart sound devices represent a groundbreaking shift in cardiac care, offering continuous, non-invasive monitoring with the potential to revolutionise the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of cardiovascular conditions, according to a new study.

Cardiovascular diseases remain a global health crisis, spurring an urgent demand for innovative diagnostic tools that enable early detection and effective treatment.

These cutting-edge advancements promise to enhance patient care and outcomes by providing real-time insights into heart health, said researchers from the City University of Hong Kong.



"Our work on wearable heart sound devices marks a significant step forward in the early detection and monitoring of cardiovascular diseases," said Dr Bee Luan Khoo, Associate Professor at the City University of Hong Kong and a leading researcher in the field.

"These devices have the potential to provide more accurate, real-time cardiac

health data, revolutionising the way we manage and understand heart health," Khoo added.

Traditional tools, such as stethoscopes, have long been valuable for diagnosing cardiac issues but fall short when it comes to continuous monitoring.

Wearable technology emerges as a transformative solution, enabling persistent and real-time

tracking of heart sounds. However, challenges such as sensitivity, comfort, and data accuracy still hinder widespread adoption, said the researchers.

These hurdles underscore the necessity of advancing wearable devices to overcome existing limitations and improve cardiovascular health monitoring on a global scale.

The study highlights a transformative journey from traditional stethoscopes to state-of-the-art wearable sensors that enable continuous cardiac activity monitoring. Key innovations include the development of mechanosensitive sensors with soft, flexible designs that prioritise user comfort while maintaining high sensitivity and specificity.

The research empha-

sised the importance of advanced materials and optimised design principles in addressing these challenges.

Denoising techniques are also spotlighted as crucial for accurate heart sound analysis, tackling the low-frequency nature of cardiac sounds and their vulnerability to environmental interference.

Notably, the study delved into the clinical applications of these sensors, envisioning a future where personalised healthcare and remote monitoring are seamlessly integrated into cardiovascular disease management.

The findings pave the way for actionable, real-time insights that could significantly enhance patient outcomes and healthcare efficiency.

South Korea confirms another case of lumpy skin disease, total 24 this year

AGENCIES
SEOUL, DEC 25

South Korea has reported an additional case of lumpy skin disease (LSD) in cattle, raising the total number of confirmed cases this year to 24, the agriculture ministry said on Wednesday.

The latest case was detected at a cattle farm in Goheung, about 330 kms south of Seoul, which is raising 54 milk cows, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, reports Yonhap news agency.

The ministry issued a standstill order for personnel and vehicles associated with the farm and related facilities while conducting disinfection operations to prevent the spread of the disease.

LSD is a highly contagious disease that causes



skin lesions, fever and loss of appetite, often resulting in reduced milk production and, in severe cases, death. It affects cattle and buffalo and is transmitted by mosquitoes and other blood-feeding insects.

In October, South Korea reported an additional case of lumpy skin disease (LSD) in cattle. The latest case was detected at a cattle farm in Chungju, some 147 kilometers south of Seoul, according to the Ministry of Agriculture,

Food and Rural Affairs.

The government will deploy all available disinfection vehicles to prevent the spread of the disease, it added. The agriculture ministry has called on provincial governments to stay vigilant against additional cases breaking out across the nation and complete vaccination of cattle by the end of this month.

The country reported its first case of LSD in cattle this year in August.

Health fairs first launched during leadership of Atalji: Yogi

AGENCIES
LUCKNOW, DEC 24

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath inaugurated the two-day Atal Health Fair at Dilkusha Lawn, Lucknow, to commemorate the birth centenary of Bharat Ratna and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Rajnath and Yogi also inaugurated and laid the foundation for 181 projects worth Rs 662 crore on the occasion.

Speaking at the event, the CM said that Atalji, who represented Lucknow as an MP five times, revolutionized Indian politics by steering it from instability to stability.

He said, "He also brought Pandit Deendayal Upadhy-

ay's vision of Antyodaya to life. Inspired by his legacy, the Atal Health Fair continues to deliver healthcare services to the underprivileged and needy."

Yogi recalled that health fairs were first launched during Atalji's leadership in 1998-99, but were discontinued in later years. "Reviving this tradition, the Atal Health Fair has been organized consistently over the last five years, benefiting more than 50,000 people between 2020 and 2023," he said.

Describing Atalji as the 'Ajatshatru' of Indian politics, the CM praised his spontaneity and simplicity, which endeared him to people across all sections of society. He also com-

mended Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's role in Lucknow's all-around development and acknowledged the significant contribution of projects worth Rs 662 crore that were inaugurated and launched during the event.

Assistive devices like prosthetic limbs, tricycles, wheelchairs, and blind sticks were distributed at the health fair.

Referring to initiatives for empowering the differently-abled (Divyangjans) under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership, Yogi emphasized the increase in their annual pension to Rs 12,000 and highlighted ongoing programmes for equipment distribution to support their needs.

National Ayush Mission empowering communities with accessible, affordable healthcare

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

The National Ayush Mission (NAM) has empowered communities with accessible and cost-effective healthcare based on traditional practices, Prataprao Jadhav, Union Minister of State for Ministry of Ayush, has stressed.

The minister said this while unveiling a film series titled "Ayush for All: Holistic Health Care through National Ayush Mission" in the national capital, showcasing the remarkable progress and transformative impact of the National Ayush Mission.

"This film series is a step towards making



information about our initiatives readily accessible to the public, showcasing Ayush's pivotal role in reducing disease burden and promoting wellness across the nation," said Jadhav.

The series highlights real-life stories of trans-

formation, demonstrating how NAM, in collaboration with state and UT governments, has improved healthcare access and reduced out-of-pocket expenditures for rural and underserved populations.

According to the ministry, the NAM aims to strengthen Ayush healthcare services, promote preventive care through Ayushman Arogya Mandir (Ayush), and integrate Ayush systems into mainstream public health.

The NAM also emphasises the development of Ayush educational institutions to enhance the quality of education and research. Moreover, the scheme has supported the establishment of 167 Integrated Ayush Hospitals and upgraded 416 Ayush Hospitals and 5036 dispensaries.

Essential Ayush medicines were supplied to 996 hospitals and 12,405 dispensaries each year. NAM also supported 16 new Ayush educational

institutions and upgraded 112 others. Additionally, 3,883 Yoga Wellness Centres, 1,055 Ayush Grams and 12,500 Ayushman Arogya Mandir (Ayush) were established, promoting holistic wellness nationwide, according to the ministry.

According to Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha, Secretary, Ministry of Ayush said, the NAM focuses on strengthening Ayush healthcare services, establishing Ayushman Arogya Mandir (Ayush), and promoting medical pluralism.

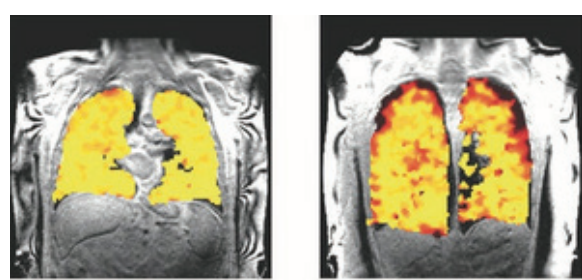
"These initiatives are transforming public health and improving access to preventive and promotive care across the nation," he mentioned.

SCIENTISTS DEVELOP SCAN THAT UNRAVELS SECRETS OF LUNG FUNCTION

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

A team of scientists has developed a new method of scanning lungs that is able to show the effects of treatment on lung function in real time, enabling them to see the functioning of transplanted lungs.

The scan method enabled the team, led by researchers at Newcastle University in the UK, to see how air moves in and out of the lungs as people take a breath in patients with asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), and patients who



have received a lung transplant.

"We hope this new type of scan might allow us to see changes in the transplant lungs earlier and before signs of damage are present in the usual blowing tests. This would allow any treatment to be

started earlier and help protect the transplanted lungs from further damage," said Professor Andrew Fisher, Professor of Respiratory Transplant Medicine at Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Newcastle University, UK.

In the study published in Radiology and JHLT Open, the team explained how they use a special gas, called perfluoropropane, that can be seen on an MRI scanner.

The gas can be safely breathed in and out by patients, and then scans taken to look at where in the lungs the gas has reached.

"Our scans show where there is patchy ventilation in patients with lung disease, and show us which parts of the lung improve with treatment," said project lead, Professor Pete Thelwall at Newcastle Uni-

versity.

The new scanning technique allows the team to quantify the degree of improvement in ventilation when patients have a treatment, in this case a widely used inhaler, the bronchodilator, salbutamol. This shows that the imaging methods could be valuable in clinical trials of new treatments of lung disease.

There is potential for this scan method to be used in the clinical management of lung transplant recipients and other lung diseases in the future, said researchers.

Sharp rise in Chikungunya cases, experts warn of health risks

AGENCIES
BHOPAL, DEC 25

Madhya Pradesh is grappling with a rising number of Chikungunya cases, with the disease spreading rapidly despite crores of rupees spent annually to combat virus-borne illnesses.

The alarming situation has been highlighted by the recent death of a doctor in Indore due to Chikungunya-related complications.

Health experts are raising concerns over the mutation of the Chikungunya virus, which is now reported to affect vital

organs like the heart and kidneys.

In Bhopal, the number of Chikungunya cases has seen a sharp increase, causing significant health challenges. Patients report persistent joint pain, weakened immunity, and vulnerability to illnesses like arthritis. A unique symptom, black spots or "chick signs," has also been observed near the nose and cheeks, with 5-10 new cases reported daily in the city.

So far, 593 cases have been reported in 2024, the highest in the last five years, surpassing the 756 cases reported in 2019.

Experts note that testing and confirmation protocols at government hospitals have become more stringent, potentially underreporting the true extent of the outbreak.

Bhopal, Gwalior, and Indore have emerged as major hotspots. Health officials attribute the surge to an increase in mosquito populations following the monsoon.

The Aedes mosquito, which transmits the virus, is most active during the day. Insufficient fogging and anti-larval measures by local authorities have further worsened the situation.

UP preparing to ensure NQAS certification for health facilities

AGENCIES
LUCKNOW, DEC 25

The Uttar Pradesh government is making relentless efforts to ensure quality healthcare for patients across the state, officials said here on Monday.

On the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, preparations are in full swing to secure the prestigious National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS) certification for facilities ranging from district hospitals to Ayushman Arogya Mandirs, they said. In addition, health units are being prepared for the coveted

Kayakalp Award. In this regard, the mission director of the National Health Mission has instructed officials concerned to conduct an external assessment of 122 community health centres (CHCs) as soon as possible, they added.

Mission Director Dr Pinky Jewel said that in line with the chief minister's vision, health units are being integrated with advanced technology to enhance Uttar Pradesh's healthcare infrastructure.

In a letter issued to all the additional directors and chief medical officers, Dr Jewel has instructed that external assessments

of these health units be conducted between December 24 and 29.

Each facility has been assigned three assessors, with specific assessment dates scheduled.

According to the letter, an external assessment of seven CHCs is to be done in Kanpur and Jaunpur, six each in Bareilly and Siddharthnagar; five each in Kanpur Dehat and Shahjahanpur; four each in

The criteria for the Kayakalp Award include better medical facilities, cleanliness and hygiene in health centres, better waste management and infection control methods.

ESIC overhauls IT systems to boost healthcare, delivery mechanism for millions

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 24

In a significant step to improve healthcare services and overall delivery mechanism for millions, the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) on Tuesday said it has modernised its information and IT systems.

The Dhanwantari Hospital Information System (HIS) is now being used more widely in ESIC hospitals and dispensaries, with a 40 per cent growth in adoption, enabling healthcare providers to better manage patient care and hospital operations,



according to the Ministry of Labour and Employment.

"The connection pool for the concurrent users of the Dhanwantari Module as well as the Insurance Module has been increased very significantly," the ministry informed.

Moreover, the ESIC's 'Dhanwantari Module'

enables the hospitals and dispensaries, with better availability of patient records, previous case history, etc. thus ensures better patient care.

Total number of transactions has increased by 50 per cent since the beginning of the current financial year and is on a linear rise.

"After enhancing the concurrent users 10 times in the month of September, 2024, the number of incidents reported has decreased to one third. The total number of such incidents raised is only 93 for 1.5 crore transactions," the ESIC informed.

ESIC has also upgraded its IT systems, including hardware, middleware, software and network systems; enabling the system to be faster, more secure and easier to use for stakeholders across all ESIC facilities.

The transition is integral part of ongoing operations and maintenance contract

with current system integrator at a total cost of Rs 312 crore for 3 years.

Meanwhile, the ESIC mobile app has also been improved to provide a more user-friendly experience and additional features.

Online appointment bookings have seen remarkable growth, with a 200 per cent increase from 2022 to 2023 and another 177 per cent increase from 2023 to 2024.

Nearly 17.80 lakh new employees were enrolled under the Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) scheme during October this year.

Good governance demands sensitivity, empathy: CM Saini

AGENCIES
GURUGRAM, DEC 25

Haryana Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini on Wednesday emphasised the importance of sensitivity and empathy in government administration, urging officers to view their roles as an opportunity to uplift society and ease the hardships of the common people.

CM Saini made the remark while addressing the State-level Governance Day programme in Gurugram on the occasion of the birth anniversary of Bharat Ratna awardee and former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

The Chief Minister urged the officers to view each case with compassion, stating that when someone approaches their office with a problem, they



should not simply see it as a piece of paper. Instead, they should recognise it as a symbol of the individual's pain and hardship.

He said: "If we can understand the story behind that paper, we will have truly succeeded in our efforts towards good governance."

The Chief Minister also paid tribute to Bharat Ratna awardees Pandit Madan Mohan Malviya and

Atal Bihari Vajpayee on their birth anniversaries, reflecting on their monumental contributions to the nation.

He said: "Today's day is not only a memorable occasion for all of us, but it also inspires us to strengthen our commitment towards building a better and more empowered nation."

"Atal Bihari Vajpayee's leadership was truly

transformative for India. His vision and policies were pivotal in shaping the country's progress on both domestic and international fronts.

His leadership laid the foundation for the India we see today, and it is this vision of a 'Vikist Bharat' that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is dedicated to realising," the CM said.

Chief Minister Saini said: "When our government assumed the responsibility of public service in 2014, we launched a campaign of governance reform, transitioning from good governance (Sushasan) to service (Sewa)."

He said that the success of such a campaign depends on 'Niyat' (intent), 'Nishtha' (commitment), and 'Niti' (policy).

For good governance, he said, there must be a

genuine intention to serve, and the policies must be designed in a way that leaves no room for corruption.

"On the strength of Niyat, Nishtha, and Niti, our government is successfully realising the true essence of good governance," said CM Saini.

The Chief Minister said that in a bid to curb irregularities in land registration, the government has introduced the online issuance of No Objection Certificates (NOCs) from various departments, boards, and corporations, which are required during registration.

Additionally, the Web-Halris system has been implemented statewide to ensure transparency and accuracy in land records, he said.

SGPC chief Dhama undergoes punishment, cleans shoes in Golden Temple

AGENCIES
AMRITSAR, DEC 25

Five Sikh high priests, headed by Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh, on Wednesday pronounced religious punishment, also known as "tankhah" for Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) President Harjinder Singh Dhama for allegedly making offensive remarks against Bibi Jagir Kaur, a three-time chief of the gurdwara management body. This voluntary punishment comes less than a month after Akali Dal leader Sukhbir Badal was held guilty of religious misconduct by the high priests. The former Punjab Deputy Chief Minister was ordered to clean utensils and shoes in gurdwaras, including the holiest of all Sikh shrines, Harmandir Sahib, popularly known as the Golden Temple in

Amritsar, and complied.

Earlier in the day, SGPC chief Dhama appeared before the Akal Takht here and held a meeting with the Akal Takht Jathedar before appearing before the high priests, who asked him to wash dishes and clean shoes of the devotees for an hour each in the Golden Temple.

Soon after the religious punishment was pronounced, the SGPC chief, who accepted the directive, underwent the religious punishment in the Golden Temple.

Earlier Dhama had apologised for using foul language and submitted an apology letter to the Akal Takht.

Before the religious punishment, Punjab State Women Commission Chairperson Raj Lali Gill had issued a notice to the SGPC President for allegedly making offensive remarks. Gill had stated

that the commission took suo-motu cognisance of an audio recording circulating on social media, in which Dhama purportedly used offensive and demeaning language during a telephonic conversation with a journalist.

"The remarks were not only personally defamatory but also disrespectful to women as a whole," she had said, emphasizing the seriousness of the issue.

The commission had underlined that Dhama, as the head of a revered institution like the SGPC, is expected to uphold the highest standards of respect and dignity.

"Such language is unbecoming of his office and sends a damaging message to society," she had added.

Dhama appeared in person and submitted a written explanation to the commission, which was yet to pronounce its decision.

Congress using Ambedkar's name for political gains: Himanta Biswa Sarma

AGENCIES
GUWAHATI, DEC 25

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Wednesday launched a scathing attack at the Congress, alleging that the opposition party has been using B. R. Ambedkar's name only for political gains.

CM Sarma told reporters here, "While Congress was in power for many decades, they have named many institutions in the name of the Nehru-Gandhi family; however, they have not named any university in Ambedkar's name."

"Forget about a university, did Congress name any school after Ambedkar? The answer is no," he added.

Terming the Congress

party shameless, CM Sarma said, "With an aim to have political gains only, the Congress leaders have been using B.R. Ambedkar's name. This is such a shameless act being done in the country."

The CM also questioned the Congress party for not conferring Bharat Ratna on B. R. Ambedkar.

He said, "Congress leaders awarded Bharat Ratna to many people but they did not give it to Ambedkar."

CM Sarma also alleged that no Congress office has the portrait of B. R. Ambedkar.

"I was in the Congress party for more than 22 years.

I have never seen any pictures of Ambedkar in any of the Congress offices," he mentioned.

DELHI CM ATISHI ACCUSES BJP'S PARVESH VERMA OF DISTRIBUTING CASH, LATTER CLAPS BACK

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi on Wednesday backed Kejriwal's charge of 'cash distribution' in his constituency and leveled a direct charge at the BJP leader and former West Delhi MP Parvesh Verma.

Addressing the press, the CM claimed that former BJP MP was handing over cash to voters ahead of the impending elections in the capital. Atishi alleged that women voters from slums were being given Rs 1,100 in cash along with pamphlets featuring photos of Parvesh Verma, Home Minister Amit Shah, BJP President J.P. Nadda, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

She claimed that the distribution was taking place at former BJP MP Parvesh Verma's official residence, 20 Windsor Place.

"Women voters were called to Verma's government bungalow. Their voter IDs were checked, a form was filled, and Rs 1,100 was handed over in an orange envelope," Atishi said. She added that the AAP plans to file a complaint with the Election Commission soon.

"BJP has been caught red-handed distributing money. Crores of rupees in cash are lying at Parvesh Verma's residence. ED, CBI, and Delhi Police must raid his house immediately to reveal BJP's desperate attempt to win a lost election," Atishi asserted.



Parvesh Verma, reacting to the startling allegations, refuted all the charges by AAP leaders and stated that the funds were distributed as part of a welfare initiative by the Rashtriya Swabhiman organisation, established by his father 25 years ago.

He explained that the assistance was aimed at helping women from underprivileged communities who lack access to pensions, ration cards, or adequate healthcare.

"I am proud to support

my poor mothers and sisters. This initiative is not political. It is unfortunate that Kejriwal and Atishi are politicising it," Verma said.

Taking a dig at AAP, he added, "At least I am not distributing liquor. During Covid, when Delhi needed hospitals and medicines, Kejriwal was busy distributing free liquor and building his 'Sheesh Mahal.' In contrast, I set up Covid centres, provided oxygen concentrators, and helped save thousands of lives."

Verma accused AAP of

misleading voters with false promises. He pointed to the recently announced Mahila Samman Yojana, under which AAP promised to provide Rs 2100 to women, post-election.

"This is a fraud. Even the Delhi government's own advertisement confirms that no such scheme has been approved. AAP made similar promises in Punjab three years ago but failed to deliver. Why wait until after the elections? Nothing stops Kejriwal from implementing the scheme now," Verma said.

He accused AAP of using women's issues as an election stunt.

"Women voted for Kejriwal thrice, yet they lack basic amenities like pensions, clean water, and

healthcare. I challenge him to match my efforts in helping women. It is unfortunate that the AAP is asking for votes even before implementing it," he added.

The war of words highlights the intensifying battle between BJP and AAP ahead of the Delhi elections. While AAP accuses BJP of giving out money for votes, BJP has slammed AAP's promises as 'hollow and hypocritical'.

Meanwhile, Atishi has demanded immediate action from law enforcement agencies against Verma, while the latter maintained his pledge to continue his welfare initiatives despite the accusations.

Take action or face consequences: K'taka BJP chief on egg attack on party MLA Munirathna

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, DEC 25

The Karnataka BJP on Wednesday asked the Congress government in the state to take action into the egg attack on party MLA N. Munirathna Naidu or face consequences.

BJP State President B.Y. Vijayendra said, "If strict action is not taken against the criminals who attacked Munirathna and if attempts are made to cover up the issue, the Congress government led by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah should be prepared to face the appropriate response. This is a warning I wish to convey."

"In the Congress gov-

ernment, a situation has arisen where there is no protection for people's representatives. Goons are targeting BJP MLAs and attacking them. The case of the attack on MLC C. T. Ravi at Suvarna Soudha in Belagavi was taken lightly by the government, encouraging Congress-backed goons to attack our MLA Munirathna today," Vijayendra said.

This incident is extremely disgraceful and condemnable, he underlined.

"If even public representatives, who are supposed to ensure the protection of the people, are not safe, it raises serious concerns about the safety

of ordinary citizens. It seems Congress is steering the state towards a lawless and anarchic condition," he slammed.

"Whatever accusations may exist against MLA Munirathna, they should be addressed within the framework of justice. However, the emergence of a situation where an elected MLA is plotted against and attacked in broad daylight is a deeply concerning development," Vijayendra said.

An egg was hurled at BJP MLA N. Munirathna Naidu in Bengaluru on Wednesday morning, after which he blamed Deputy Chief Minister D. K. Shivakumar for the incident.

SVAMITVA scheme: Maha CM, Cabinet colleagues to distribute property cards on Dec 27

AGENCIES
NAGPUR, DEC 25

Owners possessing houses at inhabited areas in 30, 515 villages from 30 districts in Maharashtra will get property cards under the flagship Survey of Villages and Mapping Improved Technology in Village Areas (SVAMITVA) scheme of the Central government.

Speaking at a press conference here, Maharashtra Revenue Minister Chandrashekhar Bawankule said Prime Minister Narendra Modi will virtually attend the distribution programme of prop-

erty cards on December 27, while Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, his deputies Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, and Mahayuti ministers will attend the event scheduled to be held across 30 districts.

He clarified that the property cards under this scheme will be distributed to the owners of properties which are not in dispute.

Bawankule said he would attend the function in Nagpur, adding that the SVAMITVA, a property survey and mapping scheme, aims to provide 'Record of Rights' to owners possessing houses

in inhabited areas in villages and issue legal ownership rights through property cards or title deeds.

He further stated that the scheme will enable rural households to use their property as a financial asset for getting loans and other financial benefits.

It will help in the determination of property tax and increase liquidity of land parcels in the market and increase the financial credit availability for the village.

Bawankule said that it will also help to create accurate land records and drastically reduce prop-

erty-related disputes. He added that with the possession of property cards, disputes over property transfers will be reduced.

According to Bawankule, the property card holder along with an Aadhaar card will be entitled to avail benefits under various Central and state government schemes.

The minister said that the drone survey has begun in urban areas and after its completion, the property cards will be distributed.

According to the Panchayat Raj Ministry, the pilot phase of the SVAMITVA Scheme was launched

on April 24, 2020, for implementation during 2020-21.

The national roll-out of the scheme was launched on April 24, 2021. The SVAMITVA Scheme is being implemented with the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, State Revenue Department, State Panchayati Raj Department and Survey of India (SoI).

States need to sign the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with SoI for implementation of the scheme.

So far, 31 states/Union Territories have signed MoU with SoI.

Centre launches Rashtraparv Website & app to mark former PM Vajpayee's birth anniversary

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

To honour the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Wednesday, the Central government has launched the 'Rashtraparv Website' along with its mobile application, the Ministry of Defence said in a statement.

Now people can get all information on national events, including Republic Day and Independence Day celebrations, through a dedicated website.

The website will help

people purchase tickets for these events and will also give vital information on national events like route maps and timings, etc.

Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh launched the Rashtraparv website along with its mobile application on the occasion of 'Good Governance Day', commemorating the birth anniversary of former PM Vajpayee.

The MoD said that the website will facilitate access to information related to the organisation of national events

such as Republic Day, Beating Retreat Ceremony, Independence Day etc. It also offers live streaming, purchase of tickets, provide information related to seating arrangements and route maps of events etc.

Speaking on the occasion, the Defence Secretary said that the Rashtraparv Website and the mobile app, developed by the Ministry of Defence, also have a system for managing the tableaux proposals and historical data regarding events.

It will host a tableau

management portal to facilitate states/UTs, Ministries and departments in designing and finalising their tableaux for the Republic Day event.

The website and mobile application have been a result of a consultative process adopted by the MoD.

The states had suggested a portal for the management of tableaux design data.

Similarly, viewers of the Republic Day event in the feedback had suggested to have information regarding events, parade, and

tableaux with them.

The Rashtraparv website has been developed by incorporating all these, an MoD official added.

The website can be accessed at <https://rashtraparv.mod.gov.in> and the mobile app can be downloaded from the Government App Store (M-Seva).

According to the MoD, the initiative is a step further towards openness, transparency and citizen-centric governance and is a fitting tribute to former PM late Atal Bihari Vajpayee on Good Governance Day.

BJP slams Kejriwal over 'Mahila Samman Yojana' after Delhi WCD disowns it

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

The political storm surrounding the Aam Aadmi Party-led Delhi government's welfare schemes intensified on Wednesday as the state Women and Child Development Department disowned the Mahila Samman Yojana, sparking a war of words between the ruling party and the opposition BJP.

The scheme, which promised Rs 2,100 per month to women, was labelled as "fraudulent" by BJP leaders, who accused former Chief Minister

Arvind Kejriwal of misleading the public with false promises.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Vijender Gupta, slammed Kejriwal and the AAP for spreading misinformation.

Speaking to IANS, Gupta said: "On one hand, Kejriwal is making promises about schemes that don't exist, and on the other, they are misleading the people of Delhi. It's nothing short of cheating. They're using OTPs to scam citizens. If the Delhi government is issuing an advertisement saying that there is no such scheme, Kejriwal should

explain why AAP continues to speak about it."

He also accused the government of enabling cyber scammers by allowing such fraudulent claims to persist.

Gupta went on to predict a looming defeat for AAP in the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections. "BJP hasn't even released its candidate list yet, and Kejriwal is already in panic mode, fearing his defeat," he said.

Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva also joined the chorus of criticism, calling out Kejriwal for 'lying' about the existence of the Mahila Samman Yojana.

Iran cites Israel's confession to assassination as justification for October 1 attack

AGENCIES
TEHRAN, DEC. 25

Iran's envoy to the United Nations (UN) has said that Israel's "clear confession" to assassinating Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh on Iranian soil justifies Tehran's military response against Israel on October 1.

Amir Saeid Iravani, Iran's Permanent Representative to the UN, made the remarks in a letter addressed to the UN Security Council while reacting to the confession on Monday by Israeli Defence Minister Israel Katz, in which he admitted for the first time that Israel had assassinated Haniyeh in Tehran, Xinhua news agency cited a report from Iran's semi-official Tasnim news agency.

Haniyeh was killed on July 31 along with his bodyguard when their



residence in Tehran was attacked. Both Hamas and Iran accused Israel of carrying out the assassination.

On October 1, Iran launched dozens of ballistic missiles at Israel, describing the attack as a retaliation for the assassinations of key resistance figures, including Haniyeh, Hezbollah leader Sayyed

Hassan Nasrallah, and senior Iranian commander Abbas Nilfroushan.

Speaking at a recent Defence Ministry event, Katz had also issued a warning to Houthi forces in Yemen after their drone attacks, which have been intercepted by Israeli air defence systems.

"We will strike the Houthis hard, target their

strategic infrastructure, and decapitate their leaders -- just as we did to Haniyeh, Sinwar, and Nasrallah in Tehran, Gaza, and Lebanon," Katz had said.

Haniyeh and his bodyguard were killed when their residence was struck in Tehran, according to a statement published on the IRGC's official news outlet, Sepah News.

The statement mentioned that the attack was under investigation, and the results would be announced later.

In a report published on July 31, Iran's semi-official Fars news agency stated that Haniyeh was assassinated around 2 am on July 31 local time after his residence in Tehran was hit by a 'projectile.'

The Islamic Hamas movement had confirmed the death of its leader, stating that Haniyeh was assassinated

in an Israeli attack in Iran.

In a press statement, Hamas had expressed its grief, saying that it "mourns to the Palestinian people, the Arab and Islamic nation, and the free people of the world" following the death of Haniyeh, who had been in Tehran to attend the swearing-in ceremony of Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on July 30. Haniyeh was also expected to discuss with the Iranian president the political and field developments related to the ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict in the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli military has previously claimed responsibility for killing Hamas leader Yahya Sinwar in southern Gaza and Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut's southern suburb of Dahieh.

Drop negative China-related content in annual defence policy bill, Beijing urges US

AGENCIES
BEIJING, DEC. 25

China strongly urges the United States to abandon its Cold War mentality and ideological bias, and to refrain from implementing the negative content related to China in the National Defence Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2025, a spokesperson from China's top legislature said Wednesday.

Noting that both houses of the US Congress passed the NDAA for Fiscal Year 2025 and President Joe Biden signed it into law, Xu Dong, spokesperson for the Foreign Affairs Committee of the National People's Congress (NPC), expressed China's strong dissatisfaction and firm opposition to the negative content targeting China.

He criticised the NDAA for repeatedly hyping up the "China threat," advocating military support



for Taiwan, suppressing China's scientific, technological and economic development, restricting China-US economic, trade and people-to-people exchanges, grossly interfering in China's internal affairs, and undermining China's sovereignty, security, and development interests.

China has always handled its relations with the United States in accordance with the principles of mutual respect, peaceful coexistence and win-

win cooperation, and has always believed that the success of both countries presents an opportunity for each other, Xu said, adding that the two countries should be a boost to each other's development rather than an obstacle, Xinhua news agency reported.

The steady, sound and sustainable development of China-US relations is not only vital to the two peoples but also to the future and destiny of humanity, the spokesperson said.

UNGA adopts milestone treaty against cybercrime

AGENCIES
UNITED NATIONS, DEC. 25

The UN General Assembly adopted the United Nations Convention against Cybercrime, a landmark global treaty in bolstering international cooperation in the fight against such crimes.

It has been the first international criminal justice treaty negotiated among UN member states in over 20 years. The legally binding convention acknowledges the significant risks posed by the misuse of information and communications technologies, which enable criminal activities on an unprecedented scale, speed, and scope. It highlights the adverse impacts such crimes can have on states, enterprises, and the well-being of individuals and society, and focuses on protecting them from offences such as terrorism, human trafficking, drug smuggling and online financial crimes. The document also recognises the growing impact of cybercrime on victims and prioritises justice, especially for vulnerable groups. It underscores the need for technical assis-

stance, capacity-building and collaboration among states and other stakeholders. According to a UN press release, the convention will open for signature at a formal ceremony to be hosted in Hanoi, Vietnam, next year, and enter into force 90 days after being ratified by the 40th signatory, Xinhua news agency reported.

Welcoming the adoption of the historic convention, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres expressed his belief that the new treaty would promote a safe cyberspace and called on all states to join it.

"This treaty is a demonstration of multilateralism succeeding during difficult times and reflects the collective will of Member States to promote international cooperation to prevent and combat cybercrime," his spokesperson said in a statement.

"The convention creates an unprecedented platform for collaboration in the exchange of electronic evidence, protection for victims, and prevention, while ensuring human rights are protected online," the statement added.

LATAM REGIONAL BLOC CONDEMNS TRUMP'S THREATS OF RETAKING PANAMA CANAL

AGENCIES
CARACAS, DEC. 25

The Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America-Trade Treaty (ALBA-TCP) has strongly condemned recent comments by US President-elect Donald Trump, who hinted at the possibility of taking control of the Panama Canal.

The Panama Canal is a vital international waterway protected by international law and historic agreements, including the Torrijos-Carter Treaties, the alliance said in an official statement issued in Caracas.

These treaties affirm that the canal is an integral part of Panamanian territory, the statement said.

ALBA-TCP described Trump's remarks as an act of aggression against Panama's sovereignty, warning that such statements represent a threat not only to Panama, but to the broader Latin American and Caribbean region.

The alliance expressed its full support for Panama in defending its sovereignty,



territorial integrity, and right to self-determination, Xinhua news agency reported.

It also reiterated its steadfast solidarity with Panama's government, calling Trump's comments a renewed affront to Latin American sovereignty.

The Panama Canal was returned to Panamanian control by the United States in 1999 according

to the Torrijos-Carter Treaties signed in 1977 under pressure from the Panamanian people.

Earlier this week, several Panamanian scholars had depicted as "ridiculous" Trump's threat to take back the Panama Canal.

Trump on Saturday wrote on his Truth Social platform that the Panama Canal plays a "critical

role" in the US economy and national security. He demanded Panama reduce fees on the canal or return it to US control.

"It is ridiculous," said Jones Cooper, a professor at the University of Panama. Panama is the rightful owner of the canal, and the United States has no legal basis to reclaim it, he added, noting that the United States profited

significantly during its occupation while Panama gained little in return.

Julio Yao, a Panamanian international relations scholar, called Trump's comment the latest example of the American "big stick" policy. He emphasised that the Panama Canal must not be returned to the United States.

According to the Torrijos-Carter Treaties signed in 1977 by the then-Panamanian President Omar Torrijos and then-US President Jimmy Carter, Panamanians recovered their sovereignty over the canal on December 31, 1999.

On Sunday, Panama's President Jose Raul Mulino said that the canal will "continue to be in Panamanian hands".

Every square meter of the Panama Canal and its adjacent area belong to Panama and "will remain so," and "the sovereignty and independence of our country are not negotiable," Mulino said in a social media video post.

Mulino said he hopes to maintain a "respect-

ful" relationship with the next US government. He also pointed out that security issues such as illegal migration, drug trafficking, terrorism, and organised crime should be a priority in the two countries' bilateral agenda.

He also recalled the Torrijos-Carter Treaties and added that it established the permanent neutrality of the Panama Canal, "guaranteeing its open and safe operation for all nations. (...) any position to the contrary is invalid."

"(The tariffs) are established based on an open hearing, considering market conditions, international competition, operating costs and the maintenance and modernisation needs of the interoceanic waterway," said Mulino.

"The Canal will continue to be in Panamanian hands as an inalienable patrimony of our nation and guaranteeing its use for the peaceful and uninterrupted transit of ships of all nations," said the Panamanian president.

MONGOLIA BEGINS EXPORTING LIVE SHEEP TO UZBEKISTAN

AGENCIES
ULAN BATOR, DEC. 25

Mongolia has officially commenced the export of live sheep to Uzbekistan, marking a significant step in agricultural trade between the two nations, local media reported on Wednesday, citing the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry.

The initiative stems from an agreement made during Mongolian President Ukhnaa Khurelsukh's state visit to Uzbekistan in June, the ministry said in a statement.

During the visit, the two countries' leaders pledged to enhance cooperation in agricultural trade, specifically in the supply of wool, cashmere, leather, meat, and meat products from Mongolia to Uzbekistan and, through Uzbekistan, to other Central Asian markets.

As part of this agreement, Mongolia committed to exporting 100,000 live livestock to Uzbekistan, according to the ministry, Xinhua news agency



reported.

"The agreement has now been officially implemented, and the first shipments have already begun. Since December 21, Mongolia has transported 1,440 live sheep to Uzbekistan on two flights," the ministry said.

Promoting livestock husbandry is considered a key strategy for diversifying Mongolia's mining-dependent economy.

Mongolia is one of the world's last surviving nomadic countries, where livestock husbandry plays a crucial role in diversifying the landlocked nation's mining-dependent economy. As of the end of 2023,

the country had 64.7 million livestock, with goats comprising 38.1 per cent of the total and sheep making up 45.5 per cent, according to the National Statistics Office.

The livestock sector is a cornerstone of the Mongolian economy, but frequent outbreaks of livestock diseases pose significant challenges to the industry.

Earlier this month, an outbreak of a highly contagious disease affecting sheep and goats was reported in the western Mongolian province of Khovd.

"Several cases of Peste des Petits Ruminants

(PPR), commonly known as sheep and goat plague, have been confirmed in Bulgan soum (an administrative subdivision) of the province," the Bulgan soum governor's office said in a statement.

In October, the southeastern Mongolian province of Dornogovi was placed under quarantine for an undetermined period due to an outbreak of CCPP, as reported by the country's General Authority for Veterinary Services on Thursday.

Contagious Caprine Pleuropneumonia (CCPP), a severe disease which affects goats, is caused by the bacterium Mycoplasma Capriculm Subsp. Capripneumoniae.

Approximately 15,000 goats in Khatanbulag and Khuvsgul soums (administrative subdivisions) of the province were estimated to be infected.

The authority stated that measures are being implemented to contain the disease, cull the infected goats, and disinfect the affected areas.

Martial law probe: South Korean Prez Yoon defies joint investigation team's summons for 2nd time

AGENCIES
SEOUL, DEC. 25

South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol failed to appear on Wednesday before a joint investigation team for questioning over his short-lived imposition of martial law, defying its summons for the second time.

Yoon did not appear at the office of the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials (CIO) in Gwacheon, south of Seoul, as requested by 10:00 a.m. on Christmas Day as part of a joint investigation into his botched declaration of martial law on December 3, Yonhap news agency reported.

Yoon, who faces charges of abuse of power and being an insurrection ringleader, has been identified as a suspect in the joint investigation of the CIO, the police and the defence ministry's investigation unit.

He did not comply with the CIO's first summons



last Wednesday.

The CIO plans to wait for Yoon's possible appearance later. If he does not show up, the team is expected to decide as early as Thursday on further possible measures, such as sending a summons for the third time or seeking an arrest warrant.

On Tuesday, Seok Donghyeon, Yoon's lawyer, said Yoon places a priority on the Constitutional Court proceedings on his impeachment and that he plans to issue a statement on his position on the trial after Christmas Day.

The fate of Yoon's presidency has been handed to the Constitutional Court after the National Assem-

bly impeached him on December 14. The court will hold its first pre-trial hearing on Yoon's impeachment on Friday.

The CIO is expected to take its next steps by taking into account this week's hearing, as well as Yoon's planned statement.

A CIO official, however, said the impeachment trial would not have a "decisive" impact on the anti-corruption body's next steps, noting it would merely be a factor to be considered.

Regarding the possibility of seeking an arrest warrant for Yoon, the official said it would be a "far distant" step, considering the circumstances.

Israel intercepts missile from Yemen, says army

AGENCIES
JERUSALEM, DEC. 25

Israel's air defence systems on Wednesday intercepted a missile fired from Yemen, the Israeli military said in a statement.

The projectile "was intercepted before crossing into Israeli territory," the military said.

Sirens sounded across central Israel "due to the possibility of falling shrapnel from the interception," it added.

Magen David Adom, Israel's emergency service, said that it had treated at least nine people who were injured on their way to shelters.

For the fifth time in a week, millions of Israelis were sent to shelters as Houthi militants in Yemen launched a missile attack, the Israel Defense Forces said in a post on X.

Houthi forces have launched sporadic missile and drone attacks on Israel since October last year, citing solidarity with Palestinians in Gaza.

India now has 1,57,066 recognised startups, 73,000 with at least 1 woman director: Centre

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

At least 157,066 startups have been recognised by Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) to date and 759,303 users are registered on the portal (as on December 25), the government said on Wednesday.

The country now has more than 73,000 startups with at least one woman director that have been recognised under the 'Startup India Initiative', representing nearly half of the 1,57,066 startups supported by the government, according to Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

The country has emerged as one of the most vibrant startup ecosystems globally, earning its place as the third largest



est startup hub. With over 100 unicorns, the Indian startup landscape is shaping the future of innovation and entrepreneurship.

"The entrepreneurial spirit in India has undergone a paradigm shift in

the last decade. Cities like Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Mumbai, and Delhi-NCR have become epicentres of innovation," said the ministry.

This year, 13 new-age companies launched their initial public offerings

(IPOs), as startups cumulatively raised more than Rs 29,200 crore from the stock market.

Out of this, the fresh issue was nearly Rs 14,672 crore and Rs 14,574 crore Offer for Sale (OFS). Among 13 startup IPOs, 10 were mainboard and 3 were SME IPOs.

The widespread availability of affordable internet, coupled with a young and dynamic workforce, has fueled the growth of startups in diverse sectors, including fintech, edtech, health-tech, and e-commerce.

According to the 'Indian Startup Ecosystem Report' by Startup India, India's startups have leveraged emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI), blockchain, and IoT to solve local and

global problems.

The flagship Startup India programme, launched in 2016, has been a cornerstone in this effort.

In addition, initiatives such as the Atal Innovation Mission (AIM) and the National Initiative for Developing and Harnessing Innovations (NIDHI) provide infrastructure and financial support to innovators.

Moreover, the Startup Accelerator of MeitY for Product Innovation, Development, and Growth (SAMRIDH) scheme aims to support 300 software product startups over four years with an outlay of Rs 99 crore, providing funding up to Rs 40 lakh per startup through accelerators to scale their businesses.

Indian telecom industry's revenue doubled in 5 years, Bharti Airtel biggest gainer

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

The revenue of India's telecom industry increased 8 per cent (quarter-on-quarter) to Rs 674 billion (13 per cent growth year-on-year) in the second quarter of FY25, mainly driven by tariff hikes, according to a new report.

Driven by three rounds of smartphone tariff hikes, India's quarterly telecom revenue has almost doubled (up 96 per cent) since September 2019, implying 14 per cent five-year industry revenue CAGR, according to the report by Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd. Given the consolidated market structure in the Indian telecom industry, higher data consumption, lower ARPU, and inadequate returns generated by telcos, "we expect tariff hikes to be more frequent. We build in 15 per cent



tariff hike in December 2025."

The telecom industry's average revenue per unit (ARPU) has almost doubled from Rs 98 in September 2019 to Rs 193 in September 2024, driven by tariff hikes.

However, as a result of sharp tariff hikes, the industry's subscriber base at 1.15 trillion in September 2024 is lower than September 2019 levels (1.17 trillion).

Among telcos, Bharti Airtel has been the biggest beneficiary of tariff hikes

with a 2.2 times increase in implied ARPU, registering a 17 per cent five-year CAGR.

"We believe the significant improvement in the data subs proportion has also been a key driver for Bharti's industry-leading ARPU," said the report.

Over the reporting period from 2019-2024, Bharti's revenue has increased 2.6 times, implying 21 per cent five-year revenue CAGR, with incremental revenue market share significantly higher at 48 per cent.

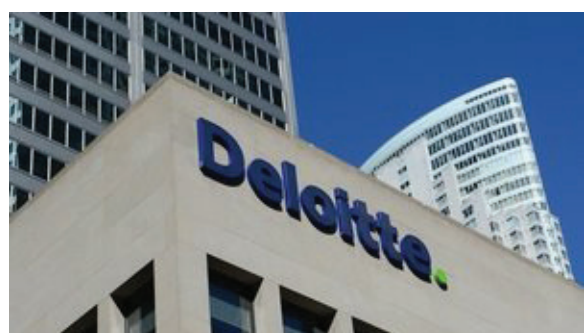
Not only India, US, China, and Canada also fined Deloitte for violating audit standards

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

Global audit firm Deloitte has been fined about Rs 2 crore by the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) for alleged lapses in auditing Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL).

This is not the first time Deloitte has been fined for auditing lapses.

In the last five years, many other countries including the US, China, and Canada fined Deloitte for ignoring audit standards. In China, Deloitte's operations faced regulatory scrutiny from domestic and international authorities. In September 2022, the US Securities and Exchange Commission imposed a fine of \$20 million on Deloitte's Chinese affiliate. The fine was imposed on the firm for asking its cli-



ents to do their audit work on their own, which was a direct violation of auditing standards. Following this, in March 2023, Chinese regulators imposed a fine of 21.9 million yuan (\$30.8 million) for flaws in auditing China Huarong Asset Management Company. This fine was imposed on Deloitte by Chinese regulators for not maintaining quality in audits.

In September 2023, in the South American coun-

try of Colombia, Deloitte & Touche S.A.S. was fined \$9,00,000 by the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (PCAOB) for violating quality control. In April 2024, the PCAOB imposed fines of \$1 million each on Deloitte's affiliates in Indonesia and the Philippines for exam cheating and other violations, reflecting a lack of adherence to auditing standards and professional conduct.

NRI remittances surge to record \$11.9 billion in April-Oct: RBI

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

Inflows into in non-resident Indian (NRI) deposit accounts surged to \$11.9 billion in April-October during the current financial year, which is nearly twice the corresponding figure of \$6.1 billion for the same period last year, the latest figures compiled by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed.

The total outstanding NRI deposits as of October 2024 has now gone up to \$162.7 billion, compared to \$143.5 billion during the same period last year.

The NRI deposit schemes include foreign currency non-resident (FCNR) deposits, non-resident external (NRE) deposits, and non-resident ordinary (NRO) deposits.

The figures also show that FCNR (B) deposits attracted the highest flows



to the tune of \$6.1 billion which is close to thrice the amount of \$2.1 billion deposited in the same period last year. The total amount in these accounts stood at \$31.87 billion.

These accounts are preferred by Indians working overseas as they can maintain fixed deposits from one to five years that enables them to earn higher interest. Since these accounts are in foreign currency these

deposits are safeguarded against fluctuations in the rupee. The RBI had raised the interest rate ceilings on FCNR (B) accounts in its monetary policy review earlier this month to attract more flows to increase the country's foreign exchange reserves. An increase in the foreign exchange reserves reflects strong fundamentals of the economy and gives the RBI more head-

room to stabilise the rupee when it turns volatile.

A strong forex kitty enables the RBI to intervene in the spot and forward currency markets by releasing more dollars to prevent the rupee from going into a free fall. Conversely, a declining forex kitty leaves the RBI less space to intervene in the market to prop up the rupee.

The RBI figures also show that NRE deposits saw an inflow of \$3.09 billion during this period, up from \$1.95 billion in the same period last year. NRE deposits are a high-interest earning rupee deposit option for NRI remittances.

NRO deposits rose to \$2.66 billion during April-October compared to \$2 billion during the corresponding period of the previous year. India tops the list of

recipient countries for remittances in 2024 with an estimated inflow of \$129 billion, according to the latest figures compiled by World Bank economists.

The growth rate of remittances this year is estimated to be 5.8 per cent, compared to 1.2 per cent registered in 2023, according to a World Bank blog post

"The recovery of the job markets in the high-income countries of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), following the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, has been the key driver of remittances.

This is especially true for the United States where the employment of foreign-born workers has recovered steadily and is 11 percent higher than the pre-pandemic level seen in February 2020," the report said.

NFRA fines Deloitte Haskins Rs 2 crore over alleged lapses in ZEEL audit, firm reviewing order

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 24

The National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) has slapped a penalty of Rs 2 crore on Deloitte Haskins & Sells LLP, along with two chartered accountants, for alleged lapses in the auditing of Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL).

The Rs 2 crore fine pertained to the lapses in auditing for 2018-19 and 2019-20 financial years.

Along with slapping a fine of Rs 10 lakh, chartered accountant AB Jani who was the Engagement Partner (EP) for the audit has reportedly been barred from taking up any audit work for 5 years and



Rakesh Sharma, who was the Engagement Quality Control Review (EQCR) Partner, has reportedly been fined Rs 5 lakh and debarred for 3 years.

According to the financial watchdog, prima facie, auditors had not discharged their professional duties under the

Companies Act as well as the Standards on Auditing (SA).

A Deloitte spokesperson said in a statement that they received the NFRA order against the firm and two retired partners, and "We are currently reviewing the order to determine our next course of action".

NFRA's examination revealed that the auditors were grossly negligent and failed to apply professional scepticism and due diligence.

They did not adequately challenge the management's assertions, and failed to evaluate the reporting of suspected fraud, found the NFRA.

In August this year, ZEEL, and Culver Max Entertainment Pvt. Ltd. (CMEPL) operating as Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI), together with its group company Bangla Entertainment Pvt. Ltd. (BEPL), arrived at a comprehensive non-cash settlement, amicably resolving all disputes related to the merger cooperation

agreement and the composite scheme of arrangement.

In January this year, Sony Pictures Networks India (SPNI) terminated a proposed \$10 billion merger deal with Zee Entertainment, calling off a December 2021 agreement.

Sony also sought a \$90 million termination fee for alleged violations by Zee Entertainment of the terms of the merger agreement.

Zee had also sought a termination fee of \$90 million from SPNI and its entity Bangla Entertainment Pvt. Ltd. (BEPL) on May 23 for withdrawing from the \$10 billion merger.

EPFO adds 13.41 lakh net members as employment rises

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

The Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has made a net addition of 13.41 lakh members during October, reflecting the increased employment and higher awareness of employee benefits among workers, according to a statement issued by the Ministry of Labour and Employment on Wednesday.

The EPFO enrolled around 7.50 lakh new members in October out of which a significant 58.49 per cent were in the young 18-25 age group. The net number for this dominant age group is 5.43 lakhs. This is in con-

sonance with the earlier trend which indicates that most individuals joining the organized workforce are youth, primarily first-time job seekers, indicating the increasing employment opportunities in the economy.

The payroll data highlights that approximately 12.90 lakh members exited and subsequently rejoined EPFO. This figure depicts year-over-year growth of 16.23 per cent, compared to October 2023.

These members switched their jobs and re-joined the establishments covered under the ambit of EPFO and opted to transfer their accumulations instead of applying

for final settlement thus, safeguarding long-term financial well-being and extending their social security protection.

A gender-wise analysis of the payroll data reveals that out of the new members added during the month, around 2.09 lakhs are new female members. This figure exhibits year-over-year growth of 2.12 per cent, compared to October 2023.

Also, the net female member addition during the month stood at around 2.79 lakh. The increase in female member additions is indicative of a broader shift towards a more inclusive and diverse workforce, the official statement said.

AI to generate new revenue streams in 2025, innovate business processes: Experts

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

Enterprises will reimagine business processes and value streams with AI agents in 2025, while taking into consideration the practical and ethical challenges, industry experts have said, adding that it will be the year of small language models, scaled reasoning and business value realisation. In the coming year, AI agents will generate new revenue streams, innovate business processes across industries, boosting

profitability, operational efficiency, and customer experience.

"Humans will increasingly take on roles where they set up agentic teams, plan agentic workflows, and validate work done by AI Agents," said Sandhya Arun, Chief Technology Officer, Wipro.

According to Mohammed Rafee Tarafdar, CTO of Infosys, in 2025, we will see a lot of AI initiatives that are currently under rollout, to be scaled across enterprises, and businesses will start realising some

measurable business value along the lines of cost, growth, better experience, and risk protection. "We are seeing increased investments in scaling inferencing which improves the reasoning capabilities, thereby enabling the agentic systems to be used to eliminate tasks and re-engineer the processes," Tarafdar mentioned. As the small language models become more specialised and can deliver higher accuracy at lower cost, the adoption of these models in enterprises is likely to accelerate.

18.89 mn international tourist arrivals in 2023, forex earnings cross Rs 2.31 lakh cr: Centre

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

India recorded 18.89 million international tourist arrivals in 2023 as foreign exchange earnings (FEEs) through tourism last year surged to Rs 231,927 crore, the government said on Wednesday.

Foreign tourist arrivals (FTAs) in India during 2023 were 9.52 million and domestic tourist visits (DTVs) were 2,509 million, according to data released

by the Ministry of Tourism.

The ministry sanctioned a total of 76 projects for an amount of Rs 5,287.90 Crore under the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, out of which 75 projects are physically complete.

Under this, 40 projects worth Rs 3,295.76 crore were approved under special assistance to states for capital investment (SASCI) for development of iconic tourist centres to global scale across 23 states, and 34 projects were sanc-

tioned for Rs 793.20 crore under the 'Swadesh Darshan 2.0' initiative.

The Swadesh Darshan Scheme has been revamped as Swadesh Darshan 2.0 (SD2.0) with the objective to develop sustainable and responsible destinations following a tourist and destination-centric approach.

The Ministry of Tourism has also sanctioned a total of 48 projects for an amount of Rs 1,646.99 Crore under the PRASHAD

Scheme, out of which 23 projects have been completed. A total of 65 projects for an amount of Rs 937.56 crore have been sanctioned under the Assistance to Central Agencies Scheme, out of which 38 projects have been physically completed, informed the ministry.

The government has formulated guidelines for 'Challenge Based Destination Development' as sub scheme of Swadesh Darshan 2.0 Scheme to

enhance tourist experience across all points of the tourist value chain.

The ministry said it has selected 42 destinations under various tourism themes for development under the scheme.

The 'Chalo India' campaign was launched to invite Indian diaspora to showcase India to their non-Indian friends worldwide; One lakh free e-visas for foreign tourists visiting India were issued under the campaign.

Zimbabwe announces free entry for spectators in upcoming Tests against Afghanistan

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) has announced free entry for spectators to the Queens Sports Club in Bulawayo for the upcoming two-match Test series against Afghanistan, starting with the Boxing Day game on Thursday.

In a statement, ZC said the decision comes in the wake of its efforts to celebrate the country's first Boxing Day Test at home in 28 years. It is followed by Zimbabwe's inaugural New Year's Test, scheduled for January 2-6, 2025.

"This is an extraordinary milestone for Zimbabwe Cricket and our fans. By offering free entry, we want to share this historic occasion with as many cricket lovers as possible, creating an electric atmosphere to inspire our players and celebrate the spirit of the game," said Give-more Makoni, ZC Managing Director.



The last time Zimbabwe played a home Boxing Day Test, it was in 1996, which ended in a rain-affected drawn match against England at Harare Sports Club. Since then, Zimbabwe

have only played Boxing Day Tests abroad against New Zealand in 2000 and South Africa in 2017, the latter being a pink-ball day-night fixture in Port Elizabeth.

Meanwhile, Zimbabwe have called up right-arm fast bowler Victor Nyauchi to replace Takudzwa Chataira, who suffered a

right-side strain during the team's practice session earlier this week.

Chataira was among the seven uncapped players initially selected for the series.

His replacement Nyauchi, an experienced bowler with nine Test matches under his belt and 20 wickets to his

name, brings additional depth to the hosts' bowling attack.

Thursday's match, despite a rain threat looming on all five days, will be Zimbabwe's second Test of 2024 after playing in a one-off Test against Ireland at Belfast in July, where they lost by four wickets. Zimbabwe lost T20I series to Afghanistan 2-1, and was followed by them losing ODI series to the visitors' 2-0.

Zimbabwe Test squad: Craig Ervine (captain), Ben Curran, Brian Bennett, Johnathan Campbell, Joylord Gumbie, Trevor Gwandu, Takudzwanashe Kaitano, Tadiwanashe Marumani, Brandon Mavuta, Nyasha Mayavo, Blessing Muzarabani, Dion Myers, Richard Ngarava, Newman Nyamhuri, Victor Nyauchi, Sikandar Raza, Sean Williams

PKL 11: Top six coaches praise young stars as season reaches climax with playoffs

AGENCIES
PUNE, DEC 25

The performance of the young blood is a true indicator of the health of a sports league. As Season 11 of the Pro Kabaddi League (PKL) reached the business end with the playoffs, the performance of young stars came in for praise when the coaches of the top six teams after the league stage came together on Wednesday to give their verdict on the season.

Ahead of a week that is set to celebrate the sport of kabaddi in more ways than one, the six coaches, Manpreet Singh (Haryana Steelers), Joginder Narwal (Dabang Delhi K.C.), Jasveer Singh (UP Yoddhas), Narender Redhu (Patna Pirates), Gholamreza Mazandarani (U Mumba) and Sanjeev Baliyan (Jaipur Pink Panthers) spoke at length at

the Panga Roundtable and touched upon various aspects of PKL season 11.

Table toppers Haryana Steelers, who are through to the semifinals, are gunning for their first title, and coach Manpreet Singh, who was full of praise for the Show-Stopper Mohammadreza Shadloui.

"The Haryana Steelers team is like a family. The players are all like my younger brothers, and we will work together, and leave no stone unturned when we play our Semi-final. Having qualified for the semifinals directly is a source of great motivation for the team before the final week, and for Haryana, a state that has won so many medals in other sports, it is the PKL title that remains elusive, and hopefully, we can win it."

The Dabang Delhi K.C. have been one of the best teams this season and have stitched together

a 15-match unbeaten streak, which helped them secure the second position on the points table. Having qualified for the Semi-final already, coach Joginder Narwal, who won the PKL title as a skipper in Season 8, spoke about the bond between his two co-captains - Ashu Malik and Naveen Kumar.

"I have played with Ashu and Naveen in the previous years in the PKL, and they are like best friends. The two of them have great chemistry and always stick together, and that bond is visible on the mat also. The team is like a complete family, and going into the playoffs, they are all fit and in form," he said.

The UP Yoddhas, who had to go back to the drawing board before the season began, have seen their young raiders and the defence step up in style.

ICC Rankings: Bumrah equals Ashwin's record of joint highest-rated Indian Test bowler

AGENCIES
DUBAI, DEC 25

India's spearhead pacer Jasprit Bumrah has solidified his top spot in the ICC Men's Test Bowling Rankings after his phenomenal performance in Brisbane. Bumrah's nine-wicket haul for 94 runs in the rain-marred third Test against Australia earned him 14 additional rating points, taking his total to a career-high 904.

With his rating, Bumrah equalled the record set by former spinner Ravichandran Ashwin in December 2016, and became the joint highest-rated Indian Test bowler in ICC history. With one more Test in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy to be played in Melbourne, Bumrah has the chance to surpass Ashwin's record.

South Africa's Kagiso Rabada and Australia's Josh Hazlewood are currently ranked second and



third, respectively, but trail Bumrah significantly in points.

Australia's Travis Head continued his remarkable run in the ongoing series against India, climbing to fourth place in the Men's Test Batting Rankings. His heroic knock of 152 at the Gabba after his ton in Adelaide has taken him one spot above to number four with 825 points.

Head's compatriot Steve Smith's century in the third Test gets him into the top ten fray once again. On the other hand,

Indian opener KL Rahul's resilient display in India's first innings takes him ten places above to 40th.

Australia skipper Pat Cummins has earned his place back in the top 10 all-rounders, following his four wickets with the ball and 42 runs in the third Test against India.

In the ODI format, Heinrich Klaasen's three sensational half-centuries in the home series against Pakistan propel him from 13th to fifth in the Men's ODI Batting Rankings with 743 points.

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

Former India cricketer Mohammad Kaif said he would give preference to Yashasvi Jaiswal and KL Rahul as the opening pair ahead of the Boxing Day Test against Australia, starting at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) on Thursday.

Though Jaiswal has blown hot and cold in the series, barring a majestic 161 at Perth, Rahul has been India's leading run-getter in the ongoing tour, scoring 235 runs from six innings at an impressive average of 47, including hitting two half-centuries.

Despite various reports alleging Rohit Sharma could be back to opening and Rahul being pushed to number three, Kaif has voiced his support in not disturbing the Jaiswal-Rahul pairing at the top.

"KL Rahul is doing a



great job, while Jaiswal hit a hundred too. When Jaiswal plays, then India wins the Test match. He's a player whose type is like

India gets a lot of advantage from there."

"So I'll keep Jaiswal there, while KL Rahul is playing by taking his time and building a proper opening partnership. For someone who's scored tons in Australia, England, South Africa, you can't write off that player. He's scored previously on these bouncy pitches, so you want to give him a preference first," said Kaif in a video posted on his 'X' account on Wednesday.

With the five-match series currently locked at 1-1, Kaif thinks the equation is still even stevens and that India can win the game in Melbourne if they get their biggest nemesis Travis Head out quickly. At the same time, Kaif cautioned Indian batters about facing seamer Scott Boland, who picked five wickets in Adelaide, where Australia won by ten wickets.

"No, I believe that the Test series is going on at an equal level. Even though the form of Indian batting is not great, a lot of the players are out of form, but on the same boat, there's also an Australian team. If you get out Travis Head, you'll win the Test match, because we have got Bumrah. If Travis Head is out, then even with out-of-form batting, the Indian team can win this series."

"The way their batters have got out caught behind, and their openers are nicking behind, so there's a big problem with their batting. Barring Travis Head, you can see Labuschagne has been dismissed twice outside the off-stump by Nitish Reddy. So, in batting, the Australian team is far behind. In bowling, Boland will definitely take 2-3 wickets and trouble the Indian bowlers. I'm telling you right now," he concluded.

BGT 2024-25: Gavaskar backs Nitish Reddy as India ponder bold changes for Boxing Day Test

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

As the five-match Border-Gavaskar Trophy reaches a critical juncture with the series tied 1-1, Team India faces significant selection dilemmas ahead of the Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG). The aftermath of the third Test at the Gabba, which ended in a hard-fought draw, has triggered a wave of planned and speculative changes, with legendary cricketer Sunil Gavaskar weighing in on the decisions the Indian team management must make. The most significant shift came with the sudden retirement of Ravichandran Ashwin, one of India's greatest all-rounders, immediately after the



third Test at Gabba in Brisbane. Ashwin's absence has left a massive void in the squad, both in terms of his tactical nous and his unmatched skill as a spinner. Rookie off-spinning all-rounder Tanush Kotian has been named as Ashwin's replacement, marking a new chapter for India's spin department.

Among the many speculations regarding the Indian lineup, one of the biggest debates centres around Nitish Kumar Reddy's place in the XI. While some believe Washington Sundar should replace Reddy to provide India with an additional spinning option, Gavaskar strongly opposes this

idea. "They can't drop Nitish Kumar Reddy. He is the fourth seamer. I can't see India going in with just two pacers and Nitish. For me, it is pretty much this XI that plays in Melbourne," Gavaskar told Star Sports.

Reddy, despite being a reliable batter in the lower order, has struggled to make an impact with the ball in the series. However, Gavaskar believes his ability to provide crucial breakthroughs and his contributions with the bat make him indispensable to the team's balance. The Indian think tank is also contemplating a reshuffle at the top of the batting order, with reports suggesting that Rohit Sharma could return to his preferred role as an opener.

Rohit's inclusion at the top would necessitate reconfiguring the middle order.

If Rohit opens, K.L. Rahul could be slotted in at No. 3, replacing the struggling Shubman Gill. Gill, who has not been at his best in this series, might either slide down to No. 4 or be replaced altogether by Dhruv Jurel.

India's pace bowling lineup has also been a subject of debate. Akash Deep, whose heroics with the bat helped India avoid the follow-on at the Gabba, is likely to retain his spot. Gavaskar dismissed the idea of replacing him with Harshit Rana, stating, "Unlikely that Harshit will replace Akash Deep. Why would you drop a man who has saved your team from follow-on?"

ISL: Punjab FC hoping to ride home advantage against league leaders MBSG

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, DEC 25

Riding high on their home win percentage, Punjab FC aims to bounce back after two successive away defeats. The Shers, playing their final fixture of 2024 are slated to face league toppers Mohun Bagan Super Giant tomorrow here at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.

Punjab are currently placed seventh with 18 points from 6 wins, will aim to consolidate their playoff ambition through a win against the Kolkata giants. The Boxing Day fixture is scheduled to kick-off at 7:30 PM.

Speaking ahead of the match, PFC Head Coach Panagiotis Dilmeris said, "Every game is a tactical process, it's never about just one individual or team. Our focus is on supporting the boys, especially our young players. We've a clear plan and that will be visible on the field tomorrow, there's no stress, no pressure, we approach tomorrow's match with confidence"

Both the teams who have had an unimpressive away fixture will head into the game with a win on their mind, however Punjab will be walking with an added advantage of playing at home.

Both the teams will miss key players in their playing eleven due to injuries and suspensions, and the game is expected to showcase some high quality football from both ends.

Sharing his thoughts during the pre-match press conference, midfielder Manglenthang Kipgen said, "The coach believed in me and gave me the opportunity. I always try to give my best on the field. The support here has been incredible, and the first team feels like a family. I've learned so much already and look forward to growing even more with the team."

'HIL will take Indian Hockey to the top', says UP Rudras' forward Lalit Kumar

AGENCIES
ROURKELA, DEC 25

As the excitement builds for the return of the Hockey India League (HIL), Lalit Kumar Upadhyay of the UP Rudras, a seasoned forward of the national team and a two-time Olympic Bronze medalist, credited the

HIL for shaping his early career and providing the opportunity to fight for his place on the national team.

"When the league was introduced, it was a huge platform for Indian players. It offered us a chance to showcase our talent and directly make it to the squad," Lalit remarked.

He highlighted the financial and professional support the league has provided, noting its instrumental role in elevating the sport's profile. "It gave us the experience of playing with legends we had only seen on TV. Sharing the field with such icons boosted our confidence and made us

more comfortable in competitive scenarios. India's performance graph went up after the first HIL, and with the league returning now, I am sure it will take us to the top and help us stay there."

Lalit's journey with the Kalinga Lancers began in 2013 during the previous edition of the HIL. This

platform allowed him to showcase his skills on an international stage and carve a path to the Indian Men's Hockey Team.

Reflecting on his time in the league, Lalit shared his three most cherished HIL moments, "I was out of the Indian Junior Men's Hockey Team for the Junior World Cup in

2013, but as a Kalinga Lancer, I scored one of my best goals against the UP team. It was one of the best goals of the season and a key reason why I was selected for the Indian team at the Rabobank Hockey World Cup 2014," he said.

"My second-best memory is from the 2017

season. Again, as part of the Kalinga Lancers, I scored notable goals and helped the team win the title.

We had several close games, many going down to penalty shootouts. In the semi-final match against the UP Wizards, I bypassed the Great Wall of Indian Hockey, PR

Sreejesh, to score a crucial goal."

"But my best moment was when the Kalinga Lancers decided to retain me and showed faith in me to lead the line as a young forward. That trust was reassuring and built the confidence I carry to this day," the 31-year-old added.

Dy CM participates in 81st Salana Barsi of Sant Baba Sunder Singh Ji



JJ NEWS SERVICE
NOWSHERA, DECEMBER 25

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, attended the 81st Salana Barsi (Annual Remembrance) of Sant Baba Sunder Singh Ji at Gurudwara Yaadgar Sant Baba Sunder Singh Ji in Naniyal, Nowshera today.

During the program, members of the Gurudwara Committee raised concerns regarding the need for better road connectivity and water supply in the area. Addressing the gathering, the Dy CM assured the committee and the devotees that their demands would be fulfilled at the earliest. The Deputy Chief Minister highlighted the contributions of Sant Baba Sunder Singh Ji towards

promoting harmony and spiritual awakening. He emphasized the government's commitment towards addressing public grievances and ensuring holistic development in all regions. The event concluded with prayers and langar (community meal), symbolizing the spirit of unity and service. The local community expressed gratitude to the DyCM for his presence and assurance of support.

7-day Refresher Course for PETs concludes at Kishtwar

JJ NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, DECEMBER 25

A seven-day refresher course organised by the Department of Youth Services and Sports for Physical Education Teachers concluded here today.

Organized under the guidance of the Director General of Youth Services & Sports J&K, Rajinder Singh Tara, and supervised by DYSSO Jaffer Haider Sheikh, the program was specifically designed for PEMs, PETs, REKs and Groundsmen.

The training sessions, held at Chowgan/TRC Kishtwar, aimed to equip participants with modern methodologies, techniques and best practices in physical education and sports management. The initiative highlights the department's efforts towards fostering innovation and excellence in sports while promoting a healthy and active lifestyle among the youth of



the region.

During the seven-day course, participants were engaged in varied activities, including workshops, practical demonstrations, and interactive discussions led by subject-matter experts. Topics covered ranged from modern sports techniques, event management and physical fitness assessments to the integration of technology in sports education.

The valedictory ceremony was attended by

Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan; Additional Deputy Commissioner Pawan Kotwal and Chief Education Officer Javeed Ahmed Kichloo. In his address, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the importance of continued skill development and training programs for educators and sports personnel. He noted that such refresher courses are pivotal in enhancing knowledge and expertise,ulti-

mately benefiting students and youth across the district. DYSSO Jaffer Haider Sheikh expressed his heartfelt gratitude to all participants for their active engagement and praised his team's efforts in ensuring the program's success. He reaffirmed the department's commitment to organizing similar initiatives in the future to further develop the skills of physical education and sports professionals.

MVD organises health checkup, awareness camp at Poonch

JJ NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, DECEMBER 25

The Motor Vehicles Department (MVD), under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal on Wednesday organised a health check-up cum awareness camp for drivers and conductors here at Bus Stand Poonch. This initiative aimed to enhance the health and well-being of these essential road safety stakeholders.

A dedicated team of doctors from the District Hospital provided free health check-ups and eye examinations, underscoring the importance of health in maintaining road safety. The Deputy Commissioner highlighted the need for strict adherence to traffic rules and asked the vehicle operators to avoid over speeding, mobile phone use while driving, drunken driving, wrong overtaking, and illegal parking.

The event featured an engaging interactive session, allowing drivers, conductors, and civil and police administration officers to discuss critical road safety and health-related issues.

Assistant Regional Transport Officer Taramani expressed gratitude to the Health Department, Municipal Council, Police and Traffic Police for their collaborative efforts in promoting road safety and public health.

Kishtwar Admin celebrates launch of newly Registered M-PACS, Dairy & Fishery Cooperatives



JJ NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, DECEMBER 25

A district-level event was organized at the District Administration Complex, Mini Secretariat Kishtwar, to celebrate the inauguration of 10,000 new M-PACS, Dairy and Fishery Cooperative Societies across the nation.

Home Affairs and Cooperation, Amit Shah. Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan was the Chief Guest of the district-level event. The program was organized by the Deputy Registrar, Cooperative Societies (Agri.) Mirza Mumtaz Iqbal. The event witnessed participation from Dairy and Fishery Cooperative Societies newly registered in the district. All participants connected virtually

to the mega event held in New Delhi. The Deputy Commissioner distributed registration certificates to the newly established Dairy Cooperatives and commended the contributions made by Cooperatives to the economy. The event was also attended by the Assistant Director of Fisheries, Kishtwar, representatives from CMS, PACS and officials from the Department of Cooperatives.

DDC finalises preparations for New Year Vibrant Baderwah Festival

JJ NEWS SERVICE
DODA, DECEMBER 25

District Development Commissioner (DDC) Doda Harvinder Singh chaired a meeting today at Dak Banglow Baderwah to finalize the arrangements for the New Year Vibrant Baderwah Festival 2024. Scheduled from December 29 to December 31, the three-day celebration is being organized by the Department of Tourism, J&K in collaboration with the District Administration Doda.

The meeting was attended by the CEO Baderwah Development Authority, ADC Baderwah, ASP Baderwah, DFO Baderwah, district officers designated as nodal officers for the festival arrangements and representatives from Sanatan Dharm Sabha, Islamia Committee, Adventure Association, Hoteliers, Youth Committee, Tour and Trade Associations, Civil Society members, Excursion Agents, BATA Association, and ABTA Association.

The festival aims to highlight Baderwah's natural beauty and adventure tourism potential, with events scheduled at Jai Valley, Guldanda, and Baderwah Fort on December 29 and 30, culminating in a grand



celebration at the New Bus Stand Baderwah on December 31, 2024.

The Key Features of the Festival include Adventure Activities like Skiing, sledging, zorbing, cycling, zip-lining, hot air ballooning, and rafting at Shibnote (Premnagar). Cultural and Departmental Exhibitions, showcasing the region's heritage and the government initiatives, besides cuisine stalls offering a variety of local and traditional dishes are other highlights of the event.

Chief Executive Officer BDA has been designated as the Nodal Officer to oversee all festival arrangements, while State Tax Officer (CTO) would act as the nodal officer for coordination.

Medicare facility and ambulance services would be made available by the

Chief Medical Officer to meet any health emergency.

The event will feature Cultural performances by local and celebrity artists and the responsibility for managing the same has been conferred to District Information Officer and Culture and Education Departments.

To ensure best quality and hygienic food at the eateries, AD FCS&CA will be managing food stalls in coordination with NRLM and DUDA. The logistic and stage mounting arrangements are being made by the PWD (R&B) Baderwah.

An exhibition cum sale of local handicraft and handloom being organised by the Cooperative department would be another major attraction of the event.

The Fire & Emergency

Services department has been put on alert to ensure venue safety with deployment of fire tenders and scrutiny of the venue. The Government Degree College is coordinating a literary festival on the sidelines of the event.

The DDC emphasized on making foolproof arrangements for the festival aimed at promoting Baderwah as a major tourist destination in Jammu and Kashmir. He directed all departments and stakeholders to work in close coordination to ensure the success of this grand event.

Highlighting the potential of tourism to foster economic growth, the DDC urged the public to participate actively, making the Vibrant Baderwah Festival 2024 a memorable experience for visitors and locals alike.

District level event held at Srinagar on inauguration of newly registered M-PACS, Dairy & Fishery Cooperatives

JJ NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 25

A District level event was organized today at DC office, Srinagar to celebrate the inauguration of 10,000 New M-PACS, Dairy and Fishery Cooperative Societies across the nation.

The event was organized in line with the mega event organised at ICAR, Pusa Road, New Delhi being presided over by Union Minister of Home Affairs and Cooperation, Amit Shah.

Additional Deputy Commissioner, Srinagar, Syed Ahmad Kataria was the chief guest at the district level event.

The event witnessed the participation of newly registered multi purpose primary agricultural credit societies (M-PACS) of the district. All the participants connected virtually with the mega event held at New Delhi.

The chief guest on the occasion distributed registration certificates to newly registered M-PACS and appreciated the contributions made by the Cooperatives in the economy.

The event also saw the presence of Assistant Registrar Cooperative Societies Srinagar, representatives from M-PACS and officials of the Department of Cooperatives.

Farmers familiarized about commercial floriculture at SKUAST Jammu



JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, DECEMBER 25

Department of Floriculture, Parks & Gardens Jammu organized a one day District Level event on commercial Floriculture at Krishi Vigyan Kendra SKUAST Jammu. The event was held under the guidance of Director General Department of Floriculture, Parks & Gardens Jammu, S. Jatinder Singh, while Director Extension Dr. Amrish Vaid was the chief guest.

tion of flowers, given their high demand in local spots. Farmers were encouraged to adopt advanced technologies and consider protected cultivation methods to achieve higher yields throughout the year. The Chief Guest provided detailed insights into scientific Floriculture and highlighted its benefits. The events also featured demonstrations on Nursery raising techniques in Marigold and Discussions on Integrated Nutrient Management (INM) for the Crop. The event underscored the importance of Floriculture in the region and aimed to equip farmers with the necessary skills and Knowledge to venture into this profitable agricul-

tural sector. The Department of Floriculture, in collaboration with SKUAST Jammu, continues to support and promote such initiatives to boost the agricultural economy of the area. Dr. Puneet Choudhary, Chief Scientist & Head of KVK Jammu, Dr. Ravneet Kour, Chief Scientist and Head Horticulture KVK Jammu, Dr. Davinder Sharma, Professor Entomology, Dr. Arvinder Singh Professor Floriculture, Dr. Sheetal Dogra Professor Floriculture, Dr. Munish Sharma Scientist Pathology, Sunil Singh Floriculture Officer Jammu, Vikrant Kumar Floriculture Officer Udhampur Jammu were present on the occasion.

Rajouri admin hosts live streaming of 10,000 newly formed Cooperative Societies

JJ NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, DECEMBER 25

The Cooperative Department of Rajouri today hosted live streaming of the launch of 10,000 newly formed Multipurpose Primary Agricultural Credit Societies (PACS). The event was chaired at the national level by Union Home and Cooperation Minister, Amit Shah.

At the district level, the program was presided over by Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma in presence of officers and officials of the Cooperative Department. The webinar witnessed enthusiastic participation from the management and members of newly formed cooperative societies in the district.



The participants keenly listened to the insightful deliberations of the speakers, who emphasized the

pivotal role of cooperatives in fostering grassroots-level development. Inspired by the vision outlined

during the program, the cooperative societies in Rajouri reaffirmed their commitment to advancing the cooperative movement in the district.

The program concluded with Deputy Commissioner Rajouri distributing registration certificates to newly established dairy cooperative societies. This symbolic gesture underscored the district administration's support for the cooperative sector's growth and its potential to empower local communities.

With renewed enthusiasm, the members of these societies expressed their determination to work collectively towards achieving economic self-reliance and development in the region.