

**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
- Orchestrated vomiting
- Severe joint and muscle pain
- Severe stomach pain
- Severe fatigue
- Severe skin rash
- Severe bleeding
- Severe dizziness
- Severe confusion
- Severe irritability
- Severe restlessness
- Severe weakness
- Severe loss of appetite
- Severe loss of interest in life

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

# JINDRAH IMAGES

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## 3 cops injured as escort vehicle of Mehbooba Mufti skids off road in Baramulla

JNEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, FEB 9

At least three cops were injured when an escort vehicle of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) President Mehbooba Mufti skidded off the road and fell down into a gorge in Jammu Kashmir's Baramulla district on Sunday.

Police said the accident occurred at village Watergam in Sopore township when an escort vehicle

in the cavalcade of the former Chief Minister lost control and skidded off the road causing minor injuries to three cops.

The injured cops have been referred to a nearby health facility for treatment, they said.

The PDP president was on its way to Kupwara, they said.

## Iltija Mufti meets family of youth who died by suicide after alleged torture in Kathua

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 9

PDP leader Iltija Mufti on Sunday met the family of a youth who recently committed suicide after alleged torture by police over his suspected links with terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir's Kathua district, party leaders said.

This comes a day after Iltija claimed that she and her mother Mehbooba Mufti had been placed under house arrest.

Makhan Din (25), a Gujjar youth from Billa-lar area of Kathua, ended his life by consuming insecticide at his home on Tuesday evening and recorded the act on a video claiming innocence. He denied any connection with terrorists, prompting separate probes by the police and the local administration.

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## Looking forward to witness future of Aerospace sector: Rajnath on Aero India 2025

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Sunday said he will be attending the 15th edition of 'Aero India' in Bengaluru that will showcase cutting-edge defence technologies and global aviation excellence.

'Aero India' is billed as Asia's largest air show, and hosted at Air Force Station, Yelahanka in the southern city.

"Leaving New Delhi for Bengaluru to attend the 15th edition of Biennial Aero-India. #Aero-India2025 will showcase cutting-edge

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## LG Sinha urges youth to uplift underprivileged, strengthen unity

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEBRUARY 9

Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha addressed the 46th National Convention of All India Galav Purva Tyagi Brahmin Mahasabha at Dr Karan Singh Inter College, Agra.

In his keynote address, the Lieutenant Governor exhorted the people to work towards fulfilling the dream of modern India.

"We must protect and promote our rich culture, strive for reform in education, empower youth and give back to society," the Lieutenant Governor said.

He asked the youth to act as a bridge between the government and the public and drive the economic growth and social change in the country.



"Youth are our greatest wealth and strength. I also want our youth to work with dedication to improve the

lives of the underprivileged and strengthen the foundation of the ideals of

CONTINUED ON ►► PAGE 4

## India's quantum leap testified by global success stories 'Vaccine', 'Chandrayaan': Dr Jitendra

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh said here today that India's quantum leap was testified by global success stories like "Vaccine" and "Chandrayaan".

He was speaking after inaugurating the new premises of "Vigyan Bharati" in the national capital, describing the same as a long-felt need. He emphasized that the office would serve as a center for exchange of ideas and a seat of learning.

Addressing the ceremony, Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Science & Technology; MoS PMO, Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions, Atomic Energy and Space, Dr Jitendra Singh stated that India is witnessing a transformative era in science under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He highlighted how the Prime



Minister not only encourages but also provides unwavering support to the scientific community, strengthening it with resources and enabling collaborations with non-governmental sectors to achieve the best outcomes.

Reflecting on the advancements of the past decade, Dr. Jitendra Singh stressed that while India has always had

immense scientific acumen and talent, the missing element was commitment and prioritization from the political leadership—something that is now being actively addressed under PM Modi's governance.

Dr. Jitendra Singh underscored the significant progress India has made,

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## No Indian citizen will lose life after end of Naxalism by March 31, 2026: Amit

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday (February 9, 2025) that "Naxals" will be eradicated by March 31, 2026 and no citizen of the country has to lose his life due to it.

Mr. Shah said this after the security forces killed 31 Maoists in Chhattisgarh.

"I also reiterate my resolve that before 31 March, 2026, we will completely eradicate Naxalism from the country so that no citizen of the country has to lose his life due to it," he wrote on 'X' in Hindi.

The Home Minister said in the direction of making India Maoist-free, the security forces have achieved a big success in Bijapur, Chhattisgarh.



He said that 31 Maoist were killed in this operation and a huge amount of arms and explosives were also recovered.

Mr. Shah said the security forces have also lost two of its brave soldiers "in the effort to end anti-human Naxalism" and the country will always be indebted to these heroes.

"I express my heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyred soldiers," he said.

## Air Chief Marshal A P Singh and Army Chief Dwivedi take sortie in Tejas

AGENCIES  
BENGALURU, FEB 9

Air Chief Marshal A P Singh and Chief of the Army Staff General Upendra Dwivedi on Sunday set the tone for the grand Aero India-2025 by flying in the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) Tejas here at Yelahanka-based Air Force Station.

The performance by the top brasses was the prelude to the biannual event, which commences on Monday and will continue till February 14.

All eyes were glued to the sky as the Air Chief Marshal flew the metal bird with the Army Chief.

After the successful sortie, General Dwivedi termed the experience as the best moment in his life.

For the Army Chief, the experience was such that he called the Air Chief Marshal his



guru and even regretted why he did not opt for the Indian Air Force.

"It was the best moment in my life and as you are aware the Air Chief Marshal is my coursemate. We have been together since the NDA (National Defence Academy) days.

I wish he had met me earlier and I would have changed my

option to the Air Force. As I have said earlier, also if I had gone to the Air Force, I would have been fighter pilot," General Dwivedi told reporters.

"And I must say that from today onwards, the Air Chief Marshal AP Singh is my guru because he made me do a lot of roles and other activities while in the sky," he added.

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## J&K Police intensify inspections to curb misuse of SIM cards by Terrorists

JNEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, FEB 9

Police have ramped up efforts to curb the misuse of Subscriber Identity Module (SIM) cards by terrorists and criminal elements and carried out extensive inspections in Jammu and Kashmir, officials said.

Police on Sunday said extensive inspections have been carried out across multiple districts, including Srinagar, Ganderbal, Anantnag, Budgam, Pulwama, Shopian, Bandipora, Samba, and Kishtwar, to ensure strict compliance with Know Your Customer (KYC) norms by SIM card vendors.

Over the past year, more than 30 individuals have been arrested for procuring SIM cards in their names and passing them on to terrorists for unlawful activities, police said.

These measures aim to prevent unauthorised issuance and misuse of SIM cards, maintaining the security and integrity of communication networks.

Over the past year, more than 30 individuals have been arrested for procuring SIM cards in their names and passing them on to terrorists for unlawful activities, police said. The State Investigation Agency and district police units continue to take firm action against such violations.

J&K Police remain committed to public safety and will continue enforcement measures to prevent the exploitation of communication networks by anti-national and criminal elements.

The police urged the citizens to exercise caution regarding SIM cards issued in their names.

Any individual found facilitating the misuse of SIM cards for terrorism or organised crime will face strict legal consequences, police warned.

## Par Panel recommends 'Comprehensive Security Assessment' of All Indian Missions, Posts

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

A Parliamentary Panel has recommended that the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) should conduct a "comprehensive security assessment" of all missions and posts of India taking into account the geopolitical situation, potential threats and vulnerabilities in host countries.

In its report, the Committee on External Affairs has also noted that India currently lacks resident missions in 42 countries.

While acknowledging the challenges involved in establishing new missions, the committee recommended "accelerating efforts to bridge these gaps, particularly in countries where India has significant economic or strategic interests or a large diaspora presence".

The 'Fourth Report of the Committee on External Affairs (2024-25) on Demands for Grants (2024-25) of the Ministry of External Affairs' was presented in Parliament last week. The panel is headed by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor.

The committee further said in its report that it has also "taken note of the criteria" for establishing new missions, focusing on economic partnerships, strategic cooperation, diaspora engagement and multilateral diplomacy.

"The committee have also been informed about ongoing efforts to operationalise missions in other strategic locations such as Fukuoka (Japan), Kazan (Russia) and Yekaterinburg (Russia) and future plans for opening five missions in Europe and Latin America and Caribbean regions," it said. The parliamentary panel

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## SC to hear on Feb 10 plea seeking access to public schools and hospitals to Rohingya Refugees

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

The Supreme Court is scheduled to hear on Monday a plea of an NGO seeking direction to the Centre and the Delhi government to grant Rohingya refugees based in the national capital access to public schools and hospitals.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and N Kotiswar Singh is scheduled to hear the plea.

On January 31, the top court asked the NGO Rohingya Human Rights Initiative to apprise the court about the places where these Rohingya refugees are settled in Delhi and the facilities accessible to them.

It had asked senior advocate Colin Gonsalves to file an affidavit indicating their places of settlement in Delhi.

Gonsalves said the NGO sought access to public schools and hospitals to Rohingya refugees as they were denied the



access due to lack of Aadhaar cards.

"They are refugees having UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees) cards and therefore they can't have Aadhaar cards. But, for want of Aadhaar they are not being granted access to public schools and hospitals," he had submitted.

The bench had said since there were no aggrieved parties before the court but an entity, the NGO must file an

affidavit indicating their places of settlement, specifying if they lived in camps or residential colonies.

Gonsalves had said Rohingya refugees resided in Shaheen Bagh, Kalindi Kunj and Khajuri Khas areas of Delhi.

"In Shaheen Bagh and Kalindi Kunj they are residing in slums and in Khajuri Khas they are residing in rented accommodation," he had submitted.

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## Cardiac Ailments and Exercise - A Vital Relationship : Dr Sushil

JNEW SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 6

Continuing with his relentless efforts to aware masses regarding prevention of cardiac ailments by encouraging healthy lifestyle practices ultimately leading to healthy heart Head Department of Cardiology GMCH Jammu Dr Sushil Sharma held a day long cardiac awareness cum health check up camp at Akhara Deewan Mandir Jammu so as to disseminate information regarding concept of hale and healthy heart at grass-root level as much as possible.

While interacting with the people Dr Sushil told that Cardiac ailments, including conditions like coronary artery disease, heart failure, and arrhythmias, affect millions of people worldwide. These conditions can severely impact a person's quality of life and increase the risk of severe complications such as heart attacks or strokes. While medical treatments and lifestyle changes play a crucial role in managing heart disease, exercise is one of the most effective ways to improve heart health. However, for individuals with cardiac ailments, engaging in physical activ-



ity requires careful planning and medical supervision.

He elaborated the Importance of exercise for Heart health, Exercise plays a significant role in maintaining cardiovascular health and preventing heart-related complications. It strengthens the heart muscle, improves circulation, and enhances the efficiency of oxygen delivery throughout the body. Regular physical activity also helps control key risk factors for heart disease, including high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, and obesity. Additionally, exercise reduces stress and promotes overall well-being, which can further benefit heart health. Exercise is a powerful tool for preventing and managing cardiac ailments. When done correctly and under proper supervision, it can improve heart function, enhance overall health, and reduce the risk of

complications. However, individuals with heart conditions must follow medical advice and adopt a safe, structured exercise regimen. By balancing physical activity with necessary precautions, heart patients can enjoy a healthier and more active life.

He advised that for heart patients, not all forms of exercise are suitable. The type, intensity, and duration of physical activity should be tailored to an individual's condition and fitness level. Low-Intensity Exercises like Walking, Cycling, Swimming or Water Aerobics, Yoga. These activities are generally safe for most cardiac patients and provide moderate-intensity cardiovascular benefits. Moderate-Intensity Exercises like Brisk Walking, Light Jogging, Dancing and Resistance Training For individuals with stable heart conditions, moderate-intensity activities can offer additional

cardiovascular benefits. Certain high-intensity activities like High-Intensity Interval Training, Heavy Weightlifting, Sprinting or Intense Cardio Workouts, Competitive Sports with Sudden Bursts of Activity may put excessive stress on the heart and should be avoided unless advised by a healthcare provider. Individuals with cardiac ailments should take necessary precautions before starting an exercise program, He Said

Management committee of the Akhara Deewan Mandir Bodh Raj , Sanjeev Kerni , Swaranlal, Rajkumar, Rajinder Singh , Vishav Pratap , Pankaj Mehra and Dheeraj Sharma appreciated the efforts of Dr Sushil and his team for conducting cardiac awareness cum health check up camp in their premises and shows their heartfelt gratitude.

Others who were part of this Camp includes Dr Yashwant Sharma and Dr Dhaneshwar Kapoor .Paramedics and volunteers include Kamal Sharma , Raghav Rajput , Ranjeet Singh , Rajkumar , Rohit Nayyar , Rahul Vaid , Maninder Singh , Gourav Sharma , Vikas Kumar , Rajinder Singh, Arun Singh and Nirvair Singh Bali

## Natrang presents 'Yamraaj Ka Nimantran': A Satirical Play on Arrogance and Reality

JNEW SERVICE  
JAMMU

Natrang presented a play in Hindi 'Yamraaj Ka Nimantran' here today at Natrang Studio Theatre in its weekly Sunday Theatre series under the direction of Neeraj Kant.

The play 'Yamraaj Ka Nimantran' is the story of an arrogant king who is used to hearing false praises and who feels that if he is not around, his subjects will become orphans, majority may go crazy and may commit suicide by jumping into the sea.

The play begins in the court of Raja Abhiman Singh where he wants to know from his minister what the people think about him. He asks the queen about herself and what kind of man she thinks the king is. He wants to know from Royal Pandit Gungani as what kind of king he is? All three shower praises him. On this King Abhiman Singh says that this means that he should rule



the kingdom for another hundred years. With this the court is adjourned.

In the next scene, the king, who was sleeping at night, gets startled by the arrival of Yamdoot, sits up on the bed and asks Yamdoot who he is and why he has fallen into the clutches of death like this. When Yamdoot tells that he has come to take him to hell on the orders of Yamraaj, the king tells that he himself is Prajapal, Lokpal, Mahipal, Dandpal and Mahakaal on earth. Doesn't Yamraaj know this? But Yamdoot starts carrying the king with a

rope around his neck. The king shouts a lot but Yamdoot does not listen. In the end, Yamdoot and the king agree that if even three people love the king, then Yamdoot will leave him here and will return to Yamlok empty handed. Yamdoot asks the king to lie down and puts a white sheet on him and then the queen, the Minister and the royal Priest are called individually. But since these three praise the king falsely, none of them want that the king's life should be spared and he should live longer anymore. The queen says that after the

king's death, her son will become the king and she will become the queen mother, hence the king must die. Minister and Pandit who are tired of giving false praises and are now satisfied that they will not have to tell any more lies. After everyone leaves and after listening to their thoughts, the king finally requests Yamdoot to take him to Yamlok and the play ends. This is how the king comes out of his falsehood and is exposed to the real world. The play carries a very relevant social message and the artists were successful in portraying the same very effectively.

Natrang young artists who performed in the play included Kartik Kumar, Aryan Sharma, Mehak Chib, Adaksh Bagal, Krishay Bhatia and Akrit Sharma. The lights and the music of the play were executed by Neeraj Kant whereas the show was coordinated by Mohd. Yaseen. The presentations were done by Manvi Devi.

## Madhav Seva Trust organizes Rajput Pariyojana Mahila Sammellan at Ved Mandir

JNEW SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 9

In a significant effort to safeguard social values and strengthen cultural heritage, Dharam Jagran Samnvay, under the aegis of Madhav Seva Trust, organized the Rajput Pariyojana Mahila Sammellan today at the Ved Mandir Premises, Amphalla, Jammu. The event aimed at addressing pressing concerns affecting the Rajput community, including religious conversion, Love Jihad, and declining population rates.

Eminent social thinker Surekha Charak presided over the Sammellan, while Shagun Parihar, MLA Kishtwar, graced the occasion as the chief guest. Rakesh Tyagi, Incharge North Zone Dharam Jagran, was the keynote speaker, highlighting the importance of unity, social awareness, and religious preservation.

A grand display of Matrishakti (women's power) was witnessed as a Padyatra (foot march) was taken out from Ved Mandir, resonating with patriotic and cultural slogans like Bharat Mata Ji Jai, Jai Shivaji, Jai Bhavani,



and Jai Shri Ram. The march passed through the main market before culminating back at the temple premises.

Addressing the gathering, Rakesh Tyagi passionately highlighted the pressing need to curb caste-based discrimination, which continues to be a significant factor driving religious conversions. He stressed that discrimination weakens

social unity and creates divisions that opportunistic forces exploit.

Emphasizing the importance of preserving cultural and traditional values, he urged the Rajput community to take proactive steps in instilling these ideals among the younger generation. He cited the examples of legendary warriors and rulers such as Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, General

Zorawar Singh, Maharaja Gulab Singh, and Maharaja Hari Singh Ji, who upheld the principles of courage, integrity, and inclusivity in their times.

Tyagi underscored that true strength lies in unity and mutual respect within the community, which would not only preserve their rich heritage but also fortify their identity against external influences. He called for collective efforts in nurturing a society where every individual is treated with dignity and respect.

Chief Guest MLA Shagun Parihar in her speech underscored the role of women in protecting their faith and strengthening family values. She provided practical solutions for ensuring women's safety and empowerment within the community.

The event served as a call to action for the Rajput community to stay united, uphold their traditions, and actively participate in the preservation of Sanatan Dharma. The Rajput Pariyojana Mahila Sammellan concluded on an inspiring note, reinforcing the commitment to cultural revival and societal upliftment.

## Col Mahan advocates better road connectivity for remote areas

JNEW SERVICE  
KATHUA, FEB 9

In a major step towards addressing long-standing connectivity issues in remote areas, Col Mahan Singh (Retd), DDC Chairman Kathua, today visited the far-flung Panchayat of Godal to inspect the ongoing survey for the proposed PMGSY road from Jagna to Godal, spanning approximately 10 km. This initiative aims to provide a much-needed durable fair-weather road for the region, fulfilling the long-pending demand of the local residents.

Despite the challenging hilly terrain, Col Mahan Singh traversed the entire proposed alignment cross-country, personally assessing the ground conditions and interacting with villagers en route. During these interactions, he emphasized the importance of community cooperation and sought consensus



from the residents to voluntarily donate land for the successful execution of the project.

Speaking on the occasion, Col Mahan Singh reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring road connectivity for remote and isolated habitations, which he termed as a fundamental necessity for development. He assured the villagers that their

grievances regarding lack of infrastructure, basic amenities, and mobility constraints would be addressed at the earliest.

The DDC Chairman emphasized that road connectivity would open doors to better healthcare, education, and economic opportunities, ultimately improving the quality of life for the residents of Godal Panchayat. During

his visit, Col Mahan Singh also attentively listened to the day-to-day challenges faced by the locals, promising to take up their concerns with the concerned authorities. The villagers expressed their gratitude for his proactive approach and dedication to their welfare.

Accompanying the DDC Chairman on the visit were Rajinder Singh, Sarpanch Godal, along with prominent locals including Ashok Singh, Deewan Chand, Parkash Chand, and several other well-known figures from the region.

Col Mahan Singh reiterated that under his leadership, the district administration remains committed to bridging the gap between remote communities and mainstream development, ensuring that every citizen benefits from progressive governance and infrastructural advancements.

## Ramgarh BJP activists celebrate historic victory in Delhi Assembly Polls

JNEW SERVICE  
RAMGARH, FEB 9

Enthusiastic BJP activists in Ramgarh gathered at Main Bazar to celebrate the party's historic win in the Delhi Assembly elections. The celebrations were marked by traditional Dhol beats, the bursting of firecrackers, and the distribution of sweets among party members, all showing the immense joy of the occasion.

Dr. Devinder Kumar Manyal, the MLA Ramgarh, former J&K Minister, and General Secretary J&K BJP, along with Mandal Pradhan Ramgarh, Nancy Choudhary, Binder



Singh, Anil Gupta, Dheeraj Kumar, Tilak Raj, hundreds of BJP activists, participated in the festivities.

In his address to the jubilant crowd, Dr. Manyal congratulated the party activists for their hard work, which played a pivotal role in this resound-

ing victory. He emphasized that the Delhi results reflect the growing trust of the people in the good governance led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the decisive rejection of the Aam Aadmi Party's chaotic and corrupt practices. Dr. Manyal further

stated that the Delhi elections have demonstrated the people's desire for a "Double-Engine Government" that will propel socio-economic development in Delhi. The BJP's unwavering focus on "Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas" (Together with All, Development for All) will continue to guide the party's vision for the welfare of all sections of society.

The celebrations ended with a renewed pledge by the BJP workers to continue working tirelessly to serve the people and contribute to the growth of the nation under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi.

## Indian Army conducts Medical Patrol in Rajouri's Remote Villages

JNEW SERVICE  
RAJOURI, FEB 9

In a humanitarian effort, the Indian Army conducted a medical patrol in Katenar and Mangota, Rajouri District. The initiative aimed to extend medical services to needy individuals in remote areas, providing them with basic medical treatment at their doorstep. A total of 35 civilians benefited from the medical patrol, which is part of the Indian Army's ongoing efforts to support local communities.



By offering medical aid to those living in areas far from medical facilities, the Indian Army seeks to build trust and strengthen its bond with the local population. The medical patrol is a testament to the Indian Army's commitment to serving the nation and supporting local communities, particularly in remote and inaccessible areas. The initiative has been well-received by the local population, who appreciate the Indian Army's efforts in providing medical aid and support.

## Preventive healthcare is essential in today's fast-paced world: Arvind Gupta

JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 9

Arvind Gupta, senior BJP leader and MLA Jammu West, emphasized the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the critical role of medical camps in ensuring public well-being. He stated that preventive healthcare is essential in today's fast-paced world, where lifestyle diseases like diabetes, obesity, and hypertension are on the rise. He urged people to adopt a balanced diet, regular exercise, and routine health check-ups to prevent chronic illnesses.

The MLA was speaking after inaugurating the free medical camp organized by Sedna Clinics and Diagnostic Center, Jammu today.

The senior BJP leader commended Sedna Clinics for their commitment to public health and lauded their initiative in organizing the health camp, emphasizing the importance of preven-



tive healthcare and the need for regular medical check-ups. He reiterated that such efforts align with the government's vision of accessible and affordable healthcare for all, encouraging citizens to take full advantage of these initiatives to lead healthier and more productive lives.

Notably, Sedna Clinics and Diagnostic Center, Jammu, successfully organized a Free Mega Health Check-up Camp, focusing on diabetes, obesity, and thyroid disorders. The camp witnessed an over-

whelming response, with more than 400 patients benefiting from the free medical services and diagnostic tests offered during the event.

The camp was led by a distinguished team of renowned medical experts, including Dr. Sushil Kotru, Director and Head of the Department of Diabetes and Endocrinology at Max Super Speciality Hospital, Bathinda, and Sedna Clinics, along with Dr. Leena Kotru, Senior Dietitian (Gold Medalist), Diabetes Educator,

and Weight Loss Expert. Dr. Tarundeep Singh, MS, DNB, MNAMS, Orthopaedic Surgeon from Ranjit Hospital, Jalandhar, also contributed his expertise to the camp, ensuring comprehensive medical consultations and care for all attendees.

The medical camp was also graced by Hardeep Singh Mankotia, former Corporator, who attended as the Guest of Honour, along with Kushant Prajapati, Mandal President BJP, and Atul Bakshi, Senior BJP Leader.

During the camp, patients availed themselves of free diagnostic tests, including HbA1c, TSH, Lipid Profile, Foot Nerve, Fibroscan, and Bone Densitometry. The health camp not only provided valuable diagnostic services but also raised awareness about managing chronic health conditions like diabetes, obesity, hypertension, high cholesterol, and thyroid disorders.

## ZNS NIST Shiksha Academy, Udhampur hosts Grand Bridal Photo Shoot event at Malhar Resort

JI NEWS SERVICE  
UDHAMPUR, FEB 9

ZNS NIST Shiksha Academy, Udhampur, successfully organized a Bridal Photo Shoot Event at Malhar Resort, providing a dynamic platform for students to showcase their expertise as professional makeup artists. The event featured breathtaking bridal transformations, where over 50 students displayed their skills on professional models, blending traditional and modern bridal aesthetics with remarkable creativity and precision.

Dr. Jagdish Chander, Secretary/CEO of KVIB J&K, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest and lauded the students and faculty for their outstanding efforts. He underscored the significance of vocational education in equipping youth with industry-relevant skills and commended the academy for its commitment to bridging the gap between



education and professional careers.

Also in attendance was Mr. Shabir Malik & Nusrat Malik Director of ZNS NIST Pvt. Ltd., who praised the students for their dedication and artistic brilliance. He emphasized the importance of hands-on training in skill-based education, preparing students for the challenges of the professional world.

Mrs. Shivangi Dogra, Proprietor & Centre Head of ZNS NIST Udhampur, provided an insightful overview of the academy's

programs, training modules, and success stories. In her vote of thanks, she expressed gratitude to the esteemed guests, faculty, students, and participants for their contributions in making the event a resounding success.

The event was skillfully hosted by Mr. Irfan Chowdhary, a renowned actor and director, who managed the stage with engaging and interactive compering.

The Bridal Photo Shoot Event served as an excellent opportunity

for students to gain practical exposure and demonstrate their professional expertise in bridal makeup. The participation of over 50 students in live bridal transformations showcased the academy's commitment to excellence in skill development and industry-oriented education. The event concluded with high praise for the students' efforts, reinforcing ZNS NIST Shiksha Academy's role in shaping future professionals in the beauty and makeup industry.

## Growing drug crisis remains one of J&K's most pressing issues: Kesri

JI NEWS SERVICE  
ARNIA, FEB 9

Shiv Sena Hindustan J&K President Pt Rajesh Kesri Sunday claimed that despite various strides, the growing drug crisis remains one of the J&K's most pressing issues. Addressing meeting of party leaders in Arnia today, Kesri observed that the porous borders and Jammu and Kashmir's strategic location have made it a key transit point for narcotics smuggling into India. Though significant progress has been made in tackling the problem, the region continues to face challenges due to the widespread availability and abuse of drugs, added Kesri. Kesri however appreciated rise in conviction rates and the aggressive seizure of illegal assets marking a pivotal step in curbing the drug menace.



Law enforcement agencies are now showing renewed determination in their multi-pronged approach to combat the illicit narcotics trade in the region. The conviction rate for drug peddlers in Jammu and Kashmir has soared to 54 per cent in 2024, signaling a significant breakthrough in the region's fight against drug trafficking, added Kesri. Kesri claimed that this achievement comes

as the Jammu and Kashmir Police, in partnership with other law enforcement agencies, have ramped up efforts to target both drug peddlers and the financial networks fueling the illicit trade. In 2024, illegal assets worth Rs 12.04 crore were attached, with properties valued at Rs 50 crore also undergoing attachment procedures, Kesri said. This is part of a broader crackdown on

the financial structures sustaining the narcotics trade. Kesri further said that Shiv Sena Hindustan has been vocal about demanding strict action against drugs trafficking. He demanded that there should be zero tolerance for drug trade in any form in J&K. He also demanded strict action against those involved in the drug trade, including the removal of 'paan' shops near schools and colleges. To combat this issue, the government has launched initiatives like the "Nasha Mukht Bharat Abhiyaan" (NMBA) and established de-addiction centers and rehabilitation facilities. However, the challenge remains daunting and a more comprehensive approach is needed to address the root causes of drug abuse and provide adequate support to those affected, added Kesri.

## Indian Army organised a Special Cultural Program for Gujjar and Bakkarwal Children at Makhidhar, Reasi

JI NEWS SERVICE  
REASI, FEB 9

In a heartwarming initiative to foster cultural harmony and community engagement the Indian Army organised a special cultural programme for Gujjar and Bakkarwal children at the remote location of Makhidhar in District Reasi. The event aimed at promoting social cohesion and preserving the rich cultural heritage of the region witnessed enthusiastic participation from children and local residents.

The programme featured tradition on folk dances, music performances and storytelling sessions highlighting the vibrant tradition of Gujjar



and Bakkarwal communities. Senior Army officials, local dignitaries and community elders graced the occasion emphasizing the importance of such initiatives in strengthening the bond between the armed forces and local communities.

The Indian Army reaffirmed its commitment

to supporting the education and cultural development of children in remote areas, ensuring their holistic growth. The local community expressed gratitude for the Indian Army's efforts in organizing the event, which not only provided a platform

for young talents but also reinforced the spirit of unity and inclusivity. This initiative is part of the Indian Army's ongoing outreach programs aimed at fostering goodwill, promoting cultural exchange, and enhancing developmental opportunities in the far flung region.

## Indian Army engages locals on Jumrah for Community Development

JI NEWS SERVICE  
RAJOURI, FEB 9

On Jumrah or Salat al-Jumu'ah, considered a special day of congregational worship, it presents an excellent opportunity for the Rashtriya Rifles to reach out and connect with the community in a meaningful way.

In a commendable initiative aimed at fostering strong community relations and providing vital support to the local populace, the Indian Army organized an interaction and assistance program with the locals. Recognizing the critical importance of synergizing the power

of youth in future and ongoing projects, their participation and efforts in bringing forward views on the development, overall well-being, including sports activities, classes for upcoming recruitment, and computer learning programs, were praiseworthy.

The local residents engaged in open dialogues, committing their support in all possible ways, which was humbly reciprocated. The event reached a heartfelt conclusion with a tea party enjoyed by all participants. This gesture of hospitality symbolized unity, respect, and the breaking of barriers.

## Indian Army unites culture and strength: Pir Panjal festival begins

JI NEWS SERVICE  
POONCH, FEB 9

The Indian Army is orchestrating the Pir Panjal Winter Festival from 09 February to 31 March 2025 in Poonch. This grandiose festival is a testament to the Indian Army's unwavering commitment to youth empowerment, cultural preservation, and social reformation, particularly in advocating against drug abuse. The festival encompasses a diverse array of sports and cultural spectacles, including:-

Under-25 Boys Cricket Tournament - a platform for aspiring cricketers to exhibit their prowess.

Under-25 boys and Under 21 girls Volleyball Tournament - fostering teamwork, discipline, and competitive spirit.

Solo and Group Singing Competitions - an opportunity for school and college students to showcase their melodic talents along with science and arts exhibitions to showcase their knowledge and creativity with painting, essay writing and elocution competitions. Live Musical Extravaganza by Famous Artist and his ensemble on the grand finale.

This initiative serves as a catalyst for fostering sportsmanship, cultural renaissance, and holistic development among the youth, particularly those hailing from remote and marginalized communities of District Poonch. The overwhelming response from the enthusiastic populace of Poonch underscores the profound reverence and camaraderie shared between the community and the Indian Army.

Beyond mere festivities, the Pir Panjal Winter Festival embodies a transformative movement, inspiring young minds to eschew the perils of substance abuse and channel their energies toward constructive, life-affirming pursuits.

## Omar become softened, no signs of restoration of statehood in near future

JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 9

The attitude of Omar government, which passed the proposal of restoration of statehood and special privileges for Jammu and Kashmir on the lines of North-Eastern states in the first cabinet meeting, has now cooled down. To avoid a situation of conflict, there is procrastination in fulfilling the promises of free electricity, drinking water, minimum wages, regularization of daily wagers etc. The sur-rendered attitude of NC has given a severe blow to the expectations of the people, stated by Manish Sahni, President, Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu and Kashmir unit.

In a press conference held today at the party's state central office, state chief Manish Sahni said that in the situation of two power systems in Jammu and Kashmir, the people and their basic issues are being crushed. NC, which won the assembly elections, has surrendered on its main issues to avoid a



situation of conflict. At the same time, in the 2025-26 budget, the Center is bringing the Police in par with the Delhi Police by keeping the Jammu and Kashmir Police budget under the estimates of the Ministry of Home Affairs. From which it is clear that the full statehood of Jammu and Kashmir is not going to be restored in the near future. At the same time, the silence and soft attitude of the Omar government on this is an indication that something is definitely cooking between the NC and the BJP.

At the same time, the Omar government has turned away to avoid a confrontation on the promises of free electricity, drinking water, minimum wages, employment, regularization of daily wagers, women empowerment etc. Sahni said that turning away from public issues and promises and getting close to the BJP will prove fatal for the political future of the NC. No concrete efforts are visible on the ground from the Centre and Omar government regarding the safe return of Kashmiri Pandits to the valley.

## SMVDU and J&K Police organize Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan Campaign under Civic Action Programme



JJ NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 9

Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU) in collaboration with the Jammu & Kashmir Police successfully organized a campaign under the Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan as part of the Civic Action Programme. The event was fully sponsored by the J&K Police and aimed at raising awareness about the harmful effects of substance abuse while promoting a healthier and drug-free society. The event was coordinated by Dr. Vikram Singh, Dr. Rajiv Kumar (NSS Programme Coordinator), and Dr. Varun Dutta (NCC Coordinator), with the active involvement of NSS volun-

teers and NCC cadets, who played a crucial role in the smooth execution of the campaign. As part of the event, a debate competition was organized, where students actively engaged in discussions on the pressing issue of drug abuse. The competition provided a platform for students to express their views on the causes, consequences, and possible solutions to combat substance abuse. The winners of the competition were felicitated with prizes, recognizing their analytical skills and persuasive arguments. In addition to the debate, an expert lecture on the New Criminal Law was delivered by Prosecuting Officer, DPO Reasi, Ms. Shikha Jamwal. She provided valu-

able insights into the latest legal reforms, emphasizing how the amended criminal laws address drug-related offenses and substance abuse cases. Her lecture helped students and faculty understand the legal consequences of drug abuse, law enforcement measures, and the role of society in preventing substance misuse. The function was graced by several esteemed dignitaries, including Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, SMVDU, Prof. (Dr.) Pragati Kumar, who attended as the Chief Guest, and DIG Udhampur-Reasi Range, Sh. Rayees Mohd. Bhat, who presided over the event. Other distinguished guests present included Prof. Amit Kant Pandit, Sh. Amod Nagpur,

SSP Udhampur, Sh. Paramvir Singh, SSP Reasi, Sh. Pardeep Giri Goswami, Commandant 06 Bn, CRPF, Sh. Vipin Chandran, SP katra. The campaign served as an impactful initiative to educate students about the dangers of substance abuse while equipping them with legal knowledge and civic responsibility. The event concluded on a strong note, with a collective commitment from participants to continue spreading awareness and working towards eliminating drug abuse from society. The collaboration between SMVDU, J&K Police, NCC, and NSS highlighted the power of joint efforts in building a drug-free and law-abiding community.

## Sant Nirankari Mission organises a voluntarily Blood Donation Camp at Vijaypur

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 9

The Sant Nirankari Mission actively organizes voluntary blood donation camps as part of its humanitarian efforts. These camps emphasize the Mission's core values of selfless service, compassion, and unity, encouraging devotees and the general public to contribute to society by donating blood. Sant Nirankari Mission Branch Vijaypur Organised a voluntarily Blood Donation Camp at Sant Nirankari Satsang Bhawan Vijaypur. Devotees from Branch Ramgarh, Bishnah and Pandorian also participated in this camp. A total of 121 Units of blood donated in this camp.

The Camp was inaugurated by Smt. Anu Behl JKAS Spl. Secretary to the Govt. Revenue Deptt. JKUT, while speaking on the occasion she said I sincerely commend the Sant Nirankari Mission for its unwavering commitment to humanitarian service through its blood donation camps. By organizing such noble initiatives, the Mission has played a crucial role in saving countless lives and fostering a spirit of selfless service in society. Blood donation is



a vital cause, and the dedication shown by the volunteers and devotees of the Mission is truly inspiring. Their efforts not only help hospitals and patients in need but also promote a culture of compassion and unity. I extend my heartfelt appreciation to the Sant Nirankari Mission for their continued service to humanity and encourage more people to join this life-saving movement.

Ajit Singh Zonal Incharge Sant Nirankari Mission Jammu said that Since 1986, the Mission has been a major contributor to blood donation drives across India and abroad in collaboration with government hospitals & medical insti-

tutions where thousands of units of blood are collected annually. The initiative reflects the Mission's belief that "Blood should flow in veins, not in drains," reinforcing the spirit of service to humanity beyond caste, color sor religion.

Sat Paul Chadgal Mukhi Vijaypur welcome the Chief Guest and Donors presented on the occasion.

Other Dignitaries presented on the occasion were Smt. Ashu Behl JKAS FA/CAO Directorate of Social Welfare Deptt. Dr. Tasir from Blood Bank GMC Jammu. The camp was held in collaboration with blood & transfusion dept. of Govt. Medical College Jammu and JKASCS.

## Release salaries of NHM employees: Tarigami

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR FEBRUARY 9:

CPI(M) leader and MLA Kulgam, Mohamad Yousuf Tarigami, on Sunday urged the authorities to release the pending salaries of National Health Mission (NHM) employees without any further delay, stating that they deserve their rightful wages.

Tarigami said that NHM employees are performing their duties rightfully and should not be made to wait for their salaries.

"We have been informed that they have not received their salaries for the past two months. It is unjust to let them suffer like this. We urge the authorities to release their pending wages immediately and ensure their families do not face financial hardships," Tarigami said.

"It is imperative for the concerned authorities to release their salaries without any further delay," he added.

Tarigami said ASHAs working under NHM perform a wide range of tasks but unfortunately they are not being paid any regular remunerations instead are being forced to work on meager incentives.

## FROM THE PAGE 1...

### LG Sinha urges...

fraternity and harmony," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Lieutenant Governor further called upon the young generation to remain committed to provide solutions to future challenges.

On the occasion, the Lieutenant Governor paid tributes to prominent freedom fighters and political figures, who have devoted their entire life to selflessly serving the country.

He also highlighted the important role of social organizations in ensuring maximum participation of women and youth in nation building.

### India's quantum leap...

particularly in healthcare. He noted that India, once not taken seriously in curative healthcare, is now emerging as a global leader in preventive healthcare. He proudly mentioned India's achievements, including : The first DNA vaccine developed during the pandemic. The first indigenous HPV vaccine to combat cervical cancer and rapid advancements in space technology, despite a late start in the sector.

He also spoke about India's commitment to global climate change efforts, reaffirming the country's target of achieving net-zero emissions by 2070.

Dr. Jitendra Singh highlighted the importance of Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL), calling it a valuable repository of indigenous wisdom. He cited examples such as:

The Konark Temple in Odisha, which remained intact even after the super cyclone of 2000, showcasing India's architectural resilience.

The growing interest in traditional medicine, as seen during the pandemic when the West explored homeopathy and naturopathy for potential remedies.

He also referenced India's success in using steel slag for road construction in Arunachal Pradesh, in collaboration with the Tata Group, drawing parallels with the durable routes of Ajanta and Ellora that have withstood the test of time.

Quoting Dr. Syama Prasad Mookerjee, Dr. Singh remarked, "By remaining committed to our legacy, we should not deprive ourselves of what is happening across the world." He urged Vigyan Bharati to act as an interface for identifying initiatives and fostering collaborations, similar to how IN-SPACe and BIRAC have become successful platforms for the space and biotechnology sectors, respectively.

He also proudly announced India's recent breakthrough in pharmaceuticals with the creation of the indigenous antibiotic 'Nafthromycin', positioning India as a leader in both traditional and cutting-edge technologies.

Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasized that integration is no longer an option but a necessity and called upon Vigyan Bharati to become a key medium for broader scientific integration. He expressed confidence that such efforts would drive India's continued rise as a global powerhouse in science and technology.

### Air Chief Marshal A P Singh...

Stating that he enjoyed the sortie as it carried a great challenge, the Army Chief said, "I am very much grateful to the IAF and I must admire the kind of a challenge the pilots of the IAF take and it takes a great synergetic approach from all of us and I am sure that it is a good start for the Aero India-2025."

LCA Tejas is an Indian combat aircraft designed by

the Aeronautical Development Agency (ADA) and manufactured by Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for the Indian Air Force (IAF) and Indian Navy. (Agencies)

### Par Panel recommends...

has made a slew of other recommendations including on the security of Indian missions abroad in view of the geopolitical situation and other factors.

"In view of recent developments, the committee feels that the security of Indian missions and posts abroad is paramount for ensuring the safety of personnel, the protection of sensitive information and the continuity of diplomatic functions," the report said.

The MEA has informed the panel that the safety and security of Indian missions and posts is "continuously reviewed".

The committee has recommended that "the ministry should conduct a comprehensive security assessment of all missions/posts taking into account the geopolitical situation, potential threats and vulnerabilities in host countries", the report said.

Adequate resources should also be allocated for the protection of physical and digital infrastructure of the Indian missions, it added.

The recommendations assume salience given the situation in countries like Bangladesh as also in parts of West Asia, and with New Delhi flagging in the last several months the issue of space being provided to anti-India activities in Canada that has affected the bilateral ties.

On the operationalisation of new missions abroad, the committee noted that the MEA is "leveraging concurrent accreditation arrangements" effectively in countries where resident missions have not been operationalised.

"Despite the ministry's assurance that the allocated funds are adequate to account for inflationary pressures and currency fluctuations, the committee urged that the ministry be prepared for addressing any unforeseen shortfalls promptly through supplementary grants to ensure uninterrupted functioning of embassies and missions," the report said.

The panel has emphasised in its report that India's "growing stature on global arena" requires consistent and predictable investments in diplomatic, economic and cultural engagements.

"Budgetary instability and fluctuations undermine India's credibility as a partner in bilateral and multilateral initiatives," it said.

The panel stressed the need for "consistent and predictable" financial allocations to the MEA and recommended that key areas should be protected from budgetary cuts.

The committee has also acknowledged the "significant strides" made by the MEA in enhancing passport services through the expansion of the Passport Seva Programme, including the establishment of 93 Passport Seva Kendras (PSKs) and 434 Post Office Passport Seva Kendras (POPSKs) in collaboration with the Department of Posts.

"The integration of all 193 Indian missions/posts abroad into the Passport Seva Portal is commendable and reflects the commitment of the ministry to streamline and digitise passport services globally," it said.

The committee said it also wanted to know the progress made as well as challenges faced in the construction of the new campus of Nalanda University at Rajgir, Bihar.

The university, which aims to revive the ancient glory of the historic Nalanda as an international institution for the pursuit of intellectual, philosophical, historical, and spiritual studies, was conceived as a collaboration

between India and East Asia Summit (EAS) countries.

"The ministry stated that the construction of Nalanda University's state-of-the-art net-zero sustainable green campus has achieved progress," it said.

The campus was inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 19, 2024.

Spanning about 455 acres, the campus encompasses approximately 200 buildings and structures, catering to academic, administrative, residential and recreational needs.

It has a total built-up area of over 20 lakh sq ft, including academic blocks, administrative offices, amenities, utilities, student hostels, and staff residences.

The committee acknowledged the government's commitment to reviving the ancient seat of learning through the establishment of Nalanda University under the Nalanda University Act, 2010.

Despite significant budgetary allocations and the completion of the green campus, the panel said it is "concerned to note that the university's establishment has been marred by delays and operational challenges".

Although the construction has progressed and the campus was inaugurated in June 2024, delays caused by logistical bottlenecks, disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and a lack of skilled manpower have resulted in "significant time overruns", the report said.

"Despite its mandate under the East Asia Summit framework to be a collaborative global enterprise, the committee finds that financial support from member states and other international donors has been sporadic and insufficient," it said.

The committee recommended that the MEA, in concert with the Ministry of Education and the Nalanda University Governing Board, should "establish a more rigorous framework of oversight to expedite the resolution of pending tasks".

"Diplomatic channels must be strategically leveraged to secure greater financial and institutional support from East Asia Summit member states and other international partners, commensurate with the University's global mandate," it said.

The committee added that it may also be kept informed about the progress made in operationalisation of Nalanda University on a "regular basis". (PTI)

### SC to hear on...

The top court had said it asked the questions to understand if they lived in camps, the nature of relief would be different than the one mentioned in the PIL.

Gonsalves had submitted that in other matters related to Rohingyas, the Centre took a stand that they had the right to go to public schools and hospitals.

Initially, the top court was of the view that since the issue relates to Rohingyas in Delhi and the NGO challenged the circular of the Delhi government, it would be appropriate if they moved the high court.

The PIL has sought a direction to authorities to grant admission to all Rohingya children free of cost irrespective of Aadhar cards and allow them to participate in all examinations, including class 10, 12 and graduation, without government insistence on the ID proof.

The PIL also sought extension of all government benefits such as free health services in Government hospitals, subsidised food grains as available under Antyodaya Anna Yojana scheme and benefits under the Food Security Act to Rohingya families as available to other citizens, irrespective of citizenship. (PTI)

### Iltija Mufti meets...

PDP president and former chief minister Mehbooba

Mufti wrote on X, "Finally Iltija managed to reach Bilawer in Kathua to meet the bereaved family of Makhan Din, who was driven to suicide by police torture."

"It's deeply saddening that she (Iltija) had to endure so many obstacles and travel like a fugitive just to offer comfort to the victim's family. The ruling party has shirked responsibility conveniently attributing all issues to the Lieutenant Governor. However, as a responsible opposition PDP will always strive to reach out to the people to offer solace," she said.

On Saturday, Iltija claimed in a social media post that she and her mother were under house arrest in Srinagar.

"I intended to visit Kathua to meet Makhan Din's family and (I) am not being allowed to even move out. Nothing has changed in Kashmir even after elections. Now even comforting the families of victims is being criminalised," she said on X.

"My mother and I both have been placed under house arrest. Our gates have been locked up because she (Mehbooba) was meant to visit Sopore where Waseem Mir (truck driver) was shot dead by the army," Iltija said. (Agencies)

### Looking forward to witness...

defence technologies and global aviation excellence. Looking forward to witness the future of aerospace sector," Singh posted on X.

The Department of Defence Production also shared an update on its X handle about the show that will take place from February 10-14.

In a post on X on Sunday, the department said that the defence minister will inaugurate the 'India Pavillion' at Aero India 2025 on February 10.

"India's commitment to Make-in-India featuring defence manufacturing capabilities, cutting-edge technologies & future prospects on global stage," it wrote on the social media platform.

'Aero India' is a biennial air show and aviation exhibition which is held in Bengaluru, organised by the Defence Exhibition Organisation, Department of Defence Production, Ministry of Defence.

It is India's premier aerospace and defence exhibition where global aero vendors and the Indian Air Force (IAF) thrill the spectators with back-to-back aerobatic flying displays.

A flagship event 'Aero India' brings together global industry leaders, government officials, technology experts, and defence strategists under one roof, officials said.

"The event not only showcases the nation's technological prowess and innovations but also provides a dynamic platform for international cooperation and strategic dialogue," the defence ministry said ahead of Aero India 2025.

The broad theme of this edition is - "The Runway to a Billion Opportunities".

"Aero India stands as a testament to India's unwavering commitment to innovation, strategic collaboration, and excellence in aerospace and defence," the ministry said.

As the nation prepares to host Aero India 2025, the event promises to build on the rich legacy of previous editions, most notably, the transformative Aero India 2023, it said.

"Through rigorous operational protocols, strategic partnerships, and a forward-thinking agenda, Aero India 2025 is poised to further elevate India's profile on the global aerospace stage," the ministry said. (AGENCIES)

## RKS J&K, GP organize Kavi Sammelin in memory of Dogri poet Yash Sharma

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 9

A special Kavi Sammelin was organized by Rashtriya Kavi Sangam (RKS)-J&K in collaboration with Gaytri Parivaar, Loharakote, Sunderbani (Rajouri) today to commemorate the birth anniversary of legendary Dogri lyricist Yash Sharma, known as Raj Kumar of Dogri Lyrics (Geet). Well known senior artist, writer & journalist Jang S. Verman and Sh. Madan Mohan Sharma, Retd. ZEO were the chief guests on this occasion whereas Sh. Arun Bhattacharaya from IIMA, Jammu and Sh. Ashok Kumar, Retd. Banker were the guests of honour. Sqn. Ldr. Anil Saigal presided over the programme. Renowned singer Smt. Seema Anil Saigal and Kartikey Saigal shared the dais.

Sh. Kewal Kumar Kewal, President, Rashtriya Kavi



Sangam formally welcomed the dignitaries, poets and the guests. In his address Kewal Kumar Kewal said that RKS has been conducting various programmes in the memory of Late Yash Sharma, a legendary Dogri lyricist. He added that the aim of RKS JK has been to promote the local and upcoming talent by providing them platform at different places. Sh. Sanjay Sharma, a representative of Gaytri Parivaar said that Gaytri Parivar is committed to promote value based

programmes and preserve value based system by organizing various such activities and other cultural programmes at various occasions.

The poets who presented their poetry in the programme included Vinod Kumar Sharma, Shruti Sharma, Sanjay Kumar Sharma, Ritika, Dharampal Sharma, Mohinder Pal, Kasturi Lal, O P Bhajwalia, Amarjeet Sharma, Dr. Aradhana Sharma, Dr. Anjana, Rajneesh Sharma, Rattan Bhardwaj, O P Shakir, Sandeep Singh

Jamwal, Jang S. Verman, Seema Anil Saigal and Kewal Kumar Kewal.

In his presidential address Sqn. Ldr. Anil Saigal said that the regular verse form presented by the poets in the programme deserved appreciation as it was a real tribute to prominent Dogri lyricist Late Yash Sharma. He said that RKS J&K and Gaytri Parivar are doing a nice job by organizing such programmes dedicated to the great contributors in the field of art & culture. Sh. Jang S. Verman, Seema Anil Saigal, Arun Bhattacharya, Madan Mohan and Ashok Kumar also expressed their views to pay tributes to Late Yash Sharma.

The proceedings of the programme were conducted by Sandeep Singh Jamwal, General Secretary, RKS J&K. The vote of thanks was extended by Sh. O P Sharma.

## Max Hospital, Mohali Organizes Seminar on 'Clinical Updates on Breast Cancer 2025'

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
MOHALI, FEB 9

Max Super Specialty Hospital, Mohali, hosted a seminar today titled 'Clinical Updates on Breast Cancer 2025'. The event brought together over 80 oncology experts from Tricity and Punjab to discuss the latest advancements in oncology, specifically focusing on breast cancer treatment.

The seminar was led by Dr. Sachin Gupta, Director, Medical Oncology and Hemato-Oncology, Max Super Specialty Hospital, Mohali. It began with a warm welcome from Dr. Gupta, who set the tone for the event, emphasizing the importance of learning, innovation, and collaboration in healthcare.

During the seminar, Dr. Sachin Gupta addressed the audience, stating, "The treatment for breast cancer depends on the subtype of cancer and its



stage. If the cancer has spread beyond the breast to the lymph nodes (stages II or III) or other parts of the body (stage IV), the treatment plan may vary. Today, thanks to precision diagnosis and personalized medicine, breast cancer patients can be managed more effectively. In recent years, several new targeted therapies have been approved for breast cancer, but there remains a need for more and better treatment options, especially for complex cases like tri-

ple-negative breast cancer, where chemotherapy is currently the only option."

Dr. Gupta further explained, "Radiation therapy plays a crucial role in treating residual microscopic cancer cells left in the breast tissue or lymph nodes, reducing the chances of cancer recurring on the chest wall. In more advanced stages, cancer can erode through the skin, leading to open sores (ulceration), though these may not always be painful. Women with

breast wounds that do not heal should seek medical attention to have a biopsy performed."

Technological innovations such as radiomics and artificial intelligence, along with the tireless efforts of researchers, have opened the door to precision diagnosis, enhanced treatment strategies, and more personalized care for breast cancer patients. The future of breast cancer treatment is being shaped by the dedication and commitment of the scientific community.

## NMC urges J&K Govt to Hike Medical Allowance and Release Pending DA

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 9

President of the National Mazdoor Conference (NMC) Subash Shastri today appealed to the Chief Minister to enhance the medical allowance from Rs. 300 to Rs. 1000 per month as per the norm of UT administrations, throughout the country.

Addressing a NMC workers during a meet Shastri said that UT of Ladakh has already hiked Medical allowance of the pensioners to Rs. 1000 per month from 1st of April 2020.

"Medical allowance in UT J&K is just Rs. 300 for per month for the last two decade as the prices

of medicines and other medical related expenditure has increased to a large extent so medical allowance should also be increased at par with UT Ladakh Administration." he maintained hoping that J&K UT Administration should take a decision in this regard soon so that pensioners may have a sigh of relief from rising prices of medicines and other expenses. Shastri also demanded increase of 2% house rent in favour of UT J&K employees as the DA crossed 50%.

Stressing on the need in releasing of pending DA / DR of 18 months from the month of January 2020 to ending June 2021 Shas-

tri also appealed to the Central Government to release the outstanding 3 DA instalments arrears blocked while releasing the same to its employees and pensioners 3 years ago. He said that since the price index and inflation on rise day today which has made salaried class and pensioners to face hardship to manage their livelihood. Shastri pointed out that it is the fitness of things that financial assistance so accrued by way of rising Dearness Allowance (DA) is released without any further delay. Shastri further hoped that the central Govt. will consider the burning demand of both Central/States/

UTs employees and pensioners in releasing the 3 DA instalments blocked arrears in favour of these employees and pensioners at the earliest. Release of 4% DA due from January 01, 2025 besides merging of 50% DA with pension and pay. Shastri further demanded regularization of the daily rated workers under SRO-64

Among other who were also present in the meeting included Rajan Babu Khajuria, B.S Jamwal, Surinder Kumar, Ram Singh, Anil Gupta, Ramesh Sharma, Chaman Lal, Birbal, Raman Sharma, Vinod Kumar, Sukhdev Singh, Subash Sharma and Ram Lal Sharma.

## Chandan Datta appointed Pradesh Mantri & Office incharge of RPP J&K

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 9

Today Rashtiyeh Parshu Ram Parishad Jammu and Kashmir nominated Social Activist & Chairman Kotli Welfare trust Sh Chandan datta as Pradesh Mantri Rashtriya Parshuram Parishad (RPP) Jammu and Kashmir led by its National Founder Pt Sunil bharala on the and state Head President Rashtriya Parshuram Parishad Jammu and Kashmir Pt Jeeva Nand Sharma.

He has also assigned duty and given the operation and implementation of agenda of RPP at three Districts i.e Jammu, Udhampur and Reasi to strengthen RPP . While looking at his com-



mitment and past activities President RPP JN Sharma shown his trust on datta and assigned him Additional role of Office Incharge RPP Jammu and Kashmir.

Datta is a reknowned Social activist of Jammu region of J&K UT and he is having a vast experience working at large for the welfare of people of Jammu region since more than a decade . Datta is Particularly working against drug abuse in Jammu region and motivates youth at large to

stay away from this illicit thing and channelise youth energy in Nation building activities .He has worked for the upliftment of marginalise section of society of people and organise many activities in past in service to mankind. President Rashtriya Parshuram Parushad (RPP) Sh Jeeva nand sharma has welcome Pt Chandan datta into Rash-

triya Parshuram Parishad and looking forward for his contribution to strengthen the Organisation in Jammu

and Kashmir . Rashtriya Parshuram Parishad (RPP) organisation main objective is to strengthen and Preservation of Sanatan dharma and bind Brahmins in one platform to work for the welfare and upliftment of Brahmin community at large.

The other dignitaries of RPP leaders present were Sh Raman Thappa State, Secretary, Ramesh Chander Vice President, Sh Garu Ram Vice President, Sh Vinod Mehta, State secretary for Rural areas, Opinder sharma , RSS jk and Pawan sharma ,Secretary ,RPP, prof.Sameer sharma, Secretary and other senior functionaries and general public.

## Jammu Police arrests notorious gangster Surjan Sansi

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, FEB 9

In one of the major successes for Jammu Police in action against criminals/Gangsters, the police party of Police Station Bishnah led by SHO Bishnah Sh. Sushil Choudhary under the supervision of SDPO RS Pura and SP Headquarters Jammu successfully apprehended wanted Criminal Surjan Sansi S/o Tilak Raj R/o. Rehal, Bishnah. Surjan Sansi is a history-sheeter , a notorious criminal/ gangster, wanted in several cases including his involvement in the Akshay murder case of Police Station Ramgarh, Samba. He was evading arrest for the past two years, but due to persistent efforts and strategic operations by the Jammu police, he has finally been taken into custody. Further legal proceedings are underway. Jammu Police is committed to take all measures to curb criminal elements and ensure safety and security of general police and uphold rule of law.

## Police arrests 02 drug peddlers in Srinagar, contraband substances recovered

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, FEB 9

Continuing its efforts to eradicate the menace of drugs from the society, Srinagar Police has arrested two drug peddlers and recovered contraband substances from their possession. A police team of Police Station Nishat at a checkpoint established at Pahloo Brain, intercepted 02 suspicious persons who on seeing the police party tried to flee from the spot but were apprehended tactfully. During search, substantial quantity of narcotics was recovered from their possession. They have been identified as Nadeem Qadir Chopan so of Ghulam Qadir Chopan & Ahmad Badri son of Mohammad Ismail Reshi both residents of Pahloo Brein. Both accused persons have been arrested & a case vide FIR No. 08/2025 under relevant sections of NDPS Act stands registered in Police Station Nishat and further investigation has been initiated. We urge the common masses that if you witness drug peddling or any other crime anywhere near you, feel free to contact nearest police establishment or dial 112. People are requested to cooperate with police in curbing the menace of drugs from the society. We reassure the community members that police will act tough against the criminals as per law.

## Pathania criticizes I.N.D.I.A alliance, highlights BJP's development agenda

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
UDHAMPUR, FEB 9

In a captivating address to party cadres and the general public in Khoon, Charawa, and surrounding areas of Udhampur, Mr. Ranbir Singh Pathania, Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) for Udhampur East, BJP Spokesperson, took a pot-shot at I.N.D.I.A alliance calling it as a disjointed and ideologically incoherent bloc that lacks any cohesive vision or direction. He described the alliance as a mere conglomerate of parties with differing viewpoints, divergent agendas, and no unifying ideology other than a shared hatred for Narendra Modi and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

"The I.N.D.I.A alliance was rejected in 2024 Lok Sabha elections, and the recent Delhi Assembly results have exposed the fragility of this coalition. It is nothing more than a house of cards, bound to collapse. Rabble-rousing mocks of Omar Abdullah and Rashtriya Janata Dal have hastened the hiatus and added fuel to the fire. He went on to highlight the BJP's unwavering commitment to the development and well-being of all citizens. "Unlike the opposition, which is lost in political rhetoric, the BJP stands firm with the core



agenda of 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas' - inclusive growth for every citizen of this country," he added.

Pathania took a moment to emphasize the various initiatives of the Modi government aimed at improving the lives of people, particularly the marginalized. He noted the ongoing Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) survey, designed to ensure no one is left without proper housing. "In the near future, no one will be living in katcha houses or without a roof over their heads. This is a promise from the Modi government," he assured the people .

He also expressed his support for the ongoing phase of the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), which aims to improve rural infrastructure and connectivity. "Inclusive and holistic development is the core of the Modi Sarkar. We are working tirelessly to

ensure that every person in our country benefits from the schemes and projects being rolled out by the central government," Pathania affirmed.

The event saw the participation of several prominent local leaders, including Mr. Mohan Lal Sharma, Mandal Pradhan; Mr. Mohinder Sharma, Mandal Pradhan; Mr. Shokat Ali; Mr. Bishan Singh; Mr. Romesh Gupta; Mr. Ved Sharma; Mr. Pritam Sharma; Mr. Mohan Lal; Mr. Ram Ditta Gupta; Mr. Subhash Chander, Pritam Sharma, Madan Lal, and several others. Local residents also joined the gathering, underscoring their support for the efforts being made for their welfare.

Pathania concluded his remarks by reiterating his commitment to the development of Udhampur East and the greater region, promising continued focus on addressing the needs and aspirations of local communities.

**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER**  
**MECHANICAL IRRIGATION DIVISION,**  
**AKHNOOR/NOWSHERA**  
Tele/Fax :01924-253998/E-Mail - ifcjmidadkhnor@gmail.com

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
e-NIT No.: - MID/AN/111 Dated:-07/02/2025

For and on behalf of The Hon'ble Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir (UT), Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division Akhnoor/Nowshera invites e-tenders from Approved contractors/ Registered firms / Workshop owners having experience in Electromechanical Works for following jobs:-

S. No.	Name of the work	Quantity	Earnest Money (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of tender document	Period of Completion	Class of contractor
01.	Repair of 40 HP three phase induction motor no.2 at LIS Mukeri and Repair of 50 HP three phase induction motors no.2,strengthening/ replacement of suction pipes at LIS Bal	01 Job	02% of the quoted value	Rs. 200	10 Days	Registered / Reputed firms / Workshop owners having experience in Electro mechanical Works

- The bidding documents can be seen and downloaded from the website <http://www.jktenders.gov.in> from 07/02/2025 (05:30PM) to 15/02/2025 (02:00 PM). Bidding document contains instruction for bidders, bill of quantities, general terms and condition and other details.
  - The Bids shall be uploaded in electronic format on the website <http://www.jktenders.gov.in> from 09/02/2025(10:00AM) to 15/02/2025 (02:00 PM).
  - The complete bidding process will be through electronic mode.
  - A pre-bid meeting will be held on 08/02/2025 (11:30 AM) in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division Akhnoor / Nowshera to address any queries from the firms.
  - Cover-I of the bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on 17/02/2025(1:00PM) in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Mechanical Irrigation Division Akhnoor / Nowshera in the presence of the bidders who wish to attend. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
  - Furnishing of hard copies of bids immediately after submission of e-Tenders is dispensed with. The same should be obtained only from the bidders who is declared as L1 after opening of Financial Bids
  - The cost of the tenders should be collected by introducing e-challan by simply uploading a copy of necessary treasury challan/Receipt.
- Similarly, insisting on actual call deposit receipt, a copy of same duly pledged to the concerned department should be uploaded by the tenderers. However, before allotting the work or issuing the supply order the original CDR should be obtained and kept on record.
- Other details can be seen in the bidding document.
- The guidelines regarding submission of bid in electronic mode can be downloaded from website <http://www.jktenders.gov.in>
- The bidders shall go through the tender specific instructions sheet also.
- The bidders for any clarification can contact the department through e-mail [ifcjmidadkhnor@gmail.com](mailto:ifcjmidadkhnor@gmail.com).

**No: - MID/AN/2320-24**  
**Dated: - 07-02-2025**

**-Sd/-**  
**Executive Engineer**  
**Mechanical Irrigation Division**  
**Akhnoor/Nowshera**

**DIP/J-9962/24**  
**Date: 8-2-25**

## EDITORIAL

## World Pulses Day: A Call for Sustainable Nutrition and Food Security

Every year on February 10, the world observes World Pulses Day, a United Nations-designated event that highlights the critical role of pulses in sustainable food systems, nutrition, and environmental sustainability. Pulses—such as lentils, chickpeas, beans, and peas—are more than just staples in many diets; they are a cornerstone of food security and a powerful tool in combating climate change and malnutrition.

Pulses are a rich source of plant-based protein, fiber, vitamins, and minerals, making them an essential component of a healthy diet. They play a significant role in addressing malnutrition, particularly in developing countries where access to protein-rich foods like meat and dairy is limited. High in iron and folate, pulses are especially beneficial for children, pregnant women, and those with dietary restrictions. Moreover, they have a low glycemic index, making them ideal for managing diabetes and maintaining heart health.

From an agricultural perspective, pulses contribute to environmental sustainability. Unlike many other crops, they have nitrogen-fixing properties, which enhance soil fertility and reduce the need for synthetic fertilizers. This not only lowers production costs for farmers but also decreases greenhouse gas emissions, helping to mitigate climate change. Additionally, pulses require significantly less water compared to other protein sources, making them a sustainable choice in water-scarce regions.

Pulses serve as a reliable income source for millions of smallholder farmers worldwide. By promoting pulse cultivation, governments and international organizations can empower rural economies and enhance food security. Given their long shelf life, pulses also help in reducing food waste, ensuring that nutritious food remains accessible even in times of crisis.

Despite their numerous benefits, pulses remain underutilized and often overlooked in national food policies. Governments, researchers, and consumers must work together to integrate pulses into main-stream diets and agricultural practices. Schools and institutions can play a vital role in educating communities about the benefits of pulses, while policymakers should encourage their production through incentives and research investments.

World Pulses Day is more than just an occasion to celebrate a food group; it is a call to action for sustainable nutrition, environmental protection, and global food security. As climate change and population growth continue to challenge our food systems, embracing pulses as a dietary and agricultural solution is not just an option—it is a necessity. By making a conscious effort to include more pulses in our diets and supporting policies that promote their cultivation, we can contribute to a healthier planet and a more food-secure future.

SHARMILA VAIDYA

It was just another morning, four years after my cancer treatment, when I drove to my local pharmacy to pick up my medicine. The pharmacy was only a mile from my house, a familiar route I had taken countless times. But on my way back home, I made a wrong turn. As I looked around, trying to figure out how to get back, panic and confusion set in. I had no idea where I was or which way to go. Four years ago, this wouldn't have been a problem.

I would have simply turned around and found my way home without a second thought. Now, however, situations that were once routine and effortless feel frightening and overwhelming. Math used to be one of my strongest subjects. I could solve simple problems

instantly. But over the past few years, even basic calculations have become daunting. I find myself second-guessing everything. Numbers don't stay still; they seem to blur and float in my mind.

Even simple tasks, like ordering at a restaurant, have become challenging. While everyone else is ready to order, I'm still staring at the menu, overwhelmed by the options and unable to make a decision. I suddenly become aware of everyone looking at me, waiting.

By the time I finally choose, I'm so anxious and stressed that I often end up ordering something I don't even like. These are just some of the challenges I face regularly. Things that once felt effortless now seem overwhelming.

When I fumble or hesitate, I often make

HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

I wonder how many of those who would be reading this piece have heard of Subedar Kali Das of the 8th battalion of the J&K Militia. Perhaps not one unless he/she has read Narratives from the Heart of a Veteran by Lt-Gen Baljit Singh AVSM, VSM (Retd), which tells the story of his courage and sacrifice far beyond the call of duty. On December 7, 1971, Pakistani troops, supported by tanks, had attacked Dewa, a post near the battalion's headquarters in Jammu & Kashmir. Defence having become unsustainable, orders to evacuate was issued at 14.45 hours on December 8. Retreat in broad daylight and under the eyes of Pakistanis who had their tails up, was not easy. They had to be held at bay with automatic fire as Indian troops made their way back.

It was then that Subedar Kali Das volunteered to stay back as a single-man rearguard. Trading his sten machine carbine for a light machine gun (LMG) and six to eight magazines of ammunition, he crawled into a bunker suitable for LMG firing and held the enemy back until he was shot dead. His raw courage drew admiration even from the Pakistanis. Baljit Singh says that after the ceasefire, they sent his body back in a coffin with a citation that read, "This is the body of Subedar Kali Das of 8 J&K Militia. He died while fighting very bravely in Area Tank ahead of Dewa Post.

He did not leave his trench to the last breath. After inflicting heavy casualties, he became a target of a Ghazi's bullet. His badges of rank are available. A piece of paper was found in his pocket, revealing his name."

Baljit Singh's book carries a number of such accounts of outstanding valour and bravery displayed in combat. Among the more important of these is the one about 2nd-Lieut Shyamal Dev Goswamy's role as Observation Post Officer in directing artillery fire against the Chinese attacking an important defensive position in Gurung Hill, guarding the airfield in Chushul, Ladakh, during the India-China border conflict of 1962.

Despite being severely wounded, he continued directing fire until he lost consciousness. Second-Lieutenant Goswamy (IC-12665) was awarded the Maha Vir Chakra, India's second-highest award for conspicuous gallantry in the presence of the enemy whether on land, at sea or in the air.

I began reading Narratives from the Heart of a Veteran, a week before India's 77th Army Day, which was observed on January 15, 2025. Singh has had a distinguished tenure in the Indian Army, spread over 36 years, and much of what he writes revolves round it. His, however, is by no means a chest-thumping glorification of the first-person singular number.

It provides an account



in which personal experience is located in the background of history and the interplay of contemporary events in which military deployment and operations occur. It thus provides a perspective that is much wider and deeper than any volume of just reminiscences serves up.

This is clear from the very beginning. His first narrative is about the establishment, under his command as a young captain, of a post, at Rimkin in the Bara Hoti area of Uttarakhand, in April, 1962.

To be defended by a Special Task Force, comprising a carefully selected company from the 14th battalion of the Rajput Regiment, the move was undertaken in the context of China's growing incursions across the India-China border, which were pushing events towards the conflict of October-November 1962. His exertions, which included an eyeball-to-eyeball con-

frontation with a band of intruding Chinese, earned him a commendation card from the Chief-of-Army Staff for gallantry and distinguished service.

Immediately thereafter, appears his piece on the hazardous and challenging mapping explorations by Major F.M. Bailey and Captain H.T. Morshead in Tibet, which led to the demarcation of India's border with the latter. A map showing the border was appended to the draft Shimla Convention, initiated on April 27, 1914, by the representatives of the three countries attending the Shimla Conference—Great Britain, China and Tibet—that produced the convention. Subsequently referred to as the MacMahon Line, after Sir Henry MacMahon, then British government of India's foreign secretary based in Delhi, who represented Great Britain in the Shimla conference, it runs roughly along the crest of

the Himalaya mountains from Bhutan in the West to Myanmar in the East, marking India's border with China in the east.

Both narratives are important in the context of the India-China border dispute, in which the assertion of the validity of the MacMahon Line features prominently in New Delhi's narrative regarding its position. Understandably, the need to counter China's cross border incursions has been, along with continuing tensions with Pakistan, a major factor in shaping the development and deployment of not only India's army but its air force and navy as well.

Not surprisingly, Singh's focus is primarily on the army—the generals who led it, the officers and men who have made it one of the finest fighting forces in the world, the battles fought at home and abroad, the varied interests of army personnel and the connections several of them have had with the Bombay Natural History Society.

Singh himself is an avid and knowledgeable naturalist and ornithologist who was invited to join the board of trustees of the Worldwide Fund for Nature where he served two terms.

There are engrossing accounts of diverse types—from a graphic one of the battle for Chhamb in December, 1971, to the life and time of the 19th-century soldier of fortune, Alexander Gardner, whose explorations and adventures ranged over a wide

territory, and the derring-do of Lt.-Karamjeet Singh Judge, who was posthumously awarded the Victoria Cross in the Burma (now Myanmar) campaign during World War II.

Baljit Singh's book, mainly based on his published articles, needs to be read for an understanding of what the Indian Army is and what it stands for. This is important given the wide range of tasks it has been called upon to perform—from defending the country's borders to fighting internal insurgencies, maintaining law-and-order and engaging in disaster relief.

It is an army with a great tradition, led from the front by an officers who are sought to be inspired by the motto that Field Marshal Philip Walhouse Chetwode, who commanded the British Indian army, had enunciated in 1932, and which is carved on the walls of the Chetwode Building at the Indian Military Academy in Dehradun.

It reads: "The safety, honour and welfare of your country comes first, always and every time./ The honour, welfare and comfort of the men you command come next./ Your own ease, comfort and safety come last, always and every time." The Indian Army would remain one of the finest of its kind in the world as long as its officers remember the motto.

**(The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal)**

## Awakening the Mind: The True Essence of Freedom

RAVI VALLURI

**Where the mind is led forward by the ever-widening thought and action into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake**

In this prodigious poem, Gurudev Rabindra Nath Tagore implores God to awaken the country to seek emancipation from the foreign yoke. However, the poem entails more than a mere physical liberation of the country. It seeks to reinvigorate the fossilised and chained human mind. This poem, with amazing psychological contours, attempts to breathe in freshness in the mind's otherwise lustreless

and cranny corners. Tagore implores us to discard and tear apart the existing repugnant traditions and customs, where humans behave as mere prototypes and marionettes.

The human mind seeks perfection, the eternal truth and the road travelled is only by traversing the clear stream of reason and logic and not falling in the stumbling blocks of parched and desultory thinking. Gurudev deploys both physical and psychological metaphors to arrest the mental atrophy which set in, and to ignite the passion for freedom during the rendition.

But what does freedom denote? Simply put, it is the power or right to act, speak, or think as one

wants. Many centuries ago, a monk pined to become a tutee of an enlightened Zen Master. He made several trips to the Master to join the fold, but the forays were all in vain. One day the Master was seated along with some burbling students on the banks of a river. The monk once again approached the Master, fearing reproach by the learned one. But to his amazement, the Master took the monk by the scruff of his neck and pushed him into the river. The monk screamed as his lungs filled with water and became breathless. The Master pulled him out of the river and tersely remarked, "Come to me when your mind has the volume and capac-

ity to acquire so much knowledge as your lungs had space for that much air to survive." The law of nature imprisons us from the time of our conception. We inherit our cells and acquire traits from our ancestors. That is our DNA and also our RNA. The next schooling takes place in the womb of the mother. This is our first cradle of thoughts.

The feelings, emotions, fears, phobias, dangers, efficacious and antipathetic thoughts get supplanted and ingrained in our system through the umbilical cord. Parents also pass on genetic and hereditary disorders, which over a period of time fashion thought processes. The world today is a prisoner

of the print, social and electronic media. We are propagandised by the number of likes on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and the number of selfies taken with celebrities. Gizmos decide the thought process coagulating in the gardens of our minds.

Humans should awake to the reality that the political and economic elite decide the course of our future and not the reverse. In such a peppy situation, how free are our thoughts and speech? We live in a comfort zone where the mind is not challenged and there is no aperture to enter unknown frontiers; nor are we upskilled to learn new crafts and make a critical assessment of wel-

come or unwelcome situations. However, humans need not be so despondent. There is a ventilator towards free will, choice and attempting to be creative, imaginative and to enjoy unalloyed freedom. Through the regular practice of pranayama, breathing techniques like the Sudarshan Kriya and by the practice of meditation the hemispheres of the mind develop over a period of time and humans can once again be 'born free' and have 'freedom of thought'.

**(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)**

## Life after cancer: The hidden struggles survivors face every day

SHARMILA VAIDYA

It was just another morning, four years after my cancer treatment, when I drove to my local pharmacy to pick up my medicine. The pharmacy was only a mile from my house, a familiar route I had taken countless times. But on my way back home, I made a wrong turn. As I looked around, trying to figure out how to get back, panic and confusion set in. I had no idea where I was or which way to go. Four years ago, this wouldn't have been a problem.

I would have simply turned around and found my way home without a second thought. Now, however, situations that were once routine and effortless feel frightening and overwhelming. Math used to be one of my strongest subjects. I could solve simple problems

instantly. But over the past few years, even basic calculations have become daunting. I find myself second-guessing everything. Numbers don't stay still; they seem to blur and float in my mind.

Even simple tasks, like ordering at a restaurant, have become challenging. While everyone else is ready to order, I'm still staring at the menu, overwhelmed by the options and unable to make a decision. I suddenly become aware of everyone looking at me, waiting.

By the time I finally choose, I'm so anxious and stressed that I often end up ordering something I don't even like. These are just some of the challenges I face regularly. Things that once felt effortless now seem overwhelming.

When I fumble or hesitate, I often make

excuses—"Oh, I forgot" or "Sorry about that"—or I get so nervous that I avoid the situation altogether. It feels like I'm climbing a steep, jagged mountain, desperately trying to keep from falling. I'm constantly searching for ways to make things right, but sometimes, all it takes is the look on someone's face to remind me how far I've fallen.

But this article isn't just about my personal struggles, even four years after treatment. It's about a broader issue—society's lack of awareness about the long-term physical, mental, and emotional effects of cancer, which often persist long after treatment ends. Without this awareness, people can be unintentionally cruel and judgmental.

I believe we can bridge this gap through open-mindedness and collabo-



ration. Support groups, community resources, and family understanding are essential for cancer survivors navigating life after

treatment. Healthcare providers should be encouraged to educate patients and their families early on about the long-term effects

of cancer. This would have helped my family and me better prepare for the years ahead.

Workshops should be

offered to employers to foster a supportive environment for employees returning to work, emphasizing flexible hours and mental health days in workplace policies.

Movies, television, social media, and books should portray accurate information about cancer survivors. Additionally, sharing personal stories can be a powerful way to shift public perception.

As I continue climbing this mountain, I still trip and fall, but I know I will reach the top. By sharing my journey, I hope to help those who are struggling and to bring greater understanding to those who are not. It took me years to speak up about life after cancer, but I'm glad I finally did.

Cancer survivorship is more than just remission—it's a lifelong journey filled with unseen struggles.

While the world moves on, survivors often face lingering cognitive, emotional, and physical challenges that can make everyday life overwhelming. But through awareness, education, and compassion, we can create a more understanding society.

By sharing my story, I hope to shed light on these realities and encourage meaningful change. If we work together—families, employers, healthcare providers, and the media—we can build a world where survivors feel supported rather than isolated. Speaking up took time, but if my voice helps even one person, it was worth it.

**(Sharmila Vaidya, a Houston-based educator and a children's book author, is a cancer survivor; views expressed are personal)**

# India's pharma exports has potential to reach \$350 billion by 2047: Report

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

India's pharmaceutical exports are projected to double from approximately \$27 billion in 2023 to reach \$65 billion by 2030, and can further grow to an estimated \$350 billion by 2047, according to a new report.

While India is the largest supplier of generic drugs globally, accounting for one in five generic drugs sold worldwide, the nation currently ranks 11th in terms of export value.

By innovating and diversifying its export basket to include specialty generics, biosimilars, and innovative products, the report emphasizes how India can potentially secure a position among the top five



nations in export value by 2047, according to the report by Bain & Company in collaboration with the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance (IPA), Indian Drugs Manufacturers Association (IDMA) and Pharmexil.

"India has long been the pharmacy of the world. Now we want to change the narrative to 'India as the healthcare custodian of the world'. The gov-

ernment is fully committed to achieving this goal by fostering innovation, boosting R&D, and ensuring seamless regulatory processes," said Piyush Goyal, Union Minister of Commerce and Industry.

By strengthening collaboration between academia, industry, and government, we will continue to build a globally competitive sector that drives growth and contributes

to healthcare worldwide," the minister added.

According to Sriram Shrinivasan, Partner, Bain & Company, the transition from volume-based to value-led growth is essential for Indian pharma to secure its rightful place in the global market.

"Innovation, including the shift towards specialty generics, biosimilars, and novel products, will be the key to India's pharmaceutical future. With the right focus on quality, regulation, access to global markets, talent, and entrepreneurial innovation," he mentioned.

India's API export market is projected to grow from \$5 billion currently to \$80-90 billion by 2047.

While Indian players currently hold less than

5 per cent of the global biosimilars market, green shoots are visible, driven by increasing R&D investments, an expanded pipeline of 40+ products and planned capacity addition over the next 3-4 years.

Indian biosimilar exports, currently valued at \$0.8 billion, are projected to grow 5x to \$4.2 billion by 2030, capturing 4 per cent of the global market, and reach \$30-35 billion by 2047, the report said.

India's pharma exports at 70 per cent and valued at \$19 billion, are projected to grow to \$180-190 billion by 2047.

"India can become one of the leaders in pharma exports, but needs strategic interventions," said Dr. Viranchi Shah, National President at IDMA.

## "BRONCHUS-2025" conference of Yashoda Hospitals concludes with global participation

AGENCIES  
HYDERABAD, FEB 9

The 4th edition of the International Interventional Pulmonology Conference and Live Workshop, "BRONCHUS-2025," organized by Yashoda Hospitals at HICC here on Sunday concluded with the participation of over 3,000 doctors from across the globe.

The event, endorsed by leading pulmonology associations from Europe, America, Japan, and other countries, featured more than 60 international faculty and 150 national experts.

The two-day conference, held on February 8 and 9, was inaugurated by Dr G S Rao, Managing Director, Yashoda Group of Hospitals, on the second day.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Rao emphasised the importance of modernising lung medicine and sharing knowledge on cutting-edge advancements.

He highlighted that lung cancer remains a leading cause of cancer-related deaths globally, with 1.8 million deaths annually.

Early diagnosis remains a challenge, with most cases detected in stages 3 and 4. Dr Rao also noted Yashoda Hospitals' success in Bronchial Thermoplasty, a key treatment for lung diseases.

Dr Pavan Gorukanti, Director, Yashoda Hospitals, praised the participation of leading pulmonologists and emphasized the hospital's commitment to advancing pulmonary care.

He introduced Lung Vision, an AI-based early lung cancer detection device, and other breakthrough technologies such as radial EBUS to aid in early-stage lung cancer diagnosis.

Senior Interventional Pulmonologist Dr Harikishan highlighted that the

conference focused on training, diagnosis, and innovative treatment methods.

The event also featured the "BRONCHUS RUN," a 2K run by lung specialists to raise awareness about lung health. The conference distinguished itself by moving beyond traditional workshops to hands-on training programs for disease-specific treatment approaches.

"BRONCHUS-2025" is the first medical conference in Asia endorsed by all major international pulmonology societies, including the European Association for Bronchology and the World Pulmonology Association.

Leading global pulmonologists such as Prof Felix Herth (Germany), Prof Kyle Hogarth (USA), Dr Michael Pritchett (USA), Dr Pallav Shah (UK), Dr Lorenzo Corbetta (Italy), and Dr Jamalul Azizi (Malaysia) participated in this prestigious event.

## Human breast milk may heal corneal wounds: Study

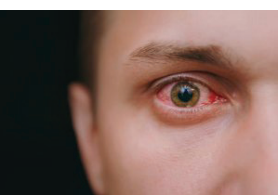
AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

Using human breast milk may enhance the healing of the cornea -- the clear outer layer at the front of the eye, which helps the eye to focus light to help one see clearly, finds a study.

Corneal wound healing is a complex process involving cell death, migration, proliferation, differentiation, and extracellular matrix remodeling.

The study by ophthalmology researchers from the University of Colorado showed that when used on wounded corneas in animal models, human breast milk led to an increase in re-epithelialization -- a part of the wound healing process.

The wounded eyes treated with human breast milk showed higher levels



of Ki67 -- a protein that's produced in cells that are actively dividing. Quick recovery is crucial in these kinds of eye injuries because it prevents infection that may cause further damage to the eye.

"The sooner that wound can heal, the better. Human breast milk seems to stimulate that process," said Mark Petrash, Professor of ophthalmology, from the varsity.

While it remains unclear how breast milk contributes to a quick recovery, the team believes that it has similar properties as serum tears -- a medication made from centrifuging a patient's own blood

to separate the serum, which is then sterilised and bottled.

The serum contains components, including proteins and growth factors, that are similar to natural tears, making it an effective treatment for some patients with severe dry eye and inflammatory eye diseases.

Although the findings, published in the journal Current Eye Research, are promising, it may just be "the tip of the iceberg," Petrash said, calling for more research.

"Breast milk itself is very complicated. There are sugars, carbohydrates, and lactose. There are a lot of proteins that have human growth factors and different kinds of biological properties. It would be really good to know what is it about breast milk that makes it so therapeutically promising."

## MP gov partners with AIIMS Delhi for maternal, infant mortality rate reduction

AGENCIES  
BHOPLAL, FEB 9

In a significant step to reduce maternal and infant mortality rates in the state, Madhya Pradesh government has formed a strategic partnership with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Delhi to seek its regular assistance, an official said on Saturday.

On Saturday, a delegation of senior officials associated with National Health Mission of the Madhya Pradesh government attended a meeting in AIIMS Delhi and signed an agreement with the country's premier government health institution.

During the meeting, the discussion was focused on exploring evidence-based interventions and policy frameworks to improve healthcare services in the state, said NHM Director



Dr. Saloni Sidana, who represented the MP government in the meeting.

Madhya Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Rajendra Shukla told IANS that the step has been taken to strengthening maternal and child health services and ensuring better health outcomes in the state.

"Partnership between AIIMS Delhi and NHM Madhya Pradesh will lead to evidence-based policies, advanced technical interventions, and enhanced

targeted interventions, capacity-building programmes, and modern health solutions.

"The objective is to improve the quality of health services for mothers and newborns and strengthen the state's health indicators. Special programs will be conducted for the training and technical empowerment of health workers," Shukla added.

A state government release mentioned: "In a high-level meeting held at AIIMS Delhi, NHM Mission Director Dr. Saloni Sidana and Deputy Director (Child Health) Dr. Himani Yadav had detailed discussions with AIIMS Delhi experts, including Dr. Ramesh Agarwal, Dr. M. Jeev Sankar, Dr. Anu Sachdeva, Dr. Aparna Sharma, Dr. Ankit Verma, Dr. Vivek Kumar, and Dr. Satya Prakash.

"The discussions focused on exploring evidence-based interventions and policy frameworks to improve healthcare services in the state.

The experts provided valuable guidance on enhancing the quality of maternal and child health services."

The statement read that under this partnership, NHM Madhya Pradesh and AIIMS Delhi will work together to implement targeted interventions, capacity-building programmes, and modern health solutions.

"The objective is to improve the quality of health services for mothers and newborns and strengthen the state's health indicators. Special programs will be conducted for the training and technical empowerment of health workers," it read.

## Powerhouses of the cell may help cure diabetes, say researchers

AGENCIES  
NEW YORK, FEB 9

Mitochondria, that produce energy for the cell, holds the key to curing diabetes, researchers have learned.

Mitochondrial defects are associated with the development of diseases such as type 2 diabetes.

Patients who suffer from this disorder are unable to produce enough insulin or use the insulin produced by their pancreas to keep their blood sugar at normal levels.

Several studies have shown that insulin-producing pancreatic cells of patients with diabetes have abnormal mitochondria and are unable to generate energy.

Yet, these studies were unable to explain why the cells behaved this way. In a new study published in the journal Science, researchers at the University of Michigan in the US used mice to



show that dysfunctional mitochondria trigger a response that affects the maturation and function of these cells.

"We wanted to determine which pathways are important for maintaining proper mitochondrial

function," said Emily M. Walker, Ph.D, a research assistant professor of internal medicine and first author of the study.

To do so, the team damaged three components that are essential for mitochondrial function: their DNA, a pathway used to get rid of damaged mitochondria, and one that maintains a healthy pool of mitochondria in the cell.

"In all three cases, the exact same stress response was turned on, which caused pancreatic cells to become immature, stop making enough insulin, and essentially stop being pancreatic cells," Walker said.

"Our results demonstrate that the mitochondria can send signals to the nucleus and change the fate of the cell." The researchers also confirmed their findings in human pancreatic islet cells.

Losing your pancreatic cells is the most direct path to getting type 2 diabetes. Through our study we now have an explanation for what might be happening and how we can intervene and fix the root cause, said authors.

The team is working on further dissecting the cellular pathways that are disrupted and hope that they will be able to replicate their results in cell samples from diabetic patients.

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## Over 14.6 cr women screened for breast cancer, more than 9 cr for cervical cancer: Nadda

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

More than 14.6 crore women across the country have been screened for breast cancer, and over nine crore for cervical cancer, said Union Health Minister J P Nadda.

In a written response to a question in Lok Sabha, Nadda noted that 57,184 women were diagnosed with breast cancer while 50,612 are receiving treatment.

Further, 96,747 women were diagnosed with cervical cancer and 86,196 are under treatment, said the Union Minister citing the National Non-Communica-

ble Diseases (NCD) portal.

The National NCD Portal was rolled out by the government in 2018 under NP-NCD for non-communicable diseases (NCDs) screening and management and ensuring continuum of care for five common NCDs, including breast and cervical cancer.

To prevent and control major NCDs like hypertension, diabetes, oral cancer, breast cancer and cervical cancer, the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NP-NCD) was also launched by the Department of Health and Family Welfare, in 2010.

It aimed to strengthen infrastructure, human resource development, health promotion, early diagnosis, management and referral to an appropriate level of healthcare facilities. Under the programme, "770 district NCD clinics, 233 cardiac care units (CCU), 372 district day care centres and 6,410 NCD clinics at community health centres have been set up across the country", Nadda said.

Meanwhile, the Department of Health and Family Welfare provides technical and financial support to the states and Union Territories under the NP-NCD as part of National Health Mission (NHM).

## More screen time may lower language development skills in toddlers: Study

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

Increased exposure to screens such as television and smartphones may lead to lower language development skills in toddlers, according to an international study.

The findings led by researchers from 20 Latin American countries found that book exposure and shared screen time with adults could boost language skills in toddlers.

The researchers anal-

ysed data from 1,878 toddlers aged 12 to 48 months across Latin America between August 2021 and March 2023. The toddlers were evaluated based on parent-reported surveys of screen use, shared media engagement, book exposure, language skills, and developmental milestones.

The team also screened the socioeconomic status of the participants to understand basic needs, parental education, and occupation.

The results, published in the journal PLOS ONE,

showed that TV and background TV were the most frequently used media, with average daily exposure exceeding one hour. This lowered language development skills in toddlers.

The team also found that entertainment content was the most consumed by toddlers. It was followed by music and educational programming.

Further, families with lower socioeconomic status reported less use of books and fewer educational resources.

## First suspected GBS case reported in Mumbai

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, FEB 9

The number of suspected GBS patients on Friday rose to 180 in Maharashtra, including the first such case involving a 64-year-old woman diagnosed with the rare nerve disorder from Mumbai.

A woman, who resides in the Andheri East area, was hospitalised with a history of fever and diarrhoea that was followed by ascending paralysis. Four new suspected GBS cases were reported in the state on Friday.



Of the 180 patients, 146 were diagnosed with GBS. A total of six deaths have occurred till now, of

which one was confirmed as GBS and five suspected deaths.

According to the State

Public Health Department, of the 180 patients, 35 are from Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), 88 are from newly added villages in the PMC area, 25 from Pimpri-Chinchwad Municipal Corporation, 24 from Pune Rural, and eight from other districts.

Of these patients, 79 have been discharged till now, 58 are in ICU and 22 are on ventilators.

Maharashtra Public Health Minister Prakash Abitkar has appealed to the citizens not to panic but to take adequate care to keep water quality good

and eat fresh and clean food.

Abitkar said that Union Health and Family Welfare Minister J.P. Nadda, who met the state government representatives on Monday, asked to prepare a Standard Operating Procedure for handling the GBS outbreak.

The Union Minister has urged collaboration among the State Health, Urban Development, and other Departments to effectively monitor and implement various measures aimed at controlling the outbreak.

# Farmers key to nation's development: Vice President Dhankhar

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

Highlighting farmers' role in the country's development, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Sunday urged youth to take up the profession and assured them of positive economic results if they take advantage of new technologies, cooperatives and government policies.

Addressing the Akhil Mewar Region Jat Mahasabha in Chittorgarh, the Vice President said, "No matter what happens, no matter how many obstacles arise, no one can undermine the role of farmers in India's journey towards development. Today's governance system bows to the farm-



ers."

He said, "When the economic situation of farmers improves, the country's situation improves. After all, farmers are the providers, and they should not look to anyone or depend on

anyone for help because farmers, with their strong hands, possess political strength and economic capability."

Encouraging farmers to take advantage of Agricultural Science Centres,

he said, "There are over 730 Agricultural Science Centres to help farmers. Don't leave them alone, go there and ask them - 'What services will you offer us?' Learn about new technologies and government policies. You'll discover that the government has opened up a treasure trove for you, of which you may not be aware. You also may not know what cooperatives can do."

"If you visit even twice a month, the people working there will wake up, become active, and realise that the food provider is awake. The food provider will be asking for accounts, and when you ask for accounts, quality improvements will follow," he pointed out.

The Vice President also emphasised farmers' participation in the trade and value addition of agricultural products.

"Why isn't the farmer increasing the value of his products? Several businesses are running on the products of farmers, like flour mills, oil mills, and many more," he said.

"We should collaborate and make sure the farmer focuses on livestock. I feel great joy when dairies expand.

There should be more growth in this sector. We should not limit ourselves to milk, but extend to products like butter-milk, yoghurt, paneer, ice cream, rasgullas - farmers should contribute to these," he said.

# India will become a Vishwa Guru following path of Vivekananda, Dayanand Saraswati: Acharya Pramod Krishnam

AGENCIES  
KURUKSHETRA, FEB 9

Former Congress leader and spiritual guru Acharya Pramod Krishnam said on Sunday that India will become a Vishwa Guru by following the path of Swami Vivekananda and Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati.

Acharya Krishnam, Peethadheshwar of Kalki Dham, Sambhal, was in Haryana's Kurukshetra on the occasion of Chaturveda Parayan Mahayagna organised on the occasion of the second birth centenary celebration of Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati.

"The philosophy, thinking of Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati, the penance he did is relevant even in

today's era. If India has to be made a Vishwa Guru, then India can become a Vishwa Guru by following the path of Swami Vivekananda and Maharshi Dayanand Saraswati," he stated on the occasion.

"I think India's successful Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji respects Maharshi Dayanand ji for his dedication towards his ideals. I think the Mahayagna organised here on this holy land of Kurukshetra will give a new direction to the country," he added.

On the Maha Kumbh underway in Uttar Pradesh's Prayagraj, Acharya Krishnam said, "Maha Kumbh is for everyone, be it heroines and heroes. I think Sanatan is for everyone and

everyone belongs to Sanatan. Sanatan includes everyone, it does not discriminate."

"I don't think we will decide who the real Shankaracharya is and who is fake. Only God can decide this. Being a Sanyasi and a sadhu is a matter of detachment.

This is not a matter of any exam. This is a matter of self-realisation, a matter of self-reflection. When a person has a spiritual realisation, then the paths of spirituality open up," he opined.

Acharya Krishnam also responded to the Sambhal mosque controversy.

He observed that the controversy happened in Sambhal because 500 years ago temples were demolished there.

# 6.39 cr villagers gained digital literacy under DISHA scheme in 2017-24: Jitin Prasada

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

As many as 6.39 crore people were imparted digital literacy between 2017 and 2024 under the Pradhan Mantri Gramin Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (PMG-DISHA), enabling them to send messages and attach files on mobile phones, according to Minister of State for Electronics and Information Technology Jitin Prasada.

The beneficiaries under the DISHA scheme also included field level government functionaries namely Anganwadi and ASHA workers and authorised ration dealers, said Prasada in a recent reply in Rajya Sabha.

Highlighting the outcomes of the scheme, he said that the maximum



number of 1.45 crore people in Uttar Pradesh were imparted digital literacy. It was followed by 74.12 lakh beneficiaries in Bihar.

Maharashtra with 53.23 lakh beneficiaries, Madhya Pradesh with 50.69 lakh and Rajasthan with 39.70 lakh beneficiaries were the other major participating states under the scheme, he said.

He said a survey conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO) between July 2022 and June 2023 had shown

that among persons aged 15-24 years, around 78.4 per cent reported execution skill of sending messages - e-mail and SMS - with attached files like documents, pictures and video.

The Minister said the Survey also showed that about 94.2 per cent of rural households and about 97.1 per cent of urban households possess telephone and/or mobile phone.

He said the PMGDISHA scheme was officially concluded on March 31, 2024, after the Survey indicated the successful achievement of its objectives ranging from rise in smart-phone usage, internet penetration, and digital engagement in rural areas.

The Minister said as

many as 1.74 lakh Anganwadi workers, 54,329 ASHA workers and 12,154 ration dealers were trained under the DISHA scheme.

Presenting state-wise data, Prasada said a maximum of 30,642 Anganwadi workers benefitted in West Bengal, followed by 27,125 in Tamil Nadu and 18,630 in Uttar Pradesh.

The Minister said the maximum number of 8,223 ASHA workers benefitted from the digital literacy scheme in Maharashtra, followed by 5,654 in Uttar Pradesh and 3,607 in West Bengal.

The maximum number of 1,949 ration dealers benefitted from the scheme in Assam, followed by 1,938 in Chhattisgarh and 1,360 in Maharashtra, he said.

# MLA who defected to Congress from BRS ready to face by-elections

AGENCIES  
HYDERABAD, FEB 9

Former Telangana Deputy Chief Minister Kadiyam Srihari, one of the 10 BRS MLAs who defected to Congress last year, said on Sunday that if by-elections are to be held, he would not run away from them but would face them.

Stating that the matter related to 10 MLAs joining Congress was pending in the Supreme Court, he said he would abide by the court verdict.

"If by-elections are to be held, I will not run away. I will stay put to fight," he told reporters.

The Telangana Assembly Secretary last week issued notices to 10 MLAs on the petitions of the Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS), seeking disqualification of

the defectors.

This came after the Supreme Court asked the Telangana Assembly to define a "reasonable period" for a decision on the disqualification pleas.

The Supreme Court was hearing the petition of BRS MLA P. Kaushik Reddy seeking the disqualification of three MLAs Venkata Rao Tellam, Kadiyam Srihari, and Danam Nagender.

The next hearing on this petition is scheduled for February 10. The apex court will also take up for hearing another petition of BRS Working President K. T. Rama Rao, questioning the delay on the part of the Assembly Speaker in taking a decision on the disqualification of seven other defected MLAs.

Srihari said that the BRS has no right to talk

about defections, alleging that it was the BRS that undermined democracy by engineering defections when it was in power. The senior leader alleged that there was no development in Telangana during the 10-year rule of the BRS.

The Dalit leader demanded that Scheduled Castes should be provided 18 per cent reservation in proportion to their population.

He alleged that BRS Working President Rama Rao was celebrating the BJP's victory in the Delhi Assembly elections. He believes that Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) suffered defeat in Delhi polls due to its friendship with the BRS.

Srihari contended that if the Congress and the AAP had contested the Delhi elections together, they would have come to power.

In March last year, Kadiyam Srihari along with his daughter Kadiyam Kavya joined the Congress.

Kavya was declared the BRS candidate for the Lok Sabha elections from Warangal. She was elected to Lok Sabha from the same seat as the Congress candidate.

Srihari was elected to the Assembly from Station Ghanpur constituency in 2023.

Srihari, a prominent SC leader who had started his political journey in the 1980s with the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), had also served as a minister in the cabinets of N. T. Rama Rao and Chandrababu Naidu in combined Andhra Pradesh.

He had also served as TDP General Secretary and Politburo member.

# Piyush Goyal slams states seeking Central funds on basis of tax contribution

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, FEB 9

Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal has come out strongly against the demand of some states seeking allocation of central funds in proportion to the taxes that they contribute to the Central pool. Criticising this approach as "petty thinking and unfortunate," the minister highlighted the Prime Minister's view that if the country has to prosper, the eight states of the Northeast and eastern Indian states of Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand must develop as well.

"There are some states like Karnataka, Tamil

Nadu and Telangana which say they should get back the amount of taxes they have paid. There can't be more petty thinking than this. There cannot also be anything more unfortunate than this," Goyal lamented.

The MP from Mumbai North constituency was speaking at the 'Rashtriya Ekamata Yatra 2025', an event here organised by the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad and the Students Experience in Interstate Living initiative on Saturday. However, there is no need to worry now as the present BJP-led government in Maharashtra is very sensitive towards Northeast India, Goyal said.

# Aero India 2025: Cooperation in defence is integral to Indo-US partnership, says Charge d'Affaires

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

U.S. Embassy New Delhi Charge d'Affaires Jorgan Andrews said on Sunday that the cooperation in defence between India and the U.S. is integral to the strategic partnership between the two countries.

The U.S. will take part in the Aero India 2025 in Bengaluru, starting from 10 February. The U.S. delegation will be led by Charge d'Affaires Jorgan Andrews which includes General Kevin Schneider, Commander, U.S. Pacific Air Forces, Brigadier General Patrick Teague, U.S. Mission India's Senior Defense Official, and Consul General Chris Hodges, U.S. Con-

sulate General Chennai.

"The U.S. is excited to once again participate in Aero India and to spotlight our strong defence ties with India. Our cooperation in defence, trade, and training is integral to our growing strategic partnership," said Charge d'Affaires Andrews.

An official U.S. statement said that for the 15th time, the U.S. will be proud to participate in Aero India 2025 - Asia's premier aerospace and defence trade show exhibition.

"During the event, the U.S. will showcase a range of advanced aircrafts, reinforcing the strong and growing defence and aerospace partnership between the two countries, which share a com-



mitment to promoting regional security, stability, economic prosperity through diversified trade, and strategic investment ties," the statement added.

It said that at Aero India 2025, more than two dozen American exhibitors would engage Indian counterparts, explore new business opportunities, and demonstrate innovative solutions in aviation and defence.

"These companies will display advancements in Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), fighter aircraft, advanced avionics, and defence electronics," the statement said.

Since Aero India 2023, the U.S. and India have deepened defence ties, including through technology innovation, expanded trade, and increased cooperation in maritime security, cybersecurity, legis-

tics, and counter-terrorism operations.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Pacific Air Forces Commander General Kevin Schneider said the Aero India 2025 is an ideal forum to showcase U.S. defence aircraft and equipment and ultimately contribute toward our compatibility and interoperability with other nations.

"The growth in Indian and U.S. bilateral defence trade has corresponded with growing interoperability through information sharing, liaison officers, training exercises, and defence enabling agreements," he said.

General Schneider added that the importance of partnership between the two continues to grow,

particularly as both face an increasingly complex and dynamic security environment in the Indo-Pacific.

The official statement added that spectators could expect a display of U.S.-made defence equipment and technology, including F-16, F-35, KC-135 Stratotanker, and B-1 bomber.

"The U.S. Air Force Band of the Pacific's 10-member ensemble, Final Approach, based out of Yokota Air Base in Japan, will perform for the public throughout the week: at Aero India 2025 on February 13 and 14 and at 5:00 p.m. on February 11 at the Christ University Auditorium, Campus Road in Bengaluru," the statement added.

# BJP leaders visit L-G's residence, await key decisions on Delhi's future after historic victory

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

After the party's historic victory in the Delhi Assembly elections, BJP leaders, including winning candidates and party officials, have begun crucial meetings to discuss the next steps for the capital's governance. Kailash Gahlot, the victorious BJP candidate from the Bijwasan constituency, arrived at the L-G's House, stating, "I am here only for a courtesy meeting with the L-G." Similarly, Parvesh

Verma, the BJP winner from the New Delhi constituency, also paid a visit to the L-G's residence.

In a parallel development, BJP MP Anurag Thakur arrived in Lucknow at the BJP office to engage in party discussions related to the Delhi elections.

Earlier in the day, a significant meeting was held at the residence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah, where key decisions regarding the future of Delhi's governance were discussed. Union Minis-

ter and BJP President J.P. Nadda also attended the meeting.

One of the most anticipated decisions remains the identity of the Chief Ministerial face for Delhi, a question that has captured the public's attention. The party is yet to announce the CM face officially, and people are eagerly awaiting the announcement.

The BJP's victory marks the end of the Aam Aadmi Party's decade-long dominance in Delhi, signalling a major shift in public sentiment.

# Nuclear plants to power railways: Ashwini Vaishnav

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

The growing power requirements of Indian Railways (IR) are likely to be met with clean and reliable nuclear power, for which the Power Ministry has been approached, said Railways Minister Ashwini Vaishnav.

The Railway Ministry is in touch with the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) and Ministry of Power (MoP) for allocation of nuclear power to meet

part of its traction power requirement, he said in a recent reply in Rajya Sabha.

He said Indian Railways has been exploring sourcing power from existing and upcoming nuclear power plants.

He said nuclear power being a clean and reliable source will help the railways, reducing the dependence on fossil fuels, and thereby lessening carbon emissions.

On fare concession offered to passengers, the Minister said that Indian Railways gave a subsidy

of Rs 56,993 crore on passenger tickets in 2022-23.

The Minister said that this amounts to a concession of 46 per cent on average, to every person, travelling on railways.

In other words, if the cost of providing service is Rs 100, then the ticket costs Rs 54 only, according to the minister.

"This subsidy is continuing for all passengers. Further, concessions beyond this subsidy amount are continuing for many categories, including Persons with disabilities (Divyang-

jans) and 11 categories of patients and eight categories of students," he said.

The Union Minister said the number of passengers availing the concession in different classes and different trains over various Zonal Railways varies from year to year.

During the financial years 2020-21 to 2024-25 (up to December 2024), approximately 2,357.8 crore passengers of all ages (including senior citizens) travelled on Indian Railways, he said.

He also highlighted

that for the ease of travel for the elderly and women, the railways earmarks a combined reservation quota of six to seven lower berths per coach in sleeper class, four to five lower berths per coach each in Air Conditioned 3 tier (3AC) and three to four lower berths per coach in Air Conditioned 2 tier (2AC) classes (depending on the number of coaches of that class in the train) for senior citizens, female passengers of 45 years of age and above and pregnant women.

# Egypt to host emergency Arab summit on Palestine on Feb 27

AGENCIES  
CAIRO, FEB 9

Egypt announced on Sunday that Cairo will host an emergency Arab summit on February 27 to address the latest developments concerning the Palestinian issue and the Gaza Strip, the Egyptian Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The summit was decided to be held after Egypt's high-level consultations with Arab nations, including Palestine, which requested the summit, and coordination with Bahrain, the current chair of the Arab League (AL) summit and the AL Secretariat, according to the statement.

The announcement followed controversial



remarks by US President Donald Trump suggesting the relocation of Palestinians from Gaza to neighbouring countries, including Egypt and Jordan. The proposal has been widely rejected both regionally and internationally, Xinhua news agency reported.

During a joint press conference in Washington

with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday, Trump said that the US planned to assume control of Gaza and redevelop it after relocating its Palestinian residents.

Trump has previously floated similar proposals, which both Egypt and Jordan have explicitly rejected, reaffirming their opposition to any forced

displacement of Palestinians.

Arab states have rejected Trump's recent comments about relocating Gaza's residents and creating a "Riviera of the Middle East" there, as have Palestinian leaders.

Trump proposed this on Tuesday when he met Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in Washington D.C.

Speaking to reporters at the White House on Friday, Trump said he viewed the proposal as "a real estate transaction, where we'll be an investor in that part of the world". He added that he was in "no rush to do anything".

Several countries also condemned a suggestion by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

-- that Saudi Arabia has enough land for a Palestinian state.

Netanyahu appeared to be joking in response to a slip by an Israeli TV interviewer, but his words reverberated through the region at a time when tensions are running high.

Over the past few days, Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty made a series of phone calls with several Arab counterparts to mass regional efforts in a bid to thwart the US proposal of displacing the Palestinian people.

Upon directives from President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi, Abdelatty phoned the Foreign Ministers of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Jordan, Iraq, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauritania, and Sudan.

# Healing from terror attack, New Orleans gets ready for biggest US sports event

AGENCIES  
NEW YORK, FEB 9

Barely six weeks after a terrorist attack shook New Orleans, the city is gearing up on Sunday to host the Superbowl, the biggest US sports event, and host President Donald Trump under heavy security.

About 125,000 visitors are expected to converge on the city, still healing from the New Year's Day attack, for the national football championship.

The Superbowl is also a multibillion-dollar business, an entertainment carnival, and national party time.

When the game starts at 6:30 pm (5 am Monday in India), life across the US will slow down to a crawl as at least 123 million Americans gather at parties in homes, bars,

and wherever else possible to watch on TV or online the Kansas City Chiefs battle the Philadelphia Eagles for the Vince Lombard trophy named for a famous coach.

According to the US Census Bureau, last year's Superbowl was "the most watched event in US history," with more than a third of the US population tuning in.

The viewership will match or exceed that number this year at Superbowl LIX - the 59th edition shown with Roman numerals.

On the ground in New Orleans, authorities are gearing up to face threats after being jolted by the January 1 terrorist attack by an Islamic State supporter who drove a vehicle flying its black flag into a celebrating crowd, killing 14 people.

In a threat assessment after the New Year's Day attack, the Federal Bureau of Investigation said the Superbowl is "an attractive target" for foreign and domestic terrorists, lone wolves, and those wanting to commit hate crimes.

The security level has been moved up several notches because Trump, the target of two assassination attempts, is attending. He will be the first president to attend a Superbowl. Louisiana Governor Jeff Landry of Louisiana issued emergency orders to create a special security zone around the Caesars Superdome. National Football League's Chief Security Officer Cathy Lanier said over 2,700 local, state, and federal law enforcement personnel will enforce security.

# African leaders call for immediate ceasefire in Congo

AGENCIES  
DAR ES SALAAM, FEB 9

African leaders called for an "immediate ceasefire" in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and reaffirmed their full support for seeking a lasting solution to the ongoing conflict.

A "historic summit," jointly convened by the East African Community (EAC) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC), two major regional blocs, was held on Saturday in the Tanzanian port city of Dar es Salaam to address the escalating crisis in eastern DRC, Xinhua news agency reported.

In a final communique, regional leaders called for an "immediate ceasefire" and the restoration of supply lines in the DRC, as the March 23 Movement

(M23) has reportedly been advancing toward Bukavu, the capital of South Kivu province, after establishing its so-called administration in Goma, the capital of North Kivu province and a key regional hub.

Recognising the urgency of the situation, leaders attending the summit directed the EAC-SADC Chiefs of Defence Forces to meet within five days to devise technical measures for enforcing an immediate and unconditional ceasefire. The leaders urged the reopening of traffic routes to restore humanitarian supply lines, particularly the road linking Goma and Bukavu, which has been cut off by the M23 rebellion's advances, and the Goma International Airport, which was severely vandalised during the hostilities.

Political and diplomatic

engagement is the most sustainable solution to the conflict in eastern DRC, the communique stated, as regional leaders expressed support for resuming direct negotiations with all state and non-state parties, including the M23, under existing regional mediation frameworks.

Kinshasa has rejected any form of direct negotiations with the M23 but has hinted at reviving the Nairobi Peace Process, a peace initiative led by the EAC and facilitated by former Kenyan President Uhuru Kenyatta.

In the communique, regional countries proposed merging the Nairobi Process with the Luanda Process, a parallel peace mechanism initiated by the African Union and brokered by Angolan President Joao Lourenco.

# ISRAELI FORCES BEGIN WITHDRAWING FROM KEY GAZA CORRIDOR UNDER CEASEFIRE DEAL

AGENCIES  
JERUSALEM, FEB 9

Israeli forces have begun withdrawing from a key area in Gaza as part of the Israel-Hamas ceasefire agreement that took effect last month, an Israeli government official said on Sunday.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the official told Xinhua news agency that the pullout from the area dubbed by Israel as the Netzarim Corridor -- a strip of land that bisected Gaza from north to south -- is expected to be completed by late Sunday.

The Israeli military had established posts in the corridor during its 15-month-long assault on



Gaza, Xinhua news agency reported.

Speaking anonymously to Xinhua, an Israeli security official said that the military was "preparing to implement the agreement according to the guidelines of the political echelon."

Footage circulating on social media appeared to

show troops setting fire to furniture and unidentified boxes at their bases, with a soldier heard shouting, "We will leave nothing for the Gazans."

The 42-day ceasefire between Israel and Hamas took effect on January 19. Under the agreement, Israel committed to withdrawing its forces from the area.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was sending a delegation to Qatar, a key mediator in talks between the sides. However, the mission included low-level officials, sparking speculation that it would not lead to a breakthrough in extending the truce.

Netanyahu is expected to convene a meeting of key Cabinet Ministers this week on the second phase of the deal, but it was unclear when. During the first phase of the ceasefire, Hamas is gradually releasing 33 Israeli hostages captured during its October 7, 2023, attack in exchange for a

pause in fighting, freedom for hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, and a floor of humanitarian aid to war-battered Gaza.

The deal stipulates that Israeli troops will pull back from populated areas of Gaza and that on day 22, which is Sunday, Palestinians will be allowed to head north from a central road that crosses through Netzarim, without being inspected by Israeli forces.

With the truce now past its midpoint, negotiations mediated by Qatar, Egypt, and the US are set to determine whether the ceasefire will continue into its second phase, which would include the release of more hostages and Palestinian detainees.

# North Korean leader says US causing 'conflicting structure,' vows to bolster nuclear forces

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, FEB 9

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un has accused the US of standing behind the world's disputes, reaffirming the country's policy to further develop its nuclear forces, the North's state media reported on Sunday. Kim made the remarks during his visit to the Ministry of National Defence the previous day in celebration of the 77th anniversary of the founding of its armed forces, the Korean People's Army, Yonhap reported quoting the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

Delivering a speech to military and political commanding officers of the ministry, Kim referred to a series of new plans for



bolstering "all deterrence" and reaffirming the country's "unshakable policy of more highly developing the nuclear forces," KCNA said, without providing details of the plans.

The leader claimed that US nuclear strategic assets deployed on the Korean Peninsula, the US-led nuclear war simulation exercises and the US-Japan-South Korea mili-

tary cooperation are "inviting military imbalance" on the peninsula and in Northeast Asia, causing "a new conflicting structure" and posing a grave challenge to North Korea.

North Korea "does not want unnecessary tension" in the region, Kim said, adding that, however, it will take "sustained countermeasures to ensure the regional military balance"

to prevent the outbreak of a new war and ensure peace and security on the peninsula.

He also accused the US of "standing unflinchingly behind the world's big and small disputes and tragedies of bloodshed," stating that this proves the regime's line of seeking "an unlimited defence capability" is "most just."

Kim also blamed the US for the Russia-Ukraine war, expressing "serious concern" that the US and Western countries are prolonging the war with the "unrealisable dream to deal strategic setbacks to Russia," the KCNA said.

North Korea's army and people "will invariably support and encourage the just cause of the Russian army and people to

defend their sovereignty, security and territorial integrity," Kim said, referring to the mutual defence treaty he signed with Russian President Vladimir Putin last year.

In a separate commentary, the KCNA also slammed joint South Korea-US military drills that have taken place this year, accusing them of heightening tensions.

"Hostile and risky actions will only lead to undesired results" the KCNA said, without elaborating on what it meant by undesired results.

North Korea has long denounced the allies' joint military drills as a rehearsal for an invasion. South Korea and the US have said their military exercises are defensive in nature.

# Israeli airstrikes target military facilities near Damascus

AGENCIES  
DAMASCUS, FEB 9

Israel carried out airstrikes on military sites in the countryside of Syrian capital Damascus, targeting facilities in the Deir Ali area, local media reported.

The attack struck a location near the capital, while the Israeli military claimed its aircraft had bombed a weapons depot belonging to Hamas in the same area.

No casualties were immediately confirmed, Xinhua news agency reported quoting Sham FM.

Meanwhile, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor, reported that Israeli airstrikes hit stor-

age facilities linked to the First Division and Brigade 166 in Al-Kiswah, southern Syria.

The strikes triggered powerful explosions, setting off fires at the targeted sites, though the number of casualties and the extent of damage remains unclear.

The attack is part of an ongoing pattern of Israeli airstrikes on military sites in Syria, often targeting weapons depots and positions associated with Iran-backed groups and Palestinian factions.

Israeli officials have repeatedly stated their commitment to preventing arms transfers to Hezbollah and other militant groups operating within Syrian territory.

There was no immedi-

ate comment from Syrian authorities on the attack.

Earlier in January Israeli Defense Minister Israel Katz said that the country's military forces will remain in Syria for an "unlimited time."

"The IDF (Israel Defense Forces) will remain at the summit of Mount Hermon and in the buffer zone indefinitely," Katz said during a visit to military posts established by Israel at the Mount Hermon summit.

He claimed that the move is aimed "to ensure the security of Israel's citizens."

"I came here to ensure that the IDF is well-prepared in defence and offence for prolonged deployment at the Mount Hermon posts," he said.

# Tears of joy as five Thai hostages return home after a year in Hamas captivity

AGENCIES  
BANGKOK, FEB 9

Thailand witnessed an emotional homecoming as five nationals, held captive by Hamas for more than a year, finally reunited with their families at Suvarnabhumi Airport on Sunday, local media reported.

The five returnees -- Sathien Suwannakham from Nong Bua Lam Phu, Pongsak Thaenna from Buri Ram, Watchara Sri-aoun from Udon Thani, Surasak Rumnao from Udon Thani, and Bannawat Saethao from Nan -- were welcomed with

tearful embraces, marking the end of their harrowing ordeal, The Bangkok Post reported.

Dressed in winter jackets, the men were visibly moved as they embraced their families.

Pongsak Thaenna, 35, broke down in tears as he hugged his 65-year-old father, Wilas. "I am indescribably happy to come back home again," he said, expressing gratitude to the Thai government for facilitating his return. "We are all deeply touched to be back in our birthplace... I don't know what else to say, we are truly thankful."

Among those waiting anxiously was Bannawat's wife, Wichayada Sae-yaung, 22, who had spent months praying for her husband's safe return. The couple has three children -- aged one, four, and six -- who had been asking why their father had not been in touch. "Every day, they asked when he would come home," she said.

For Sathien Suwannakham's mother, 60-year-old Nukan, the return of her son was a moment she had feared would never come.

"I visited as many shrines as possible, pray-



ing for his safety. I even consulted fortune tellers, just to know if he was still alive," she revealed. "Every time I thought of him, I cried. I feared my son might have already been

killed and buried." The release of the Thai hostages comes amid ongoing negotiations following Hamas's October 2023 attack on Israeli border communities. According to

Israeli authorities, at least 240 people -- including both Israelis and foreign nationals -- were abducted.

Among them were 30 Thai labourers, making Thailand one of the hardest-hit foreign nations. During the same attack, 41 Thai nationals were killed. The first group of Thai hostages was freed later that year, and efforts continued to secure the release of the remaining captives.

Thai Foreign Minister Maris Sangiampongsa, who personally escorted the returnees from Israel, described the moment as deeply emotional. "To see

them back in the arms of their families... this is what we worked for," he said. "Two families told me they never expected to have this opportunity today."

He also acknowledged concerns about the mental state of the released hostages after spending 15 months in captivity.

The minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to bringing home the last remaining Thai hostage still believed to be in Hamas captivity. Additionally, authorities are working to repatriate the bodies of two deceased Thai nationals.

"We still have hope and will continue to work to bring them back," Maris said.

Before the conflict, approximately 30,000 Thai labourers were employed in Israel's agriculture sector, making them one of the largest migrant worker groups in the country.

Since the war began, nearly 9,000 Thai workers have been repatriated. Most of them hail from Thailand's northeastern provinces, a region known for its farming communities and economic struggles.

# BHEL gets Letter of Intent for renewable energy transmission project in Rajasthan

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd received a Letter of Intent from Rajasthan Part I Power Transmission Ltd to design and execute the high voltage direct current (HVDC) link along with associated AC substations to transmit renewable energy from Bhadla III (Rajasthan) and Fatehpur (UP), according to a regulatory filing on Sunday.

BHEL has received the LOI in consortium with Hitachi Energy India Ltd. for the project which will establish two HVDC LCC terminal stations of 6,000 MW at Bhadla (Rajasthan) and Fatehpur (UP), and an over 800 kV HVDC LCC terminal station (4X1,500 MW) from Bhadla III and Fatehpur, along with associated AC substations.



The project has to be completed by 2030, the filing said.

Rajasthan Part I Power Transmission is a special purpose vehicle of Adani Energy Solutions Ltd created to efficiently evacuate renewable energy generated in the Rajasthan Renewable Energy Zone (REZ) through an HVDC scheme.

Government-owned Bharat Heavy Electricals Ltd (BHEL) has reported a more than twofold jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 135 crore for the October-December quarter of

the current financial year.

The company had posted a net profit of Rs 60.31 crore in the same quarter of FY 2023-24.

BHEL's revenue shot up by 32.2 per cent to Rs 7,277 crore during the third quarter from Rs 5,504 in the same period of the previous year.

The company earnings before interest, depreciation, tax and amortisation (EBITDA) rose 40.5 per cent during the third quarter to Rs 304 crore from Rs 216 crore in the same quarter of the previous financial year.

BHEL's order book has been growing during the current financial year.

The BHEL and Hitachi Energy India consortium had bagged a major contract in November from the Power Grid Corporation of India for the establishment of over eight hundred 6,000 MW HVDC terminal stations at Khavda Pooling Station-2 (HVDC) and Nagpur (HVDC) for the evacuation of renewable power from the Khavda region in Gujarat to Nagpur.

The scope of work includes converter transformers, AC/DC control and protection, gas-insulated high-voltage switchgear, thyristor valves, 765kV/400kV substation and auxiliary systems to be delivered by Hitachi Energy India along with its consortium partner BHEL.

Earlier in July the company secured a Rs 10,000 crore order for the 1,600 MW Damodar Valley Corp project.

In an exchange filing, BHEL said: "Bharat Heavy Electricals Limited (BHEL) has received a Letter of Intent (LOI) from Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) for setting up the 2x800 MW Koderma Phase-II Thermal Power Station at Koderma district, Jharkhand on EPC basis."

Under the terms of the order, BHEL will be responsible for the supply of equipment including boiler, turbine, generator and associated auxiliaries along with electrical and C&I, balance of plant packages; erection & commissioning; and other civil works, the company said in a statement.

## Employability of India's graduates has shot up to 54.8 pc from 33.9 pc in last 10 years: Mandaviya

AGENCIES  
GANDHINAGAR, FEB 9

The employability of India's graduates has shot up from 33.95 per cent in 2013 to 54.81 per cent in 2024 driven by various skill-building initiatives launched by the government, Union Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has said.

Speaking at the Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation (BIMSTEC) Youth Summit here, Mandaviya showcased India's commitment to youth empowerment, citing initiatives like the Skill India Mission, the National Education Policy 2020, and the PM Internship Scheme, which have trained over 15 million youth in fields like AI, robotics, and digital technologies.

India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Thailand

are members of the BIMSTEC organisation. The summit aims to promote collaboration, exchange of experiences, and accelerate youth-led development, which is a step towards empowering the youth across the region.

The minister also underscored India's thriving startup ecosystem, which is now the third-largest in the world, with over 157,000 startups, nearly half of which are women-led. He proposed that BIMSTEC nations should collaborate to build an integrated regional startup network to foster innovation and entrepreneurship. He highlighted the immense potential of the region's youth, who make up more than 60 per cent of BIMSTEC's 1.8 billion population, stressing the need for skill development and opportunities in a fast-evolving global landscape. Mandaviya announced India's propos-

al for BIMSTEC to serve as a "Youth Bridge," a multi-sectoral initiative to empower young leaders through knowledge-sharing, leadership programmes, and regional networking opportunities. This initiative aims to create a transformative platform that integrates entrepreneurship, sports, academia, and technology.

The Union minister emphasised the pivotal role of young leaders in shaping a resilient, prosperous, and interconnected BIMSTEC community.

The summit also featured a panel discussion on "Celebrating Diversity across BIMSTEC Countries," which delved into the importance of cultural inclusivity, mutual cooperation, and shared heritage in strengthening regional ties. Following this, a session on "Digital Infrastructure for Inclusive Economic Growth and Sustainability" was held.

## India's semiconductor consumption market to grow at a 13 pc CAGR through 2030

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

Driven by the government's production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme, India's semiconductor consumption market which is valued at \$52 billion in 2024-25 is expected to grow at a robust CAGR of 13 per cent through 2030.

Sectors like automotive and industrial electronics present significant value-addition opportunities. Mobile handsets, IT, and industrial applications, which together contribute nearly 70 per cent of the revenue, remain the primary growth drivers, according to Dr V Veerappan, Chairman of the Indian Electronics and Semiconductor Association (IESA).

India's semiconductor market is projected to grow to \$103.4 billion by 2030, powering the \$400+ billion electronics market.

The government's targeted incentives for FABs and OSATs, increased R&D investments, and collaborative industry initiatives are key to propelling India's semiconductor sector forward, with significant projects Investment commitment of over \$21 billion by IESA member companies in last one year, according to Ashok Chandak, President, IESA.

Focusing on local semiconductor design and manufacturing while reducing import dependency is crucial to strengthening India's position in the global electronics ecosystem and retaining economic value in the country.

A skilled workforce is the backbone of India's semiconductor aspirations. By investing in education and hands-on training, we can equip the youth to lead the sector's transformation.

The 'Make in India' initia-

tive has enabled the domestic production of critical components and sub-assemblies such as chargers, battery packs, mechanics of all types, USB cables, and more complex components like Lithium Ion Cells, speaker and microphones, display assemblies and camera modules.

The setting up a semiconductor manufacturing base in the country has been an important part of 'Make in India', which India has been attempting to achieve for over six decades.

With the launch of the India Semiconductor Mission and the five major projects which have been approved, starting with Micron, the two projects by Tata Electronics, the one project by CG Power, and the last project by Keyence, a real manufacturing base of semiconductors in this country is being established in India.

## SEBI proposes stricter rules for listed companies to strengthen corporate governance

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has proposed new rules to improve corporate governance at listed companies.

These proposals focus on revising the format of the Annual Secretarial Compliance Report (ASCR), setting eligibility criteria for appointing auditors, and introducing monetary limits for approvals of Related Party Transactions (RPTs).

The SEBI aims to ensure that listed companies follow strict compliance and maintain transparency in their operations.

In a consultation paper, the regulator has suggested changes to make the ASCR more detailed.

The new format will



provide clearer confirmation of whether a company is following securities laws.

Additionally, the SEBI has proposed making ASCR a mandatory part of the annual report, which would enhance accountability.

For auditor appointments, it has suggested incorporating provisions from the Companies (Audit and Auditors)

Rules, 2014, into the Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements (LODR) Regulations.

This will ensure that statutory auditors have the necessary qualifications and experience suited to a company's size and complexity.

The SEBI has also proposed that audit committees should carefully evaluate the qualifications of signing partners before

appointing them.

To improve transparency in auditor appointments, it has recommended that key details about the selection or re-appointment of statutory and secretarial auditors should be disclosed to the audit committee, board of directors, and shareholders. It has also suggested introducing a standard format for such disclosures.

The SEBI has further proposed monetary limits for RPTs conducted by subsidiaries of listed companies.

It has suggested two approval thresholds for these transactions.

For subsidiaries with a financial track record, the approval threshold will be the lower of either 10 per cent of turnover or a monetary limit - Rs 1,000 crore

for main-board companies and Rs 50 crore for SMEs.

For subsidiaries without a financial track record, the threshold will be based on 10 per cent of the subsidiary's net worth or the same monetary limits.

If the subsidiary has a negative net worth, share capital plus securities premium will be considered instead.

To ensure better compliance, the SEBI has also suggested clarifying the definition of RPTs.

The amendments will specify whether exemptions for transactions between a parent company and its wholly-owned subsidiary apply to both listed and unlisted entities.

The SEBI has invited public comments on these proposals until February 28.

## Six of top 10 firms add Rs 1.18 lakh crore in market value; HDFC Bank leads the tally

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, FEB 9

The combined market valuation of six of the top 10 most valuable companies saw a significant rise of Rs 1,18,151.75 crore last week as the rise was mainly driven by positive investor sentiment and steady buying interest in banking and telecom stocks.

HDFC Bank and Bharti Airtel emerged as the biggest gainers, benefiting from strong business performance and growth prospects.

In the last trading week, the Sensex climbed 354.23 points, or 0.45 per cent, while the Nifty added 77.8 points, or 0.33 per cent.

The overall bullish trend in the market was supported by encouraging domestic economic indicators



and global cues, helping key companies maintain their upward momentum.

HDFC Bank saw its market capitalisation jump by Rs 32,639.98 crore at Rs 13,25,090.58 crore.

Bharti Airtel also posted impressive gains by adding Rs 31,003.44 crore to take its total valuation to Rs

9,56,205.34 crore.

Bajaj Finance's market value surged by Rs 29,032.08 crore to Rs 5,24,312.82 crore, while Infosys added Rs 21,114.32 crore to its total valuation, which stood at Rs 7,90,074.08 crore.

ICICI Bank's market capitalisation also increased

slightly by Rs 1,384.81 crore to Rs 8,87,632.56 crore.

However, four companies in the top-10 list experienced a decline in their valuations.

ITC was the biggest loser as the company shed Rs 39,474.45 crore during the week, its total valuation down to Rs 5,39,129.60 crore.

Hindustan Unilever also faced a significant drop by losing Rs 33,704.89 crore to Rs 5,55,361.14 crore.

Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) also witnessed a dip, with its market capitalisation decreasing by Rs 16,064.31 crore to Rs 14,57,854.09 crore.

SBI's market value dropped by Rs 25,926.02 crore to Rs 6,57,789.12 crore.

The upcoming week

is set to be dynamic for global and Indian markets, driven by key macroeconomic data releases and corporate earnings.

According to experts, market sentiment will be shaped by inflation figures, industrial output data, and major earnings announcements.

"The Nifty index decisively closed above its 21-day EMA and a three-week consolidation range, confirming a shift from a negative to a positive trajectory," Master Trust Group Direcot Puneet Singhania said.

He further said that as long as Bank Nifty sustains above 49,700, it is likely to move towards 50,700, whereas a breakdown below this level could lead to a decline towards 49,200.

## Watchdog to expand English corporate disclosure info for foreign investors

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, FEB 9

South Korea's financial watchdog said on Sunday that it will expand corporate information in English to help increase foreign investors' access to disclosure.

The Financial Supervisory Service (FSS) said more content on its English disclosure platform (<https://englishdart.fss.or.kr>) will be available for foreign investors starting Monday, and a new English data platform (<https://engopendart.fss.or.kr>) will also be launched.

The FSS said the steps will help foreign investors to easily access corporate disclosure information,

enabling them to gather and analyze data in real time, reports Yonhap news agency.

System users are able to check fixed information -- index, table format and optional input values -- for all statutory disclosures, including business reports in English. Also, they can search information not only with a company's name but with a report's name and get what they want more easily.

The watchdog also said the FSS is set to unveil an open English platform, dubbed English Open DART, which will provide over 80 types of English disclosure information as well as big data on all listed companies' financial

statements.

Foreign investors' use of English disclosure services has considerably increased for the last three years, and the watchdog said that the upgraded English disclosure services will attract more users.

The FSS plans to establish a dedicated infrastructure for English disclosures in the second half of 2025 to put in place a system with high levels of reliability and low-latency.

Meanwhile, Acting President Choi Sang-mok has emphasised the importance of close communication with parliament to expedite the passage of a bill designed to enhance the country's capital markets.

## South Korea's 4 major banks to close more offline branches by March

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, FEB 9

South Korea's four major banks will close more offline branches by March, despite their record interest income in 2024, amid a growing demand for mobile banking services, the lenders' data showed on Sunday.

The country's four major lenders -- KB Kookmin, Shinhan, Woori and NH Nonghyup -- are expected to operate a combined 3,160 brick-and-mortar branches at the end of March, down from

3,330 at the end of 2023, according to the data.

Shinhan plans to reduce the number of its branches by 57 during the mentioned period to operate 665 outlets at end-March, reports Yonhap news agency.

Woori plans to shut down 52 offline bank branches over the cited period to run 659 outlets at end-March, with NH Nonghyup and KB Kookmin planning to reduce 36 and 25 outlets, respectively, to 1,064 and 772.

"The decision to integrate outlets within a

range of 1 kilometer is aimed at providing more convenient face-to-face services to customers in more comfortable and spacious outlets," a KB Kookmin official said.

But Hana Bank plans to increase the number of its outlets from 597 to 602 during the same period.

Critics say the reduction of brick-and-mortar branches could cause much inconvenience for elderly customers who prefer face-to-face banking services.

KB Kookmin, Shinhan, Woori and Hana report-

ed a combined interest income of 41.8 trillion won (US\$28.7 billion) last year, up 3.1 percent from a year earlier.

However, the trend of reducing offline branches is unlikely to be reversed, as a growing number of people now conduct their banking on their computers or smartphones without visiting bank branches.

The emergence of internet-only banks in recent years has upended the way people do business with banks in South Korea, one of the world's most wired countries.

## Meta likely to lay off thousands of employees, says leaked memo

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, FEB 9

Tech giant Meta is expected to lay off around 3,000 employees, which is about 5 per cent of its total workforce, as per a leaked internal memo, reports said on Sunday.

According to the report, the memo, posted by Janelle Gale, Meta's Vice President of Human Resources, was shared on the company's internal Workplace forum.

The memo states that affected employees will receive an email on

Monday morning informing them about their job status.

For some international employees, the layoff process will begin on Sunday at 2.30 a.m. IST.

In the US, employees will be notified at 6.30 p.m. IST on Monday.

Within an hour of receiving the email, they will lose access to company systems. The email will also provide details about severance packages.

Gale acknowledged the difficulty of the situation, especially for teams losing a manager or colleague.

She mentioned that Meta offices will remain open, but employees who prefer to work remotely on Monday can do so.

Since Meta follows a hybrid work model, requiring employees to be in the office three days a week, working from home on Monday will still count as an in-person workday. The company has not disclosed the names of the employees being laid off.

Some of these roles may be refilled in the future, but there is no set timeline.

Employees whose man-

agers are laid off will be assigned new reporting heads.

Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg had previously hinted at job cuts, stating that the company was raising performance standards.

Typically, Meta phases out low performers over a year, but this time, the layoffs are happening on a much larger scale based on recent performance reviews.

Meanwhile, Amazon recently laid off dozens of employees, while Salesforce cut about 1,000 jobs earlier this year.

# Fight to be intensified for full statehood: Karra

JINNEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, FEB 9

The Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) President Tariq Hameed Karra on Saturday reviewed the organizational affairs and activities in all the districts of North & South Kashmir districts at Srinagar Party headquarters with senior party leaders and functionaries.

The review meeting of districts falling in South Kashmir shall be conducted on Sunday.

The first phase of the review meeting covered Kupwara, Baramulla, Banderpora, Srinagar, Ganderbal and Budgam districts falling in North and South Kashmir, subsequently JKPCC President will review party activities in Anantnag, Kulgam, Shopian and Pulwama Districts on Sunday.

Apart from organizational activities, District Congress Committee (DCC) Presidents and Senior leaders gave feedback to JKPCC President with regard to socio-polit-



ical scenario obtaining in their respective districts and also briefed him (Karra) about the issue confronting the public. The meetings also held threadbare discussions over the upcoming challenges and resolved to further strengthen Congress Party for the benefit and betterment of the people.

On this occasion, Tariq Hameed Karra urged the cadres to take the programmes and policies of the party door to door vigorously and remain connected with people & make all efforts to resolve the issues they are confronted with. He said the Congress Party shall continue to fight for rights of

the people and full statehood with constitutional guarantees to restore the dignity of J&K. We will not rest till the Centre Govt fulfills its promise of restoring Statehood to J&K, Karra added and reiterated Party's commitment to continue working for inclusive development of J&K, which has suffered serious setbacks on every count due to the policies of BJP Govt at Centre.

Karra further suggested to Govt to make Administration address public grievances on priority including electricity tariff, smart meters, unemployment menace and various other developmental issues concerning them

(public). People have facing hardships since a long, they have high expectations, so there is a need to come upto their expectations, JKPCC President told the JK Govt. Among other who spoke in the meetings included Senior Leader Haji Abdul Gani Khan, Nissar Ahmad Munday, Abid Imityaz Bhat (I/C Party Hq) MLA Irfan Hafeez Lone, DCC Presidents Irfan Naqib, Mushtaq Ahmad Tantray, Javed Ahmad Mir, Er. Muzaffar Dar, Dr. Audil Farooq Mir (Media Coordinator) Dr. Waleed Karra, Yasir Nisar and various other senior leaders from North and South Kashmir.

# Sunil Sharma meets Home Minister Amit Shah, discusses key issues of J&K

JINNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 9

Leader of Opposition in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, Sunil Sharma, met Union Home Minister Amit Shah to discuss pressing issues impacting the region.

During the meeting, Sharma highlighted the alarming rise in drug abuse and narcotics trafficking in J&K, emphasizing the need for urgent intervention. He also pushed for major infrastructure projects, particularly in road connectivity and tourism, to boost economic growth and employment.

Sharma further underscored the importance



of strengthening and expanding Village Defence Committees (VDCs) and Village Defence Guards (VDGs), citing their crucial role in countering terror-

ism. He raised concerns over recent terror attacks, including the brutal assault on an ex-serviceman's family in Kulgam, and urged the government

to ensure complete rehabilitation and education for victims' families.

In response, Amit Shah assured full support and committed to addressing the issues raised. He also agreed to meet all BJP MLAs from Jammu and Kashmir, a move expected to strengthen the party's position and address lawmakers' concerns.

The discussion also covered the upcoming J&K Assembly budget session, political developments, and law & order issues. Sharma's meeting with the Home Minister is seen as a significant step in addressing the challenges faced by the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

# Atal ji's ideology, commitment, statesmanship is source of inspiration to millions: Sat Sharma

JINNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 9

The memories of Atal ji hold a great significance in our hearts. The ideology, commitment and the statesmanship of Atal ji has been a source of inspiration to millions. The people especially the social and political personalities across the nation follow him for his priceless contributions, stated Sat Sharma.

Sat Sharma, President, J&K BJP felicitated Adv. Chander Mohan Sharma, a senior leader of BJP for his dedicated services to the organization and his close association with former Prime Minister of India and Bharat Ratna Shree Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji.

Adv. Rajesh Gupta, President, BJP District Jammu, Reema Padha, Ranjodh



Singh Nalwa, Suneet Raina and others were also present on the occasion.

Sat Sharma, speaking on the occasion, said that BJP is celebrating the birth centenary year of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji. He said that a series of programmes are going to be held this year. He said that the Party leaders are felicitating the prominent persons from the society, and the organization who have worked with Atal ji. He said that

since his childhood, Chander Mohan Sharma dedicated himself to the nation, society and organization and also remained in constant touch with Atal ji till his active political life. The party appreciates his long association with the former Prime Minister, and his services to the organization, added Sat Sharma.

Chander Mohan Sharma appreciated the kind gesture by the party, adding that the people

especially the senior activists are enthusiastic to contribute in the various programmes to be organized under the birth centenary year of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee ji. Emphasizing that the memories related to Atal ji cannot be summarized

in a few minutes, as his every appearance left an unforgettable mark on the hearts of people from across the regions and religions. He said that Atal ji had a close emotional attachment with Jammu & Kashmir. Atal ji spoke for the rights of Jammu and also gave slogan of Kashmiriyat, Zamhuriyat and Insaniyat, he said expressing gratitude to the party leaders for bringing all the golden memories to life once again.

# Delhi people outrightly rejected AAP's politics of false promises: Adv. Purnima

JINNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 9

BJP J&K Spokesperson and former Deputy Mayor, Adv. Purnima Sharma, has stated that the people of Delhi have outrightly rejected Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) politics of false promises and misleading narratives, choosing instead the visionary leadership and development-driven governance of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). With BJP securing 48 out of 70 seats, the results clearly reflect the people's trust in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's transformative policies.

In a press release issued here today, the senior BJP leader asserted that AAP's governance model, built on propaganda and deception, has been exposed. The voters of Delhi have refused to be misled any further and have given a decisive mandate in favor of BJP, which has consistently worked for the welfare of all sections of society. She added that Delhi's residents have realized that freebies and false assurances cannot substitute for real development, better infrastructure, and efficient governance.

# BJP Kashmir Commemorates Atal Bihari Vajpayee's Anniversary with Events Celebrating His Legacy

JINNEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, FEB 9

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Kashmir unit commemorated the anniversary of Atal Bihari Vajpayee by hosting a series of events to honor his lasting legacy. Participants reflected on Vajpayee's leadership, emphasizing his remarkable ability to guide the nation through challenging times.

Ashok Koul, BJP General Secretary (Organization) for Jammu and Kashmir, highlighted Vajpayee's profound connection with the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Koul further revealed that events celebrating Vajpayee would be organized throughout the year.

Senior leaders Ashraf Azad and Mushtaq Noorabadi shared personal recollections of their time with Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

During an address to party workers at S-1 Church Lane in Srinagar, both Senior Leaders Mushtaq Noorabadi and Ashraf



Azad spoke of Atal Ji's widespread admiration, noting that even his political opponents held him in high esteem.

Ashok Koul reaffirmed that the leadership and contributions of Atal Bihari Vajpayee Ji continue to inspire the nation, and the BJP is dedicated to promoting his ideals across Kashmir.

Future programs will feature public outreach, social initiatives, and heartfelt tributes to Vajpayee Ji's pivotal role in nation-building.

The BJP leadership also reiterated its commitment

to expanding its presence in Kashmir and serving the welfare of the people by upholding the principles of good governance and development set forth by Vajpayee Ji.

Senior Leaders Altaf Thakur, Mudasar Wani, Sajid Yousuf Shah, Sheikh Bashir, Salinder Singh, Showkat Gayoor, Program incharge Central Kashmir Khalid Baqaal, South Kashmir Incharge Abid Husain Nangroo, North Kashmir incharge Fida Hussain and Program Media Incharge Kashmir Showkat Shah were also present on the occasion.

# Dir Fisheries inspects infra dev in Kupwara, distributes cheques among beneficiaries

JINNEWS SERVICE  
KUPWARA, FEBRUARY 9

Director Fisheries Jammu & Kashmir, A. M. Tak, along with Joint Director Fisheries (North), Ghulam Mohiuddin Wani, conducted a comprehensive visit to District Kupwara to assess fisheries infrastructure, distribute financial assistance, and promote modern aquaculture practices.

They distributed cheques worth Rs21 lakhs to the fishermen community under the Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana (PMMSY) for livelihood and nutritional support. Additionally, cheques



worth Rs32 lakhs were provided to beneficiaries for the establishment of live fish vending centers under PMMSY, ensuring improved market accessibility for fish farmers.

At the Carp Fish Farm in Shuloora, they inspected the newly established carp pond, constructed under the Capex Budget while

at the Carp Fish Farm in Bohipora, they conducted a survey for the establishment of modern aquaculture practices focusing on implementing a Recirculatory Aquaculture System to boost sustainable and high-yield fish farming.

At the Trout rearing unit in Kutlari, Director distributed cheques

to newly selected beneficiaries under PMMSY, amounting to Rs8.80 lakhs for the general category and Rs9.90 lakhs for the women category.

He also distributed farm implements to newly farmers selected under the PMMSY.

Further, he reviewed the sanctioning and commissioning of the Kutlari farm upgradation under the NABARD scheme, marking a significant step towards enhancing the region's fisheries infrastructure.

Besides, he reviewed newly established carp pond, constructed under the Capex Budget at Carp Fish Farm in Kohru.

# Vikshay Vashist to lead North Zone Inter-University Cricket Championship as Captain

JINNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEB 9

Vikshay Vashist, the talented cricketer from the village of Jangalwar in Thathri, Doda, has once again earned a place in the prestigious North Zone Inter-University Cricket Championship for the 2024-25 season. This marks his fourth consecutive appearance in the highly anticipated tournament, which will be held in Delhi. Vikshay, the son of Ram Parshad, is set to represent Jammu University as the captain of the team for the second



time. His consistent performance and leadership qualities have earned him this esteemed position, underscoring his skill and determination on the cricket field. Hailing from

a small village, Vikshay's rise to prominence in the world of cricket is a testament to his hard work, perseverance, and unwavering dedication. His selection to play in such a prestigious competition not only brings pride to him but also to his family and community. For the people of Jangalwar and Thathri, his achievements serve as an inspiration and a reminder that talent can thrive regardless of where one comes from.

As captain of Jammu University, Vikshay is focused on leading his team with confidence,

aiming to secure victory and bring glory to both his university and his home state of Jammu and Kashmir. His leadership on and off the field continues to inspire young cricketers from his community and beyond.

This remarkable achievement further solidifies Vikshay Vashist's status as one of the most promising cricketers in the region, and his journey from a small village to captain of Jammu University's cricket team stands as a shining example of dedication, talent, and ambition.

# Fire incident at Sonamarg: MLA Kangan, Div Com Kashmir, DC Ganderbal visit spot, assess damages

JINNEWS SERVICE  
GANDERBAL, FEBRUARY 09

Following the devastating overnight fire incident at the old market Sonamarg, which resulted in extensive damage to several shops, MLA Kangan Mian Mehar, along with Divisional Commissioner Kashmir Vijay Kumar Bidhuri and Deputy Commissioner Ganderbal, Jatin Kishore, visited the site to assess the situation and express solidarity with the affected shopkeepers.

During their visit, they interacted with the

Shopkeeper Association Sonamarg, extending their sympathies assuring full support from the UT administration.

Later a meeting was held with the Sonamarg Market Association, attended by SSP Ganderbal, Additional Deputy Commissioner, SDM Kangan, CEO SDA, and other district officials, to address the concerns of the affected traders.

The market association raised several demands, including immediate assistance & permission for reconstruction of

shops, and establishment of fire service station in Sonamarg to prevent such incidents in the future.

On the occasion, Div Com directed AD Fire and Emergency Services to station a fire tender at the Youth Hostel Sonamarg and near the Sonamarg Tunnel with adequate manpower as a temporary measure until a permanent fire station is established.

DC Ganderbal briefed the Div Com on the damage assessment, confirming that a final report will be submitted

promptly to facilitate swift assistance. Furthermore, the Div Com emphasized the need for a Fire Safety Audit of all establishments in Sonamarg to mitigate future risks. He urged hoteliers and shopkeepers to equip their establishments with fire extinguishers as a precautionary measure.

Div Com assured that the administration remains committed to supporting the business community in Sonamarg and ensuring their swift recovery from this unfortunate incident.

## Progress of ongoing development works in Jammu migrant camps reviewed

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEBRUARY 9

A meeting was held today under the chairmanship of Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner (M) J&K Dr. Arvind Karwani to review the ongoing development works in the migrant camps at Jammu.

Deputy Commissioner (Relief), Vijay Kumar Sharma; Assistant Commissioner (Relief), Dr. Deepak Kumar; Chief Accounts Officer Shiwani Bhan; Assistant Commissioner (Relief) Kailash Devi; Assistant Commissioner (Relief) Sanjeev Kumar; Executive Engineer PW(R&B) Department Jammu Sunil Thusoo, and concerned officials of PW(R&B) Department and Relief Organization attended the meeting.

The Executive Engineer PW(R&B) Department, apprised about the progress of works going on in the migrant camps viz Migrant Camp Jagti, Migrant Camp Nagrota, Migrant Camp Muthi &



Buta Nagar and Migrant Camp Purkhoo. He was directed to expedite the completion of approved repair and renovation works.

The meeting decided to constitute a work monitoring committee headed by the concerned camp commandant with representatives from the local residents to prioritize the repair/renovation works. "The works will be taken up in order of priority fixed by this committee and the payments shall be released to the contractors only after obtaining satisfactory work completion certificate from this committee," the meeting decided.

Further, the site engi-

neers were directed to capture pre-execution, during execution and post execution geo-tagged photographs of each work.

The PW(R&B) authorities were directed to expedite submission of the Detailed Project Reports of the comprehensive repair/renovation works at all migrant camps, regarding which estimation stands already completed so that required projection of funds is made timely to take up these works during the financial year 2025-26.

The Executive Engineer assured timely completion of ongoing works and close supervision of the quality of works being executed.

## Director Agriculture Jammu inspects Developmental Activities in RS Pura Sub Division

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, FEBRUARY 9

The Director Agriculture Production & Farmer Welfare Jammu, Arvinder Singh Reen, conducted a comprehensive inspection of the ongoing developmental activities in the RS Pura Sub Division, today.

The visit aimed to assess the field activities and highlight the advanced farming techniques being implemented in the region.

The Director was accompanied by SDAO Surinder Gupta, Subject Matter Specialists, Agriculture Extension Officers and the staff of the Sub-Division Agriculture Office, besides Ex-Sarpanch Balbir Kour.

The tour began with a demonstration of drone technology for foliar spraying of Nano Urea and Sagrika in the Pan-



chayat Trewa area of RS Pura. Wheat crops were sown using a super seeder, and the fertilizers were precisely applied using drones, ensuring uniform distribution and minimal wastage. Nano Urea, which enhances nitrogen use efficiency, and Sagrika, a growth-promoting fertilizer, were the key inputs. Director A.S. Reen emphasized the revolutionary approach to modern farming and the potential to improve crop yield and reduce labor costs with this technology.

"The use of drones in this demonstration is a game-changer for farmers," said Director Agriculture. "It not only highlights an innovative method for crop management but also shows how technology can reduce costs and enhance productivity in the agricultural sector."

Later, Director A.S. Reen visited the Polycarbonate Structure (Nursery Unit) of Beneficiary Tilak Raj in Village Puro Bhana. This nursery, with a size of 111 sq. meters, is part of the Promotion of Commercial

Floriculture (HADP) initiative. The Director also inspected a Green Shade Net House (148 sq. meters) under the same program, where he discussed the advantages of these structures in promoting commercial floriculture in the region.

Further, the Director visited the Potato Seed Village at Arnia, where he examined the ongoing harvesting operations. He also inspected a Hi-Tech Polyhouse (500 sq. meters) under the Promotion of Exotic Vegetables (HADP), belonging to Beneficiary Raman Gupta in Village Badyal Brahmina. Director highlighted the immense benefits of the poly house for cultivating exotic vegetables, including employment generation for local communities.

Continuing his tour, Director A.S. Reen visited

the Micro Irrigation Unit (Drip Irrigation) of Beneficiary Rajinder Kumar in Village Badyal Brahmana, Zone Kirpind. He underscored the importance of micro-irrigation in enhancing water use efficiency, particularly in dry and water-scarce regions.

The Director also visited the exotic vegetable fields, where he inspected broccoli crops and interacted with local farmers to understand their concerns and how the Agriculture Department's schemes have benefited them.

The final stop of the inspection was the Round-the-Year Controlled Conditioned Mushroom Unit of Farmer Raman Gupta. Arvinder Singh Reen highlighted the advantages of controlled environmental conditions for mushroom cultivation, which ensures year-round production and improved quality.

## DDC Chairman launches Watershed Yatra Campaign-2025 at Panchayat Ghar Berarru in Doda

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
DODA, FEBRUARY 9

The Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP), under the aegis of Department of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, J&K, today organized the Watershed Yatra Campaign-2025 here at Panchayat Ghar Berarru, Block Bhalla, District Doda.

The initiative aims to promote sustainable water conservation techniques, watershed management, and the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY 2.0) to improve irrigation efficiency.

The campaign was chaired by District Development Council (DDC) Chairman, Dhanan Singh Kotwal, who emphasized the importance of watershed management in enhancing agricultural productivity and improving rural livelihoods.

The DDC Vice Chairperson Sangeeta Rani, Assistant Commissioner Panchayat (ACP) Musharrif Haf and other government functionaries and local residents were present at the event. They highlighted the need for



community participation in preserving water resources and adopting modern irrigation techniques.

Experts from IWMP and the Rural Development Department briefed the locals on scientific watershed planning, soil conservation measures, and the significance of rainwater harvesting in water-scarce areas.

Farmers and panchayat representatives were encouraged to actively engage in watershed projects to ensure long-term environmental sustainability and improve groundwater recharge.

During the discussions, officials emphasized the convergence of government schemes like MGNREGA and PMKSY to maximize benefits for rural communities.

The panel also addressed concerns regarding water scarcity, deforestation, and soil

erosion in hilly terrains, suggesting practical solutions such as contour farming, afforestation drives, and efficient irrigation methods.

The event concluded with an interactive session, where farmers and local representatives shared their experiences and sought expert guidance on effective watershed management. Additionally, a plantation drive was conducted as part of the campaign.

The Chief Executive Officer, IWMP J&K, reiterated the government's commitment to sustainable rural development and water conservation initiatives. The Watershed Yatra Campaign-2025 is expected to raise awareness and mobilize collective action towards improving water resource management across Doda district. The plantation drive was also conducted during the event.

## DLTFC approves 27 JK-REGP Cases

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
KISHTWAR, FEBRUARY 9

The District Level Task Force Committee (DLTFC) for the Jammu and Kashmir Rural Employment Generation Programme (JK REGP), implemented by the J&K Khadi & Village Industries Board, has approved 27 loan proposals to support local entrepreneurs in Kishtwar. The decision was taken at a meeting

chaired by the ACD Phulail Singh.

The Committee meticulously scrutinized applications for seeking loans for kiriyana shops, commercial vehicles, and other business units and approved 27 proposals.

The total approved loan amount is approximately Rs 2.12 crore (21,250,000), with a subsidy of Rs 74.37 lakh (7,437,500) to be provided to the beneficiaries.

The establishment of

these units is expected to generate new employment opportunities, contributing significantly to Kishtwar's economic growth and providing livelihood support for local residents.

The meeting was attended by LDM Harsh Rawal, and representatives from RSETI, JKEDI, Polytechnic, JK Bank Cluster Office Kishtwar, as well as delegates from ITI Kishtwar and other stakeholders.

## Drug Control Officer inspects Medical Shops in Banihal

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
RAMBAN, FEBRUARY 9

In line with the directives of the State Drugs Controller and the District Administration, Drug Control Officer Ramban, Imtiyaz Ahmad, conducted inspections of medical shops across various villages in Banihal, including Bankoot, Kaskoot, Nowgam, Chereel, and Banihal Town.

The inspection aimed to ensure compliance with regulations regarding the installation of CCTV cameras, implementation of computerized billing systems, and maintenance of psychotropic drug records.

During the inspections, two medical shops were closed down for failing to comply with the provisions of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

The inspecting team found that all other medical establishments had installed CCTV cameras and adopted computerized billing systems as



mandated. The Drug Control Officer emphasized the importance of actively monitoring CCTV footage to ensure these systems effectively deter any malpractice. The implementation of these measures is expected to enhance transparency in transactions, improve inventory management, and reinforce accountability within the district's pharmaceutical sector. The

proactive approach of the Drug Control Department will be remained continuous in district to safeguarding public health and promoting ethical practices in the pharmaceutical trade. The department will continue to regulate and monitor pharmaceutical activities to prevent the misuse or unauthorized distribution of drugs, ensuring the well-being of the public.

## ADDC Rajouri reviews block wise progress of RDD Sector works

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
RAJOURI, FEBRUARY 9

Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa chaired a comprehensive review meeting today with officials of the Rural Development Department (RDD) from Block Sunderbani, Seri, Kalakote, Soit, Nowshera, and Mougla. The meeting focused on expediting the implementation of key developmental projects under various government schemes.

Dr. Thapa directed the concerned officers to expedite the survey for Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) so that all eligible beneficiaries were provided housing benefits without unnecessary delays.

The meeting reviewed the utilization of PRI, DDC, and BDC grants for augmentation of rural infrastructure and public



amenities.

Regarding MGNREGA, the ADC stressed the need for prompt completion of ongoing works and urged officials to maintain transparency and efficiency in project execution.

The meeting was attend-

ed by ADC Sunderbani, District Statistical & Evaluation Officer (DSEO), Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD), Executive Engineer PDD, Assistant Executive Engineer (AEE), Junior Engineer (JEE), and other officers.

## Intensive Food Safety Inspection drive conducted in Srinagar



JJ NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 9

Following the directions of Deputy Commissioner Srinagar Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, a team of Food Safety/ Drug and Food Control Organisation conducted an intensive inspection drive at Jehangir Chowk and Hari Singh High Street and other adjoining markets here today.

The drive was led by Assistant Commissioner Food Safety Srinagar, Yamin ul Nabi to inspect roadside eateries and Kashmiri snack stalls.

The primary objective of the inspection was to ensure compliance with the Food Safety and Standards Act, particularly in terms of sanitary and hygienic conditions. The team inspected various food stalls and vendors, checking for adherence to proper food handling, storage, and preparation practices.

During the inspection, roadside vendors were educated on the importance of maintain-

ing hygiene and sanitary standards. They were also instructed to take measures to protect prepared food from environmental hazards and pests. Failure to comply with these regulations would result in the cessation of their operations under the FSS Act.

Furthermore, food business operators involved in the preparation of ready-to-eat food were directed to undergo pest control measures at their premises. They were also advised against setting up temporary stalls near or over drains, as this could lead to contamination and other health risks.

Non-compliance with these directives would invite action under relevant rules and regulations. The inspection drive is part of the ongoing efforts by the Drug and Food Control Organisation to ensure food safety and quality in Srinagar. The organisation is committed to protecting public health and promoting a culture of food safety awareness among food business operators.

## Awareness Camp on PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana organized at Sunderbani

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
RAJOURI, FEBRUARY 9

On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, an awareness camp to promote the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana was today organized at PWD Dak Bungalow, Sunderbani, with the participation of various departments.

The camp, held under the supervision of Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa witnessed the pres-

ence of ADC Sunderbani, Rajeev Magotra; ACD Vijay Kumar Verma, along with other district and sectoral officers.

The awareness camp aimed to educate the public about the benefits and implementation of the PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana, which promotes the installation of rooftop solar panels to provide free electricity to households.

The officials elaborated on the eligibility criteria, financial assistance, and procedural guidelines for availing the scheme.