

**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:

- Headache
- Joint and muscle pain
- Diarrhea
- Present vomiting
- A sharp rise in temperature
- Double vision
- Stomach pain or loss of appetite
- Redness

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

# JINDRAH IMAGES

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## Ensure common people get direct benefits: Union Home Secy tells Commissioner Secretaries

Reviews flagship schemes, winds up 2-day Kashmir visit

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DEC 31

Before winding up his 2-day Kashmir visit Union Home Secretary Govind Mohan on Tuesday called on the Commissioner Secretaries to ensure that common people in Jammu and Kashmir get direct benefits of the centrally sponsored schemes.

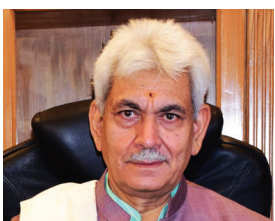
Sources told the news agency that the Union Home Secretary chaired a key meeting here and evaluated the progress of infrastructure and employment-driven projects funded by the Centre. They said that the



meeting was attended by J&K Chief Secretary Atal Duloo, Commissioner Secretaries of different departments and other top officials. Sources said that the Union Home Secretary took the feedback from the Commissioner Secretaries on the implementation of the ongoing centrally sponsored flagship schemes

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## LG's Greetings on the Eve of New Year



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, DEC 31

The Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha has greeted the people on the eve of New Year 2025.

In a message the Lieutenant Governor said, "On the joyous occasion of New Year, I convey my warm greetings and good wishes to all.

The commencement of the New Year reminds us to renew our pledge towards building a society that is peaceful and compassionate. Let us also commit ourselves to the vision of Viksit Bharat and taking

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## KPs integral part of our culture: Deputy CM



**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, DEC 31

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary Tuesday reaffirmed that Kashmiri Pandits (KPs) are an integral part of the cultural and social fabric of Jammu and Kashmir and government is committed towards their dignified rehabilitation.

The Deputy CM made these remarks while addressing a function on the side lines of his visit to

Jagti Township, Nagrota here today.

The Deputy CM was accompanied by Relief Commissioner (Migrants), Director Health Services Jammu, Director General Floriculture, Director Food supplies Jammu, and other senior officers.

On the occasion, Surinder Choudhary reiterated the government's dedication to addressing the concerns of Kashmiri Pandits and ensuring

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## GoI gives sanction for prosecution of IAS officer in J&K's arms licence scam

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DEC 31

The Government of India has accorded sanction for prosecution of Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, an IAS officer of erstwhile cadre of Jammu & Kashmir, for involvement in the infamous arms licence scam.

In a communique, a copy of which is in possession of news agency, the Department of Personnel & Training, Ministry of

Personnel & Training, Government has conveyed to Vishal Sharma, Deputy Solicitor General of India, that it has accorded sanction for prosecution of Kumar Rajeev Ranjan in the case registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in 2018.

"I am directed to refer to your email dated 23.12.2024 on the subject mentioned above and to say that an order, conveying grant of sanction

against Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, IAS, in CBI RCCHGO51201850007, under section 6 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 2006(1949 A.D.) for alleged offences under section 5(2) PC Act, 2006(1949 A.D.) has already been issued on 28.11.2004 with the approval of the competent authority," reads the communique.

It is worthwhile to mention that a huge

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## Once a symbol of hope, Srinagar's Wall of Kindness loses sheen

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DEC 31

Srinagar's "Wall of Kindness," which was once called a symbol of community spirit, has now lost its charm and faded into darkness and dust.

Initially, the wall was designed to help the less fortunate, allowing people to hang winter clothes for the needy to pick up. The initiative, which was

hailed with headlines like "Wall of Kindness spreads warmth in Srinagar," captured the hearts of many when it first appeared but has now lost its charm.

According to details collected by the news agency, located on the Bund side of Lal Chowk, the wall was meant to be a beacon of compassion. However, over time, it has turned into little more than a forgotten showpiece.

Locals expressed their disappointment, saying the wall no longer serves its intended purpose. "At first, it felt like a great initiative. But now, it is just there, unnoticed and ignored," said Zahid Ahmed, a local resident. He said it could have made a real difference, especially during the harsh winter months. Another resident, Wahid, shared,

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## YEAR-ENDER 2024

### Expansion, Loopholes of School, Higher Education in 2024

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DEC 31

In Jammu and Kashmir, the School and Higher Education departments in the academic year 2024 underwent many loopholes and developments.

The academic year on one hand exhibits development in school student enrolment by 1.2 Lakh and subsequently witnessed closure of nearly 4400 government run schools—owing to 'zero or extremely low' enrollment of students.

Similarly, the higher education department was drafting a 'Private University Policy' for establishment of Pvt

Universities but the government degree colleges faced a decline trend in student enrollment.

**School Edu Dept: JK witnesses 'closure' of nearly 4400 Govt schools**

Till May-2024, nearly 4400 government run schools were closed in JK owing to 'zero or extremely low' enrollment of students.

The official documents reveal that there were a total of 23,117 government run schools in Jammu and Kashmir out of which 4394 have been deleted from the UDISE data.

The officials say that the count of overall public

schools in Jammu and Kashmir reduced because "There were some government schools that were having zero or extremely low students enrollment. Those schools were merged with the nearby public schools."

Stating the statistics of private and other schools, the official figures reveal that there were a total of 5688 such educational institutes out of which only 5555 schools were functional as of now.

**Academic session up to 9th standard restored to Nov-Dec from**

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah had said that the government has decided to restore the

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### In 2024, ACB files 87 cases linked to corruption in J&K, chargesheets 32 cases

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DEC 31

Around 87 FIRs, including 42 cases in Jammu division and 45 in Kashmir division were registered by the Anti-Corruption Bureau in Jammu and Kashmir in 2024, while 32 cases were charge-sheeted in the court, the probe agency said.

In a statement, issued to news agency, ACB said that 23 trap cases and 13 cases of disproportionate assets were also registered during the year.

The statement reads that 42,521 vigilance clearances through online

Vigilance Clearance Portal were issued by ACB in 2024. "The vigilance clearance is sought for the purpose of promotion, regularisation, retirement and for obtaining NoC to go abroad etc," it reads.

It added that while conducting its tirade against the unholy nexus of revenue officers and land mafia, 16 FIRs were registered in 2024, wherein custodian land in Asarwan, Mishriwala and Bhalwal area of Jammu district was found usurped by the land mafia in connivance

with the officers of custodian/Revenue and police department.

"To improve the investigation skills of officers of ACB capacity building programme for staff undertaken at CBI academy, Ghaziabad with tailor-made programme to do hands on study of trap/DA/abuse of official position. This will improve the investigation skills of IOs. Internal workshops were held on various topics for better appreciation of evidence in cases," it reads.

It reads that the ACB received various complaints through Satrak Nagrik Mobile

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### In 2024, Cyber Police Kashmir recovered Rs 4.72 crore from online fraudsters

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DEC 31

In 2024 the Cyber Police Kashmir Zone, Srinagar, set a new benchmark by recovering Rs 4.72 crore defrauded from victims of online scams.

In a statement issued, by the Cyber Police Kash-

mir, a copy of which lies with the news agency said that the money was handed over to the rightful owners and the cyber criminals were dealt as per law.

"This significant accomplishment underscores Cyber Police Kashmir's dedication to combating cyber-

crime and safeguarding citizens from financial losses," the statement reads.

The Cyber Police Kashmir Zone, Srinagar, according to the officials, registered 30 FIRs during the year, 10 of which were charge-sheeted and forwarded to the Courts for judicial determination. "The unit also

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### J&K witnessed back-to-back elections, record voter turnout

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DEC 31

In 2024 Jammu and Kashmir witnessed back-to-back polls and record voter turnout.

The maiden assembly elections for the Legislative Assembly of the Union Territory of J&K were held in September-October after a span of 10-years just 2 months after the Parliamentary polls ended.

The year 2024 commenced with hectic political activities across the country. The 18th Lok Sabha elections were announced from April 19 to June 1 in seven phases.

The Parliamentary elections, according to the news agency, saw defeat

of two former Chief Ministers of erstwhile J&K State, including National Conference (NC) Vice-President Omar Abdullah and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) President, Mehbooba Mufti.

Omar was defeated by Awami Ittehad Party (AIP) chief and jailed leader Er Abdul Rashid Sheikh from Baramulla Lok Sabha constituency in North Kashmir, while Mehbooba was defeated by NC's Mian Altaf Larvi from Rajouri-Anantnag seat.

Five candidates from across the UT including two each from NC & BJP and one from AIP won the

Parliamentary polls. Jammu and Kashmir, according to the Election Commission of India,

recorded the highest voter turnout in any Lok Sabha poll in the past 35 years, with Kashmir witnessing a massive 30 points jump in election participation compared to 2019.

**Assembly Elections in J&K**

Just two months after the Parliamentary polls ended, J&K braced up for the first Assembly elections as the Union Territory.

The Assembly polls in erstwhile J&K State were

### North Kashmir records 1212 fire incidents in 2024

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DEC 31

North Kashmir has recorded a staggering 1212 fire incidents in 2024, leading to extensive damage to hundreds of structures and property worth crores reduced to ashes. The incidents mark a sharp rise compared to previous years, attributed to prolonged dry weather

and technical mishaps. According to data accessed by news agency, Baramulla district topped the list with 548 fire incidents, showing an alarming increase of 170 cases compared to 2023, when the district reported 378 incidents.

Kupwara recorded 407 incidents, up by 108 from the previous year.

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### NIA delivers 100% conviction rate, foils attempts to unleash violence

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DEC 31

In 2024 the National Investigation Agency (NIA) delivered 100% conviction rate and foiled multiple attempts by anti-national forces to unleash violence in the country, including Jammu and Kashmir.

A NIA statement, a copy of which lies with the news agency, said, "The successful investigation of several important/high-profile cases and a strong focus on tackling Left Wing Extremism (LWE) marked a year of many highs for the National Investigation Agency (NIA), which delivered a record 100% conviction rate for 2024."

"Arms seizure emerged as a key milestone against attempts by anti-national forces to unleash violence in the country. Cases of

weapons recovery and seizure were reported from across the country, including Jammu, Jaipur, Ranchi, Patna, and Chandigarh," it said.

The statement said, "The notable among these was the seizure, in Jammu, of arms/ammunition and other incriminating materials from a car driver working as an overground worker (OGW) of the banned Hizbul Mujahideen (HM) terrorist outfit. As many as 2 hand grenades, 34, 9 mm pistol rounds, 1 Chinese pistol, 1 Turkish pistol, 20 Chinese pistol rounds and 1 pistol silencer were recovered in this case."

"The arrest of 11 ISIS Jihadis, 5 J&K Jihadis and 24 other Jihadis marked another major step forward for the agency," the statement added.

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### Eco-Friendly Transport: Sgr's cycling initiative covers 1.8 lakh km, offsets 45k Kg carbon in 2024

**JI NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DEC 31

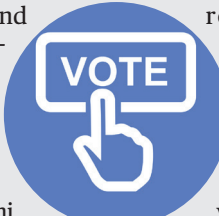
Started with an initiative to reduce the dependency on motorised transport in the Srinagar city, the eco-friendly transportation program (Bicycles) under the Srinagar Smart City project has logged 73,409 rides covering a distance of around 180,217.81 Kms during the year 2024.

The officials looking into the bicycle opera-

tions told the news agency that the feat highlights the growing adoption of sustainable commuting practices by residents of the valley.

The official said that with a slogan, "Burn Fat, Not Fuel", the programme was designed to promote eco-friendly commuting and that the program has achieved remarkable milestones in 2024, contributing to

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## Post Snowfall: DC reviews patient care in DH, assesses civic amenities in Kishtwar town

JI NEWS SERVICE  
KISHTWAR, DECEMBER 31

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rajesh Kumar Shavan today conducted a comprehensive visit to the District Hospital, main market areas in the Township and its peripheral areas to review the situation post snowfall.

The DC assessed the healthcare facilities and medical services being provided to patients at the District Hospital. He interacted with the Medical Superintendent and reviewed the availability of essential medicines, medical equipment and other resources. He reiterated the need to provide quality healthcare services, particularly during the challenging winter season.

Touring the township area, the DC inspected the post-snowfall conditions,



focusing on road clearance, power restoration, and other public amenities.

He directed the Executive Officer (EO) Municipality to ensure efficient snow clearance and improve sanitation in the town. Special instructions were issued to maintain strict vigilance against land encroachments.

The DC also visited the Chowgan Ground, Kishtwar, to assess its condition after the snow-

fall. He emphasized the importance of timely maintenance to preserve the ground's usability and cultural significance.

The Deputy Commissioner was accompanied by ADC, Pawan Kotwal; CEO KDA/PO ICDS Rishi Kumar Sharma; EO Municipality/Deputy Registrar Cooperatives Mirza Mumtaz Iqbal; CMO Dr. Rajinder Kumar; Medical Superintendent District Hospital Yudhveer Singh Kotwal and other officers.

## GMC Srinagar bids farewell to retiring employees

JI NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 31

Government Medical College (GMC) Srinagar organized an affectionate farewell function to bid adieu to its retiring employees today.

The farewell function was attended by Principal/Dean, Prof. Dr. Iffat Hassan; Administrator, Mohammad Ashraf Hakak; Deputy Registrar, Prof. Dr. Mohammad Saleem Yatoo; Medical Superintendent, Dr. Tasneem; CMOs, RMOs, nursing staff, and other dignitaries.

The college honored three dedicated employees who retired on superannuation including Mtr. Saleema Mir, Senior Grade Nurse; Kamal Kishore, Museum Curator; and Ghulam Mohamad Chopan, Multi-Tasking

Staff member. The college appreciated their selfless service, dedication, and tireless efforts in their respective roles.

Mtr. Saleema Mir was recognized for her exceptional nursing skills and compassionate care. Kamal Kishore was appreciated for his meticulous maintenance and development of the college's museum. Ghulam Mohamad Chopan was acknowledged for his hard work and commitment to the institution.

Additionally, the college also felicitated two employees who retired recently: Javid Ahmad, Estates Officer, and Ms. Dildan, Senior Lab Technician. The college expressed its gratitude for their contributions and wished them a happy and fulfilling post-retirement life.

Principal/Dean Prof. Dr. Iffat Hassan expressed heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to the retiring employees for their invaluable contributions to the institution. She praised their dedication, hard work, and commitment to providing quality healthcare services.

The farewell function was a heartfelt tribute to the retiring employees, acknowledging their years of service and wishing them a happy and fulfilling post-retirement life. The college family bid a fond farewell to the retiring employees, thanking them for their selfless service and dedication.

As a token of love and appreciation, each retiring employee received a shawl, certificate of acknowledgement, and a memento.

## DDC reviews implementation of Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme in Poonch District

JI NEWS SERVICE  
POONCH, DECEMBER 31

District Development Commissioner Poonch Vikas Kundal chaired a meeting today to assess the implementation of the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) in the district.

The Scheme was launched by the Government of India in July 2021 to enhance the quality and reliability of power supply to consumers through operational efficiency in the distribution system and minimizing Aggregated Transmission and Distribution Losses.

The Deputy Commissioner conducted a detailed division-wise review, focusing on key components of the RDSS, including metering, distribution infrastructure, project management, and other related activities.

The meeting discussed the physical progress of work, the replacement of damaged electric poles, survey activities, feeder bifurcation, the implementation plan across Electric Divisions etc.

Emphasis was laid on to mobilize resources effectively, urging all stakeholders to undertake activities in parallel to expedite the RDSS implementation.



The DDC stressed that all ongoing works must be completed within the established timelines to ensure the overall improvement of the power supply scenario in Poonch.

Furthermore, he directed concerned officers to foster coordination during surveys and resolve any technical issues promptly to prevent delays. The Deputy Commissioner also instructed

the Executive Engineer to inspect sites personally and ensure quality improvements in electricity supply, particularly in remote areas.

The Deputy Commissioner highlighted the importance of providing high-quality power to consumers and called for responsible behavior from both DISCOMS and consumers to achieve the desired outcomes of the scheme.

## GDC Marh's Jagveer emerges winner in Inter-College Quiz Competition



JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, DECEMBER 31

Jagveer Singh, a student of Semester 1st from Government Degree College Marh has secured first position in the Inter-College Quiz Competition held at Government Degree College, R.S. Pura on Dec 28, 2024. The competition was organized to commemorate the Martyrdom Day of Char Sahibzaade (Bal Veer Diwas) paying homage to the supreme sacrifices of the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji. He has also participated in the Poetry Recitation Compe-

tion in the same event. Earlier, Jagveer participated in the Poetry Recitation competition held at GDC, Bhagwati Nagar on 26th of December, 2024 on the occasion of Bal Veer Diwas. Under the guidance of Dr. Gurleen Kour, faculty member, Department of Geography GDC Marh, Jagveer demonstrated exceptional knowledge and preparation, standing out among nine participants who represented different colleges of Jammu division. The quiz covered a wide range of topics, including the historical, cultural and moral significance

of Char Sahibzaade's sacrifice. The competition served as an inspiring platform to highlight the legacy and values of courage, sacrifice, and righteousness epitomized by Char Sahibzaade. The College Principal Prof. Dr. Rakesh Kumar Koul felicitated and congratulated Dr. Gurleen Kour, Incharge/Convener of the programme and Jagveer for excelling in the competition and making the college proud through their dedication and hard-work. The faculty and students also congratulated them for their remarkable performance.

## Mission Youth

## 50 eligible candidates finalized for Super 75 HLG Scholarship Scheme

JI NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, DECEMBER 31

In a significant move towards empowering youth from marginalized sections, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Mission Youth has announced the finalization of the list of 50 eligible candidates under the Super 75 HLG Scholarship Scheme for the academic year 2023-24. The final selection comes after a thorough process that saw a total of 401 candidates vying for the prestigious scholarship.

To ensure the selection of deserving candidates, Mission Youth conducted a rigorous physical coun-

selling and document verification process in both Jammu and Srinagar. The selected candidates comprise 21 females and 29 males from marginalized sections of society, reflecting the scheme's commitment to promoting inclusive education.

Under the Super 75 HLG Scholarship Scheme, these 50 selected students will receive a scholarship amount of approximately Rs 1 lakh in two installments. The scholarship is designed to help cover the educational expenses of the candidates, providing them with the necessary financial support to further their academic pursuits. The CEO expressed

satisfaction over the selection process and emphasized the importance of such initiatives in ensuring equitable opportunities for students from underserved communities. "The Super 75 HLG Scholarship Scheme is a crucial step in our mission to support deserving students and equip them with the resources needed to succeed in their educational journey," stated the CEO.

Mission Youth is committed to creating opportunities for the youth of Jammu and Kashmir, enabling them to realize their full potential and contribute to the region's socio-economic development.

## DC Kupwara reviews progress under HADP, DAKSH Kisan



JI NEWS SERVICE  
KUPWARA, DECEMBER 31

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today held a meeting to review the status of implementation of different agricultural schemes in the district.

On the occasion, the DC took a comprehensive review of the Holistic Agriculture Development Plan (HADP), DAKSH Kisan, Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs) and other schemes.

She stressed upon the concerned officers to gear up the pace of enrolment of farmers to achieve the

desired targets under Daksh Kisan and HADP. The officers were directed to facilitate the registration and enrolment of farmers to meet the targets as early as possible.

It was informed in the meeting that 33427 applications under HADP were received by Agriculture, Horticulture P&M, Horticulture, Animal Husbandry, Sheep Husbandry, Fisheries and Sericulture departments. Out of these, 27053 applications have been approved. Under DAKSH Kisan, 12853 farmers out of the target 21749 have been registered so far and 6185 farmers have completed the course.

To improve the overall enrollment of farmers under the DAKSH Kisan, the Agriculture & allied departments were assigned targets. Each Kisan Khidmat Ghar will have to register 1000 farmers in their respective areas on DAKSH Kisan portal. Besides, each Area Extension Officer and BVO have been given a target of 300 and 400 registrations respectively. Similarly, the Fisheries department will make 149 farmer registrations.

The DC impressed upon the officers to ensure 100% coverage of the HADP scheme adding that district Kupwara has a vast potential for agriculture and allied activities which will boost its employment generation scenario.

Meanwhile, the Officers were directed to mobilize field staff and Krishi Udayamis to achieve these targets in a time-bound manner and support farmers throughout the registration and certification process.

The meeting was attended by CPO, CAO, CHO, CAHO, DSHO, AD Fisheries and other concerned officers.

## Rajouri admin approves 38 SDRF relief cases



JI NEWS SERVICE  
RAJOURI, DECEMBER 31

A meeting of the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) Committee was held here today under the chairmanship of Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa to deliberate on relief cases under the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF).

The committee reviewed 63 cases related to relief and rehabilitation. After detailed discussions and scrutiny, 18 cases were rejected as they were found not to be covered under the prescribed guidelines, 07 cases were referred back

to the respective Tehsildar for reverification to ensure accurate assessment & 38 cases were approved for sanction of relief under the SDRF.

The ADDC emphasized the importance of adhering to SDRF guidelines while ensuring that genuine beneficiaries receive the necessary support in a timely manner. He directed the concerned officers to expedite the processing of approved cases and complete the reverification of referred cases at the earliest.

The meeting was attended by senior officers from the Revenue Department and other members of the SOP Committee.

## DC Kulgam reviews progress of RDSS projects



JI NEWS SERVICE  
KULGAM, DECEMBER 31

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, convened a meeting today to assess the progress of works under the Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme (RDSS) in the district.

During the meeting, Chief Manager Power Grid briefed the DC on the status of the projects. It was informed that the RDSS, with a project cost of Rs. 126.9 crore, aims to strengthen the power distribution infrastructure in the district by installing 618 new distribution transformers and 330 km of LT Aerial Bundled Cables (ABC).

The initiative is designed to reduce Aggregated Technical and Commercial (AT&C) losses in

Kulgam. It was informed that the physical progress of the works currently stands at approximately 22%. The DC expressed dissatisfaction with the delayed supply of distribution transformers and directed the concerned to expedite the delivery process to ensure timely completion of the project.

He instructed to mobilize men and machinery to ensure completion of projects well in time. The DC emphasized the importance of completing the works within the stipulated timeline to enhance the reliability and efficiency of the power distribution system in the district.

The meeting was also attended by ACR, Ex. Engineer PDD, Tehsildar D. H. Pora and other officers.

## Mughal Road maintenance: Bufliaz to Pir Ki Gali stretch handed over to BRO

JI NEWS SERVICE  
POONCH, DECEMBER 31

In a significant step towards enhancing road connectivity, the Mughal Road stretch from Bufliaz to Pir Ki Gali has been handed over to the Border Roads Organization (BRO) by the Public Works Department (PWD). The transition was facilitated with the efforts of District Development Commissioner Vikas Kundal, and was completed with all necessary formalities. The Deputy Commissioner confirmed the handover and emphasized the importance of maintaining this crucial road stretch. He urged the BRO to enhance infrastructure support during the winter months, ensuring better accessibility for both civilian traffic and security forces in the region. "The BRO has a dedicated workforce, resources, and expertise that make it the most competent organization to operate in challenging weather conditions and harsh terrain," the Deputy Commissioner stated. This collaborative effort aims to ensure that the Mughal Road remains safe and accessible throughout the winter season, ultimately benefiting the local community and enhancing strategic mobility in the district.

**Javed Ahmad Marazi, of FPU, Info. Deptt Kashmir retires, colleagues bid warm send-off**

**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 31

Javed Ahmad Marazi, a senior official of Field Publicity Unit (FPU) of Joint Director Information Kashmir was given an affectionate farewell by his colleagues on attaining superannuation today on 31st December, 2024.

On the occasion, the employees recounted his humility, professionalism, expertise, and dedication to the department. They reflected on his outstanding contributions and wished him well in the next chapter of his life.

## Sakeena Itoo extends New Year greetings

**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, DECEMBER 31

Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo has extended her warm greetings to the people of Jammu and Kashmir on eve of New Year 2025.

In her greeting message, the Minister called on everyone to embrace the New Year with optimism, unity and hope for a brighter future.

“Let this new year be a time of growth, peace and collective progress. Together, we can create positive change and build a stronger, more inclusive future”, Sakeena maintained.

The Minister also prayed for peace, progress and prosperity of entire Jammu and Kashmir.

## DC Rajouri extends New Year Greetings to people

**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
RAJOURI, DECEMBER 31

Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma has extended heartfelt greetings to the people of the district on the eve of New Year 2025.

In his message, the Deputy Commissioner hoped that the new year will bring peace, prosperity and progress for all. He acknowledged the collective efforts of the district administration, public representatives, and citizens in achieving significant milestones during the past year and urged continued cooperation to overcome challenges and work towards a brighter future.

## DC Jammu calls for extensive promotion of PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana

**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, DECEMBER 31

Deputy Commissioner Sachin Kumar Vaishya today chaired a meeting to work out an action plan for promotion of Pradhan Mantri Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana. The Deputy Commission-

# 2-day orientation/ Training programme held at Srinagar

**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 31

The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Srinagar, in collaboration with the District Legal Services Authority Budgam today organized a two-day orientation/ training programme for the members of the Legal Service Unit for Persons with Mental Illness and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (LSUM).

The event was held under the chairmanship of Jaffer Hussain Beg, Chairman DLSA Srinagar/ Pr. District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar and Om Prakash Baghat, Chairman DLSA/ Pr. District & Sessions Judge, Budgam and under the supervision of Nusrat Ali Hakak, Civil Judge (Sr. Division)/ Secretary, DLSA Srinagar/ DLSA Budgam.

The initiative aimed to enhance the understanding and implementation of the NALSA scheme 2024.

The programme was inaugurated at the Meeting hall of District Court Complex, Srinagar, by Jaffer Beg, Chairman DLSA Srinagar/ Pr. District & Sessions Judge, Srinagar, in the presence of the Secretary, DLSA Srinagar, and the LSUM members from both districts.

The inaugural session highlighted the importance



of the scheme in ensuring access to justice for individuals with mental and intellectual disabilities.

Masarat Shaheen, a retired judicial officer and the mentor and advisor of the committee, addressed the participants virtually. She emphasized the need for effective implementation of the scheme and provided valuable insights on the role of LSUMs in bridging the gap between the legal system and vulnerable individuals.

The Secretary, DLSA Srinagar, further elaborated on the objectives of the orientation programme, underscoring its importance in equipping the participants with the necessary knowledge and tools

to implement the scheme effectively.

Advocate Naveed Gul, a member for Persons with Mental Illness and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (LSUM) for implementation of the NALSA Scheme 2024, shared his practical experiences in the field, providing the participants with a firsthand perspective on handling cases related to mental and intellectual disabilities.

Members of the LSUM for implementation of the NALSA scheme 2024 of DLSA Srinagar also shared the importance of addressing the needs of persons with mental illness and intellectual disabilities under the NALSA Scheme 2024. They emphasized

the necessity of ensuring accessible legal aid and support for these vulnerable groups, stressing the role of the unit in bridging the gap between the justice system and individuals requiring specialized assistance. Their insights underscored the commitment of the legal services authorities to the effective implementation of the scheme.

Members of the DLSA Budgam for Persons with Mental Illness and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (LSUM) for implementation of the NALSA Scheme 2024 joined through virtual mode and also shared their views and experiences, contributing to a broader understanding of the scheme's objectives and implementation strategies.

The programme facilitated interactive discussions, enabling participants to exchange ideas and explore effective ways to achieve the goals of the NALSA Scheme 2024.

The two-day orientation programme proved to be a significant step in fostering collaboration and understanding among stakeholders, ultimately aiming to ensure better legal aid and support for persons with mental and intellectual disabilities in the region.

## Winter Season: Tourism Deptt nominates officers for assistance of tourists

**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 31

In order to ensure seamless assistance and support to tourists visiting Kashmir during the ensuing winter season, the Directorate of Tourism Kashmir today nominated officers and officials as Nodal Officers for various areas.

The officers shall coordinate and oversee the efforts to ensure hassle free movement and stay of tourists and to respond to any exigency/ issue being faced by the tourists.

The Nodal Officers shall work under the overall supervision of Dr. S.D Chowdhary, Deputy Director Tourism, Enforcement (SSP), (9797066007).

Malik Waseem, Deputy Director Tourism (7006856600) shall oversee South Kashmir while Nasir Mehmood Khan, Deputy Director Tourism (9622669777) will manage North Kashmir and Abid Iqbal, Deputy Director Tourism, (7006707274) will supervise grievances

and assistance of tourists in Central Kashmir.

The Nodal Officers shall closely liaise with the concerned resort officers and concerned District Administrations/Departments for timely resolution of issues.

Furthermore, Resort Officers and Tourist police personnel shall remain available for rendering all the necessary assistance to the tourists visiting the areas during the winter season.

Assistant Director Tourism Gulmarg, Tahir Mohi U Din (7006759980) along with Syed Rafi, SI Tourist Police (9419003753) for Gulmarg.

Assistant Director Tourism Pahalgam Jahid Azad (7006245981) along with Mushtaq Ahmad, SI Tourist Police (7889342088) for Pahalgam.

Tourist Officer, Mudaris Mushtaq (9906906115) Koker nag/ Achabal/ Daksum along with Mushtaq Ahmad, HC Tourist Police (6005434129) for Kokernag and Muneera, LHC Tourist Police

(9797872546) for Achabal. Shafiqat Ahmad Itoo, Assistant Tourist Officer (7006823575) for Doodhpathri; while Basharat Hussain, Assistant Tourist Officer (9018679626) along with Fayaz Ahmad, ASI Tourist Police (9149729678) for Sonamarg.

Meanwhile, a Control Room has also been constituted at Tourist Reception Centre (TRC), Srinagar, to provide seamless assistance to tourists and respond to emergencies during this period.

Officers and officials deployed at the Control Room include Nisar Rasool, Assistant Director Tourism (9906663868); Azad Yaseen, Assistant Tourist Officer (7006146562); Gowhar Raffiee, Assistant Tourist Officer (7006580763); Sidharth Sathoo, Receptionist (7006389514); Vishant Pandita, Receptionist (7298506506); Zahida Parveen, and Abdul Rashid Bhat.

## DC Kulgam chairs DLC meeting of HADP, approves 690 cases

**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
KULGAM, DECEMBER 31

A meeting of the District Level Committee (DLC) for the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP) was held today at the Mini-Secretariat, Kulgam.

During the meeting, the committee chaired by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan reviewed and approved 690 cases under various projects and components of the HADP.

Later, the DC assessed the implementation status of various agricultural and developmental schemes in Agriculture & allied sectors in the district.

He reviewed progress under HADP, DAKSH Kisan, Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKGs), Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), Kisan Credit Card (KCC), JK Comprehensive agriculture and



allied Implementation Projects (JKCIP), and Pradhan Mantri Formalization of Micro Food Processing Enterprises (PMFME) etc. Chief Agriculture Officer (CAO) Kulgam presented a comprehensive report on the progress of these schemes.

It was informed that 17817 applications have been approved so far under HADP.

Under DAKSH Kisan scheme, 12821 farmers were registered, and 9609

farmers completed trainings.

Additionally, 10534 farmers were registered on the Kisan Khidmat Ghars (KKG) App, and 178 Kisan Sampark Abhiyan (KSA) sessions were conducted during phase-3.

The DC instructed all departments to work towards achieving 100% target under all HADP Projects. The meeting was also attended by ACR, CAO, CHO and other officers of line departments.

## DC Udhampur chairs NCORD meeting to review drug control measures



**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
UDHAMPUR, DECEMBER 31

To combat drug menace and its associated challenges, Deputy Commissioner Udhampur, Saloni Rai on Tuesday convened a meeting of District Level Coordination Committee

meeting of NCORD here in Mini Conference Hall, DC Office Complex, Udhampur. The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Prem Singh; Additional SP Sandeep Bhat; Assistant Commissioner Revenue Dr. Umesh Shan; Assistant Commissioner Development Dr. Ranjeet Singh Kotwal; Chief Medical Officer Dr. Anil Manhas and other district officers from the line departments.

Threadbare discussions were held on identification of individuals involved in illicit drug trafficking, details of cases registered under the NDPS Act, Seizure of narcotics and related enforcement actions, organizing mass awareness programs, Progress in declaring

drug-free Panchayats, Inspection and monitoring of drug de-addiction centers etc.

The DC emphasized the need for a comprehensive approach to tackle drug abuse. She instructed all departments to intensify counseling services and Information, Education and Communication activities. The Principals of Government Degree Colleges were directed to organize regular awareness programs within their respective Clusters.

The DC called for stringent enforcement actions against perpetrators and protection of youth, especially students, from falling victim to drug abuse.

The Police Department was directed to submit a detailed report on the types of drugs seized and their locations to formulate an effective strategy for tracking and apprehending drug peddlers.

The DC stressed the importance of coordinated efforts among all line departments to disrupt drug supply chains.

## GDC Neeli Nallah organises Health Care Awareness programme themed “SEVA CE SIKHE”



**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
UDHAMPUR, DECEMBER 31

The NSS Unit of Government Degree College Neeli Nallah Udhampur on Tuesday organized Health Care Awareness programme “SEVA CE SIKHE” -a GOI initiative.

The event took place in the Health Training centre (RHTC) Ayushman Arogya Mandir Garhi. The NSS Program Coordinator, Prof. Shaista Yasmeen, Assistant Professor, Department of English along with NSS volunteers participated with zeal and enthusiasm. She coordinated the event, with an aim to enhance students' understanding of healthcare practices and their role in serving society.

Dr Arti Bharat, Medical Officer and Dr. Ritu Raina, Dental surgeon at PHC Garhi and Somraj Gupta, (Head Pharmacist) addressed the NSS volunteers and delivered an enlightening speech

on safeguarding various diseases. Medical Professionals emphasized the importance of preventive measures, timely diagnosis, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. His insights inspired the students to actively engage in community healthcare initiatives.

Prof. Shaista Yasmeen (NSS PO) Department of English, Dr. Zahoor Wani and Dr. Nazeer Ahmad Khan led the NSS group during the interaction, providing valuable guidance and support to the students. The session fostered meaningful dialogue between the students and the healthcare professionals, especially Dr. Arti Bharat, Medical Officer helping them grasp practical aspects of service and care.

Principal of GDC Neeli Nallah Udhampur, Prof. (Dr) Seema Arora, was instrumental in facilitating this opportunity for the students.

## RDD Directorate bids farewell to retiring colleagues

**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, DECEMBER 31

Directorate of Rural Development Jammu today accorded a warm farewell to the retiring Accounts Officer Mohammad Saleem Lone, Section Officer Mohammad Javed and Junior Assistant Sunita Bhat, who attained superannuation after rendering dedicated services to the Department. Direc-

tor, Rural Development Department and other senior officers of the Directorate were present on the occasion. While speaking on the occasion, Director Rural Development Department, Mohammad Mumtaz congratulated the retiring Officer/Officials and lauded their commendable services rendered in different capacities and wished them a healthy and prosperous post retirement life.

## Awareness Programme on Cervical Cancer held at GCOE

**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, DECEMBER 31

An awareness program on Cervical Cancer and HPV Vaccination was held today at Government College of Education (GCOE) Jammu. The program was held under the guidance of Principal Dr. Jyoti Parihar. The programme commenced with a brief introduction to the topic by Prof. Deepali Devi.

Dr. Davinder Kour, Convener of the Sparsh Committee educated the students about the hazards of Cervical Cancer and the importance of HPV Vaccination for women. She explained that HPV is a Human Pappilloma Virus which causes Cervical Cancer. Every two minutes, one woman dies because of Cervical Cancer globally. In India also, the mortality rate of cervical cancer is 22 women per 100,000. She motivated the students for the HPV Vaccination. Five students agreed to undergo HPV Vaccination. Pamphlets were also distributed among



the participants.

Among others present were Prof. Satish Sharma, Prof. Prof. Anuradha Choudary, Dr. Sushma Bala, Dr. Shalini Rana Coordinator IQAC, was also present at the event. Prof. Kiran Thapa proposed a vote of Thanks.

Other Committee Members who were present were Dr. Rakesh Bharti, Prof. Sarita Dogra, Prof. Roopa Kumari, Dr. Shalini Sharma, Dr. Ambica, Dr Sonam Gandotra and Students committee members Jaspreet Kour and Bhagya Laxmi.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
(Construction Organization USBRL Project)  
**PRESS NOTIFICATION**  
**CRS INSPECTION OF NEW LINE FROM KATRA-REASI SECTION OF FIROZPUR DIVISION**  
Newly constructed line in Katra-Reasi section (16.501 Kms) of Firozpur Division will be opened with electric train operation shortly. High speed trial of the section by special train will be conducted by Commissioner of Railway Safety on 07.01.2025 after trolley inspection. Thereafter, new line train working will start soon in between Katra-Reasi Stations of USBRL Project.  
General public is informed to stay away from Railway lines in above section. Crossing the track at any location is trespassing and is a punishable offence and liable for prosecution under Railway Act.  
No: DyCE/C/JAT/CRS Dated: 30.12.2024  
Northern Railway Construction Organization  
3986/2024 USBRL project  
**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

## Expansion, Loopholes..

academic session up to 9th standard to November-December instead of March session.

Omar had further said, "For a long time especially from the winter zones of Jammu and Kashmir divisions, the parents as well as students were demanding to restore the schedule of exams to November-December session instead of March."

"Now, the schedule of the exams for all classes upto 9th standard will be held as per previous scheme. Exams for the classes will be held before the winter vacations," he said.

Omar added, "However, in case of the students of 10th to 12th classes, we cannot restore the academic session this year but in the 2025, we will revert the schedule as per the old scheme and their exams will also be held before winter vacations."

Rural areas in JK has literacy rate below national average among females

In Jammu and Kashmir, the literacy rate among the girl students in rural areas is below the national average.

In a written reply to Rajya Sabha, the Minister of State (MoS) for education said, "To reduce the dropout of Girls at all levels of school education, under Samagra Shiksha, there is a provision of Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) in the Educationally Backward Blocks where rural female literacy rate is below the national average."

Besides, the MoS informed the house that there has been over ten percent of drop rate among the girl students of both elementary and secondary levels till 2021-22.

Enrolment in JK Govt schools increases by 1.2 Lakh students

In Jammu and Kashmir, authorities have claimed that the student enrolment in the ongoing academic year has increased by more than 1.2 Lakh students in government-run-schools.

A top official said that during the academic year 2021-22, the total enrolment in government schools was approximately 12 Lakhs.

The official informed that "In the year 2022-23, AAO School Chalein Campaign, was launched and there was a notable increase of 17 percent, resulting in a total enrolment of around 14.18 Lakhs."

It also said that in 2023-24, again the enrollment witnessed, increasing trend, after deletion of duplicate entries and substantial increase in the pre-primary category, has been noticed over the years. 0.71 Lakhs (2021) to 1.57 Lakhs (2022-23) and now 1.80 Lakhs in 2023-24.

Promises of JKBOSE turn to dust in delivering textbook on time

Even after two weeks of winter vacation, the students enrolled in government-run-schools were yet to receive free textbooks from the authorities—thus raising a question on the functioning of JKBOSE.

The delay in delivering the textbooks has left thousands of students at the receiving end as the School Education Department has failed to distribute the course books on time.

Besides, the Chief Education Officers (CEOs) of Kashmir region have also raised the concerns in this regard and have requested the higher-ups that books shall be made available by JKBOSE at the earliest.

'Only 30% Govt, Pvt Schools of JK have internet connection

Till February-2024, only 30 percent of overall government and recognized private schools have internet connection available for the students and staff members in Jammu and Kashmir.

The official had said that till February-2024 only '5115' government-run-schools have internet like facilities available for the students and the staff members that include 152 girl schools, 4895 co-educational institutes and 68 boys schools.

It also reveals that only one government aided school has an internet connection available.

The official figures further state that only 34 Kendriya Vidyalaya central schools were having the internet like facilities available for the students and staff.

'Over 800 Govt schools in JK with zero student enrolment'

Till April, 'hundreds of government-run-schools are with zero student enrolments. Besides, majority of the institutions are having less than 50 student enrolments.

Moreover, the official documents had stated that more than 18 percent of government schools at elementary level here have an adverse Pupil Teacher Ratio (PTR).

However, the Ministry of Education (MoE) in the latest figures regarding the school size and single teacher schools in Jammu and Kashmir has said that, "Out of the total 23,173 schools in the UT, there are 848 schools with zero enrolment."

"Only 15% Govt teachers are trained to use computer as medium of teaching"

By the commencement of the year 2024, only 15 percent of teachers in government-run-schools were trained to use computers as a medium of teaching in Jammu and Kashmir.

According to the official figures among the total number of teaching staff in Jammu and Kashmir, only 26,180 teachers were trained in use of computers and teaching through the means.

The official figures reveal that the department of School Education was having a strength of 1,67,000 teachers across the region out of which only 26,180 teachers were trained in use of computers.

SED 'centralised' transfer, deputation powers

In August 2024, School Education Department 'Centralised' transfer and deputation powers by 'disempowering' CEOs, Cluster heads and ZEOs from the mastery.

The government in an order said that the decision was taken following the partial modification in previous related orders.

"It is ordered that the powers of rationalization delegated to Principals, Cluster Heads is hereby withdrawn with immediate effect and henceforth shall be exercised by the Joint Directors, with the prior approval of respective directors," it reads.

Govt proposes to provide financial support of 25,000 OoS in 2024-25

In May 2024, the Jammu and Kashmir government had proposed to provide financial support to more than 25,000 Out of School children (OoS) in the academic year 2024-25.

The concerned authorities from Jammu and Kashmir have proposed to the Ministry of Education (MoE) that "The UT has proposed financial support for 25393 OoS."

"In order to support through National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS)

For out of school children, it was informed that special centres have been provided by NIOS across the country for students in government schools," it reads.

The MoE has further said that the registration fees in these special centres have been subsidized at Rs 2000 per student.

Higher Edu Deptt

Govt Degree Colleges face decline trend in student enrollment

In a worrisome development, the government degree colleges of Jammu and Kashmir were facing a decline trend in student enrollment.

The top official of the Higher Education Department had said that besides the overall decline in student enrolment, many colleges have stopped teaching many science subjects as a major subject.

"There is no particular area for the decline in students' enrolment. In the past couple of years, the decline trend of student enrolment is being witnessed from both the peripheral and urban areas as well," the official said.

KU slips down by 12 slots in NIRF 2024 ranking

In National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) 2024, rank of University of Kashmir (KU) has gone down by 12 slots.

Earlier in 2023, KU had figured at 33rd rank in the top 100 Universities category.

In NIRF 2024, from the top 100 in overall category, KU has figured at 69th rank while the University of Jammu (JU) has figured at rank 87.

Similarly, from the top 100 universities, KU has figured at 45th rank and the JU has figured at 50th rank.

Drafting of 'Pvt University Policy' for establishment of Pvt Universities

The Jammu and Kashmir Higher Education Department in 2024 was drafting a 'Private University Policy' for establishing the private universities in the region.

Top officials of the department had said that it was in contact with all stakeholders for the clearance of all the related issues.

"In order to send a concrete proposal to the Ministry of Education (Mo) and to invite the private players to establish the universities, we are holding discussions regularly with all concerned stakeholders and we are seeking suggestions from them," the official had said.

The official further said that the policy will be sent to various concerned departments for suggestions and discussions, including Finance, Law, Revenue, Industry, and Planning.

64 GDCs exempted from making admissions through CUET score

In wake of low CUET based admissions in many degree colleges of Jammu and Kashmir, Higher Education Department had exempted 64 Government Degree Colleges from making admissions through CUET score for academic session 2024-25.

The department further said that many other students did not prefer to seek admission through the Common University Entrance Test (CUET) mode keeping in view their geographical locations, topography and availability of the infrastructure.

It had said that among the colleges that have been exempted from making admissions through CUET score for academic session 2024-25 includes 35 government colleges of Jammu division and 29 of Kashmir region respectively.

Newly established GDCs 'lack' permanent campuses, infrastructure

The Jammu and Kashmir Higher Education Department in 2024 had admitted that it lacked infrastructure, permanent campus and land for the several newly established degree colleges here.

The department however said that the screening committee has resolved to create a permanent campus for those colleges who lack it.

An official had said that the departments have 140 colleges in Jammu and Kashmir including 90 established colleges.

"We agree that in some newly established fifty colleges in Jammu and Kashmir, some of the institutes still have land issues and in some colleges we have not constructed permanent buildings. We realize that," the official had said.

Only 15 Pc students enrolled in Pvt Colleges

In Jammu and Kashmir only 15 percent of higher education students prefer to study in private unaided and aided colleges.

According to the official documents that reveal enrolment of private and government colleges based on actual response in a survey states that there were a total of 2,13,213 students enrolled in private and government colleges of Jammu and Kashmir.

Among the total number of enrolled students, 23,580 were enrolled in private unaided colleges, 4038 in private aided.

However, in comparison to the private colleges, the official figures reveal that in government colleges across Jammu and Kashmir, at least 1,85,595 students were enrolled.

'Crapastic education in JK Colleges

In view of 'Crapastic quality' of education in colleges of Jammu and Kashmir, youth here prefer to migrate to other states of India for better quality of education as compared to the regional institutes.

The official documents reveal, "The youth of Union Territory Jammu and Kashmir are looking at colleges and universities outside, claiming that the higher education institutes in other states and UTs have a better quality of education as compared to the regional institutes."

It said that of some of those who seek admissions in colleges outside Jammu and Kashmir, highlighting a glaring gap in the education infrastructure of the UT at the college and university level.

"As per the official data, there are just 208 private unaided colleges in Jammu and Kashmir, including professional colleges," it reads.

The official documents further reads that out of total number of private and Government College, not all are functional, and few colleges still don't have their complete infrastructure in place. KNO

## J&K witnessed..

and Kashmir including 64.68 per cent male voters and 63.04 per cent women and 38.24 per cent third gender voters.

Later, the first-ever elected government of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir took oath on October 16.

National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah, who won elections from Budgam and Ganderbal constituencies, took oath as Chief Minister, while his five colleagues were sworn in as the cabinet ministers.

After a gap of 19 days, the first Assembly session commenced on November 4, 2024. Abdur Rahim Rather was elected as the first Speaker of J&K UT's Legislative Assembly.

During the first-session, the resolution demanding the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir special status, revoked by the Centre on August 5, 2019, was passed amid ruckus by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLAs in the house. KNO

## In 2024, ACB files...

Application, ACB WhatsApp helpline, email, through post, by hand etc. "These complaints are then examined at ACB. This year 2,772 case were sent to DVOs and 2,434 were disposed off by DVOs. 6 DVO conferences, 3 each at Jammu and Srinagar were held this year to review the pendency of matters with DVOs, issues relating to disposal of DVO matters and timely submission of information. 27 JSCs, 29 PEs, 116 Misc verifications and 128 Verifications were also disposed off during the year."

The statement reads that during 2024, UT Vigilance Awareness Week, National Vigilance Awareness Week, International Anti-Corruption Day were celebrated throughout UT wherein stake holders were made aware of Anti-Corruption Law and Rules regarding transparent and good governance. KNO

## Eco-Friendly Transport..

the city's green transformation. As per the data, from January 1, 2024, to December 29, 2024, the initiative facilitated 73,409 rides across the city. Covering a collective distance of 180,217.81 kilometers, officials said that the program, as per their dashboard observation, has directly offset 45,582.87 kilograms of carbon emissions, marking a notable environmental victory for Srinagar.

As per the official, one of the standout features of the initiative was its unwavering commitment to service. "Operating 24 hours a

day, 7 days a week, the program has never paused operations—not even for a single day. Whether it's Eid, Diwali, Christmas, New Year, or any other occasion, the service remains available."

The official added that as per their calculation, on an average each ride has covered a distance of 2.45 kilometers, and that with the reduced vehicular traffic, the initiative has also indirectly contributed to easing congestion and improving air quality in the city.

The official added that the initiative's ethos, encapsulated in its slogan "Burn Fat, Not Fuel," encourages locals to embrace active transportation methods like cycling and walking and that the program's success reflects a shift in public attitudes towards health-conscious and environmentally sustainable practices.

He said the programme under the Srinagar Smart City has been lauded as a key component of their larger vision to create a livable, sustainable urban environment by integrating eco-friendly transport options.

"The message is clear, every ride matters. By choosing to cycle or walk, people are not only improving their health but also playing an active role in combating climate change. It makes us healthier, saves money, and protects the environment," the official added. KNO

## NIA delivers 100% conviction..

It said, "A massive haul of 5 rifles, 6 pistols, 1 revolver, 215 rounds ammunition, 5 detonators, 2 packets of gun powder, 75 fired empty cartridges & 75 Kgs of suspected explosive substance were also seized in a case of illegal supply of arms, ammunition and explosives to operatives in North Eastern states and insurgent groups based across the international border."

The statement further said, "As many as 210 accused were arrested across key categories of crimes in 80 cases registered by NIA in 2024. Of these cases, Left Wing Extremism (LWE) and North East insurgency topped the list at 28 and 18 cases. Seven J&K Jihadi cases were followed by 6 Explosive Substances and 5 Human Trafficking cases. NIA further registered 4 Other Jihadi cases, 4 Khalistan and 2 ISIS Jihadi cases, and 1 case each in Gangsters, Cyber Terrorism, FICN and other categories," the statement said.

"The NIA's impressive performance for 2024 was marked by convictions of 68 accused (in 25 cases) and charge sheeting of 408 accused. A total of 137 properties/assets worth Rs 19.57 crore were attached during the year as part of the agency's sustained efforts to dismantle the various terrorist, gangster and other criminal networks. Left Wing Extremism remained under NIA's scanner throughout the year, leading to the maximum of 69 arrests of the total 210 arrests reported in 2024," it said.

"Twenty eight cases of LWE were registered, and 12 chargesheets filed against 64 accused in this category," it added.

"The crackdown on the growing terrorist-gangster was also a key highlight of the year. NIA arrested 14 accused in connection with foreign-based Khalistani terrorist cases during the year, which saw 101 searches being conducted in these cases. The total searches carried out across all kinds of cases in 2024 stood at 662. Thirteen arrests were made in gangster related cases during the year," the statement said.

"The agency's agile efforts in cracking terrorism cases were evident in the fact that it had charge sheeted Pakistan-based Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) chief Wadhawa Singh @ Babbar and five other terrorists in the murder of VHP leader Vikas Prabhakar @ Vikas Baggia in Punjab within months of the fatal attack," the statement said, adding, "Similarly, 10 accused, including foreign-based terrorist Goldy Brar, were expeditiously charge sheeted in the case pertaining to firing for extortion at the house of a businessman in Chandigarh by aides of Brar. Early in the year, NIA had also charge sheeted Khalistan Terrorist Force (KTF) members Manpreet Singh alias Peeta and Mandeep Singh, after their successful deportation from Philippines."

"The NIA further secured the conviction of four terrorists, including chief conspirator Kulwinderjeet Singh @Khanpuria, in a terror conspiracy case related to the banned Babbar Khalsa International (BKI) outfit. Khanpuria was involved in many terrorist cases, including a bomb blast at Connaught Place and a grenade attack at Red Fort, Delhi, in the nineties. He was also wanted in many terrorist cases, including a conspiracy to carry out targeted killings in Punjab. Another notable development in the Khalistani terror related cases was the successful extradition of Tarsem Singh Sandhu of Tarn Taran district of Punjab from UAE, in a case of conspiracy of KLF, BKI & ISYF to wage war against the country," the statement added.

"As far as extraditions secured by NIA are concerned, another accused, Salman Khan, was brought in from Rwanda in an arms seizure case of Bengaluru, Karnataka," it said.

"The NIA scaled up its operations multifold in 2024, cracking the Rameshwaram café blast case, which rocked the nation early in the year, within a matter of months. With five accused already arrested and four charge sheeted in this high-profile case," it said, adding, "The NIA once again proved its ability to solve tough cases with speed and agility, backed by technical and field investigations in coordination with various state police forces and other agencies. "

"A total of 27 absconding criminals were nabbed by NIA during the year. Notable among them was Savad, who was nabbed after being on the run for 13 years in the Kerala Professor hand chopping case. Other key absconders arrested during the year included Mohammed Sahjalal Haldar and Idris in a Bengaluru case relating to human trafficking from Myanmar into India, Shokat Ali @ Shaukat Ali in the Jaipur customs gold seizure case, and Mohammed Mustafa & Kodaje Mohammed Sherif in BJP leader Praveen Nattaru murder case. The arrest of absconder Kamran Haider in the Laos human trafficking and cyber slavery case signified NIA's concerted focus on destroying the chain behind this criminal activity, which has led to several innocent youth being trapped on foreign land by unscrupulous elements," the statement said.

"A key aspect of the speedy action and breakthroughs in the Rameshwaram café blast and other major cases was the stellar role played by the intelligence agencies and the concerned state police forces," it said.

"NIA coordinated closely with them throughout the year, working in a spirit of team work and sharing information on a continuous basis to crack various important cases with speed and alacrity. As part of its efforts to enhance the capacity of the state police forces, NIA also engaged in their capacity building, providing training to 1,678 state police officials through 11 training programmes/ courses in 2024. At the same time, given the growing scale and magnitude of major terror related and other serious crimes with the potential to disrupt India's peace and harmony, NIA made significant efforts during the year to strengthen its own capacities. The establishment of two new exclusive NIA courts, one each in Jammu and Ranchi, was an important step in this direction. NIA also released a handbook on UA(P)A investigations to bring standardisation into the probing of terror cases," it said. KNO

## North Kashmir..

Bandipora, while witnessing a comparatively lower number of incidents, reported 357 cases, marking a rise of 77 from 2023.

Speaking to KNO, Mir Arif, Deputy Director, F&ES, attributed the sharp rise in fire incidents across North Kashmir to prolonged dry

weather conditions in the valley. "The dry spell has significantly contributed to the increase in fire incidents, alongside common causes like electricity short circuits and gas leaks."

He said that 42 fire and emergency stations/posts under command headquarters, staffed by around 444 dedicated personnel, have been at the forefront of managing these emergencies. "No firemen were injured during the operations despite the challenging conditions and the sharp rise in fire incidents this year", he added.

"In Baramulla district, we have 175 personnel actively working to manage emergencies, while Kupwara has 182 dedicated staff. Bandipura, however, operates with 87 personnel," Arif said.

The sharp increase in fire incidents, however, has raised concerns among residents and officials alike, prompting calls for improved preventive measures, enhanced infrastructure and public awareness campaigns to mitigate such disasters in the future.

The top office urged the public to remain vigilant and take fire safety precautions, recommending installation of smoke detectors on every level of the home, ensuring the availability of fire extinguishers and creating an evacuation plan for emergencies.

He also advised against overloading power outlets, leaving open flames unattended and delaying the reporting of potential fire hazards. KNO

## In 2024, Cyber Police..

resolved 577 complaints registered on the National Cyber Crime Reporting Portal (NCCRP) and addressed 1,700 other miscellaneous complaints, showcasing its commitment to delivering services and addressing public grievances," reads the statement.

It further reads as action was taken against 1,833 fake SIM cards used in various online crimes, and 150 missing mobile phones, worth lakhs of rupees, were recovered and restored to their rightful owners.

"Alongside its operational success, the Cyber Police Kashmir Zone placed a strong emphasis on public awareness by organizing numerous workshops in educational institutions and government offices to educate citizens about emerging cyber threats and online safety practices," the statement reads.

"These achievements highlight the Cyber Police's comprehensive approach to tackling a wide range of cybercrimes, from financial fraud to the misuse of social media platforms. The Cyber Police remains steadfast in its mission to protect the digital well-being of citizens and foster a safer online environment for all," the statement reads. KNO

## KPs integral part..

their well-being through targeted initiatives, robust support system and various welfare schemes.

"Efforts are being intensified to provide a better quality of life for the residents of Jagti township and Kashmiri Migrants as a whole and our commitment to their rehabilitation is unwavering," he stated.

The Deputy Chief Minister directed the officers to redress the grievances of the residents within the shortest possible time.

During his visit, the Deputy CM conducted a comprehensive review of the facilities available for the township residents. He assessed the status of health and education infrastructure, availability of drinking water and other essential services.

In a detailed inspection of healthcare services at the Sub-District Hospital (SDH) in Jagti, the Deputy CM directed Director Health Services to ensure uninterrupted and high-quality medical care services. He also stressed on adequate supply of medicines to meet the needs of the patients besides upgrading the existing infrastructure at the hospital. KNO

## GoI gives sanction..

arms licence scam involving deputy magistrates of Jammu & Kashmir was unearthed by the Rajasthan ATS in 2017.

The case was being probed by the J&K Police before then Governor NN Vohra handed over it to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The investigation revealed that arms licences in bulk were issued by the then deputy magistrates in J&K to non-residents on forged documents.

Between 2012 and 2016, deputy commissioners of various districts in J&K had fraudulently and illegally issued bulk arms licences in lieu of monetary consideration, the probe found. KNO

## Once a symbol of..

"I remember when people used to leave clothes here, and others would take them. Now, it is just another wall in the city, with no one bothering to contribute."

Notably, while the idea behind the Wall of Kindness was noble, its current state raises questions about the effectiveness of such initiatives when not properly maintained or supported by the community.

It is worth mentioning that for now, the wall stands as a reminder of what could have been, waiting to regain its lost glow. KNO

## Ensure common people..

including, 'One Nation, One Ration Card,' PM Mudra Yojana, PM Awas Yojana, Bharat Jal Jeevan Mission, Smart City Mission, Broadband connectivity and other schemes.

They said that the Commissioner Secretaries apprised the Union Home Secretary about the progress achieved and steps being taken to complete the targets of reaching out to the last deserving person in the queue.

The Union Home Secretary, sources said, stressed on the need to focus on ensuring that common people in J&K get direct benefits of the centrally sponsored schemes.

After chairing the meeting at SKICC on the banks of Dal Lake here, the Union Home Secretary concluded his 2-day Kashmir visit and left for New Delhi.

Pertinently, the Union Home Secretary had arrived in Srinagar on Monday. He had chaired a security review meeting which was attended by the top brass of the security forces.

The Union Home Secretary had called on the security top brass to work towards achieving the goal of 'terror-free Jammu and Kashmir' at the earliest and emphasized on the need to act tough against the terrorists and their supporters. He had reiterated the government's resolve about zero tolerance towards terrorism.

The Union Home Secretary had appreciated the security agencies for working in close coordination with each other in the decisive action against the terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. He had stressed on the need to implement "Area Domination Plan" and "Zero Terror Plan" in mission mode. KNO

## LG's Greetings..

Jammu Kashmir to pinnacle of development and prosperity. Let us celebrate the diversity of our rich culture and strengthen the bonds of brotherhood in our society. May the New Year 2025 bring happiness, health and prosperity to all". KNO

## Jammu Children exploring new world of creativity in Natrang's winter Theatre Workshop

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, DEC 31

Outstandingly talented Jammu children are exploring altogether a new world of creativity and innovation at Natrang's winter theatre workshop for children. In a very important creative exercise they improvise five to six short plays everyday and analyse and reflect critically on each other's performance and innovative ideas. Conceptualized and devised by Padamshree Balwant Thakur, a new methodology of children theatre is being implemented in an intense theatre workshop which is going on these days at Natrang Studio Theatre in Jammu. Natrang the premier cultural institution of Jammu devotes the entire winter, offering a unique opportunity for children aimed at exploring the immense inner abilities of children. While majority prefer to utilize winter

vacation in holidaying, few parents finding this as an ultimate occasion, bring their children to Natrang which has pioneered in children theatre and have given platform to thousands of children and have transformed and groomed their personalities. In Natrang's Winter Theatre workshop-2024 children are working on various aspects of the art of storytelling and play-making processes. This Natrang's new approach of working with children is yielding huge visible results as the participating children are demonstrating endless amount of confidence in public speaking and sharing of new thoughts. Away from their routine boring classrooms and usual school curriculum, they have found a new environment filled with highly enterprising, aspiring/inspiring creative and innovative ideas. They have found a space where they are being



encouraged to express their thoughts using dramatics as an effective tool to connect with the world around them. Every year Natrang organises winter, Spring and Summer workshops for children at its studio theatre where through creative games, improvisations, and exercises they explore their immense inborn inner abilities. Theatre in the developed world is used as an important tool in personality transformation and amazingly helps in infusing confidence. Stage is considered as the most magical space where a child transforms him/herself into a highly confident personality. Natrang is doing regular Children

Theatre in Jammu for the last 35 years, it has trained, inspired and motivated thousands of children till now and most of them have excelled brilliantly in various fields be it acting, direction, media, management, civil services, medicine, engineering, social work etc. It clearly speaks that no matter what you want to become in life, the confidence, spontaneity, self-exploration, creativity and discipline you imbibe because of theatre training, works as your ultimate weapon and strong motivational force for you to succeed and excel in every sphere of life. The training module of Natrang's Children theatre has been exclusively devised by Pad-

mashree Balwant Thakur himself, who has taken the children theatre of Jammu to the entire length and breadth of the country and outside to many nations. His plays like Mere Hisse Ki Dhoop Kahan Hai and Aap Hamare Hain Kaun are considered as one of the most celebrated and longest living plays by children in India. His play 'Aap Hamaare Hain Kaun' have been staged in French, Creol, and English. Children have immense possibilities and abilities to perform but they are required to be explored through such highly innovative experiments of theatre and arts in education. They are required to be infused with self confidence and equipped with new tools of communication, organizing self, focusing targets and the art of public speaking and in this area, these Theatre Workshops plays a major role. In winter Theatre workshop- a play by Bal-

want Thakur is also being devised under the direction of Neeraj Kant. The workshop is being assisted by Kanan Kaur and coordinated by Mohd. Yaseen. Sumeet Sharma and Aarushi Thakur Rana are the visiting faculty of the workshop. The children who extremely lucky to be a part of this unique initiative are Advik Sharma, Mehak Chib, Araiya Shan, Dhanak Chandan, Vaibhav Mahajan, Ruhaan Chandan, Samkit Jain, Ruhani Jain, Nyra Gandotra, Nandita Mahajan, Kavish Sharma, Reevek Verma, Deeher Gupta, Dwijesh Dutta, Saanchi Dutta, Aaranaa Gupta, Sianet Magotra, Shikhar Mittada, Priyal Gupta, Sanchi Dutta, Supria Gorka, Daivansh Singh, Daiwik Shan, Mrigasya Shan, Adira Gupta, Kavya Janydal, Deshna Jain, Anuvi Sharma, Kamakhya Bali, Jazz Shah, Nirvana Shah, Amayra Mahajan and Jayaditya Singh.

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, DEC 31

## Jugal urges Gadkari to limit Delhi-Katra expressway upto IMS Station Katra

Bharatiya Janata Party senior leader and Member of Parliament Jugal Kishore Sharma has urged Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari, to reconsider plans to extend the Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway up to Tarakote Road. Sharma, in his letter to the Union Minister as per news gathering agency KINS, requested that the expressway be constructed only up to the (IMS) Katra. The Member Parliament raised concerns over the proposed extension of the expressway to Tarakote Road, fearing it would bypass Katra's local markets, causing significant economic losses to the town. He highlighted that Katra, home to more than 100,000 people, would be severely impacted if pilgrims and tourists travel-

ing along the expressway were diverted directly to Tarakote Road. This route, he said, would neglect the vital commercial areas of Katra, including Banganga and Charan Paduka, which rely heavily on the influx of visitors. The MP pointed out that the local population, particularly the youth, had been expressing their discontent, with many even resorting to hunger strikes in protest of the plan. He emphasized that the current proposal could deprive the local community of the economic benefits they derive from tourism, as well as the traditional hospitality that Katra offers to pilgrims. Sharma has requested Minister Gadkari to intervene personally and ensure that the expressway's construction is limited to the IMS Station, halting any extension to Tarakote Marg.

## Promote regional identities, culture through education: Rajni Sethi

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, DEC 31

The Education Minister of Jammu and Kashmir must address critical concerns raised by students, teachers, and society. Transparency and accountability in decision-making is essential, particularly regarding key issues such as the roadmap for the transfer policy of teachers, fulfillment of promises of regularization, and policies for daily wage teachers in schools. Clarity on how the government plans to establish permanent policies for these teachers is imperative to ensure their stability and morale. Jammu and Kashmir BJP spokesperson, Rajni Sethi, said this while addressing media persons along with Secretary Anju Dogra and spokesperson Balbir Ram Rattan at party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu. Rajni Sethi said that according to their manifesto, the promise of free education up to the 12th grade,



along with the installation of CCTV surveillance in all private and government schools, remains unfulfilled. The minister needs to outline a clear timeline and strategy for achieving these goals. Moreover, rural schools require immediate attention to bridge the gap in quality education between urban and rural areas. Ensuring parity in the quality of education in government and private schools is crucial for equity and development. We commend the Central Government for introducing the new holiday calendar, including the

cancellation of the 13th July holiday. However, the education minister must ensure that schools are adequately informed about this decision and its significance. This reflects the need for a cohesive approach to reforms across the region. Further, there is an urgent need to promote regional identities and culture through education. Dogri as a compulsory subject in Jammu schools and Sufism in Kashmir schools would preserve the unique heritage of both regions. These steps would foster unity and cultural understanding among students.

She further said that the change in the academic session for the winter zone also raises questions about its alignment with the welfare of students and adherence to the decisions of the Lieutenant Governor. The minister must clarify whether this change serves educational needs or other agendas. A subject on disadvantages of Article 370 should also be included in school books in Jammu and Kashmir so that the students too come to know about the discrimination meted to various sections under the garb of this special provision, she said. The National Conference (NC) government must introspect whether their policies are guiding the next generation toward a bright future or jeopardizing the progress of Jammu and Kashmir. Accountability to the public and transparency in fulfilling promises is the need of the hour.

## CCI Jammu appeals admin to initiate dialogue with leaders of Katra agitation for amicable solution

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, DEC 31

A meeting of the Office Bearers of Chamber of Commerce & Industry was held today at Chamber House under the Presidentship of Sh. Arun Gupta to discuss the situation arising out of the call given by Sangrath Samiti for complete shutdown

against the proposed ropeway project and the extension of Delhi-Amritsar-Katra Expressway beyond Katra. The office bearers viewed with grave concern hardships which are being faced by thousands of pilgrims visiting the holy shrine of Mata Vaishno Devi since 25th of December and the nega-

tive impact it is causing throughout the Country. Chamber requests that since the ladies and the Children are also sitting on Dharna and are part of the ongoing agitation, the administration should initiate unconditional and meaningful dialogue with the stakeholders for amicable solution keeping in view the sentiments and

apprehensions of the people of Katra and also the future development of the pilgrimage of holy Mata Vaishno Devi. The other Office Bearers present in the meeting include Sh. Anil Gupta, Sr. Vice President, Sh. Rajeev Gupta, Jr. Vice President, Sh. Rajesh Gupta, Secretary and Sh. Rajesh Gupta, Treasurer.

## BSF 26 Bn organises Cricket Tournament in Handwara to Foster Community Engagement

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
HANDWARA, DEC 31

The 26 Battalion of the Border Security Force (BSF) successfully concluded a cricket tournament under its Civic Action Programme, aimed at fostering sportsmanship and strengthening community bonds among local youth in Handwara. The tournament, which featured three local teams from the Handwara region, culminated with an intense final match held today. The event was inaugurated by Shri S.F.P. Vaiphei, Officiating Commandant (2IC), alongside senior officers Shri Vijay Singh Ghamoria (2IC, Operations/Administration), Shri Jaipal Bishnoi (Deputy Commandant/Adjutant), Shri Raju Barahadiya (Deputy Commandant), Shri Sushil Kumar (Deputy Commandant), and Dr. Sumit (ACMO, 26 Battalion BSF). The final showdown between Ibrahim Cricket Club, Gonipora, Handwara, and Star Eleven Cricket Club, Melyal, Kupwara, witnessed a thrill-



ing contest. Star Eleven Cricket Club emerged victorious, clinching the tournament title. During the prize distribution ceremony, Shri S.F.P. Vaiphei and Shri Vijay Singh Ghamoria presented trophies and cricket kits to the participating teams. The initiative was widely appreciated for encouraging youth engagement in sports and fostering a spirit of camaraderie.

Local residents expressed their gratitude to the BSF for organizing the event, emphasizing its positive impact on youth development and the promotion of community harmony. The tournament stands as a testament to the BSF's commitment to building strong relationships with the local population through constructive and inclusive initiatives.

## Dec 5 to be observed as official holiday from 2025: CM's Advisor Nasir Aslam

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, DEC 31

Nasir Aslam Wani, Advisor to the Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Tuesday said that December 5 will be observed as an official holiday starting next year. Speaking to the media, Advisor as per the news agency-Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said that the administration is committed to addressing the concerns of people. "The CM is in the valley, monitoring minute-to-minute developments. For the first time, after snowfall, we witnessed swift restoration of power supply and roads, ensuring that people did not face significant inconvenience," he said. He added that snowfall is a blessing for the region, ensuring adequate water supplies for the summer months. "While snowfall naturally disrupts daily life, the administration's prompt action was widely appreciated by the public," he added.

**UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR**  
**OFFICE THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION UDHAMPUR**

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  
**e-NIT No. 97 of 2024-25 Dated 30.12.2024**

For and on behalf of the **Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir** e-tenders are invited on **percentage basis** from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory of J&K, CPWD, Railways, MES and other State/Central Governments for the following work:-

S. No.	Name of Work	Advertised Cost (Rs. in lacs)	Cost of documents (in Rs)	Earnest Money	Time Allowed for completion	Class of Contractor	Head of Account
1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.
1.	Upgradation of District veterinary Hospital at Kallar Udhampur (Under NABARD)	140.33	3000/-	@2% of advertised cost	12 Month	"A"	"NABARD"
2.	Renovation work in Palaash building Child Care Institution Udhampur (MH 2235-Social Welfare Department)	12.80	600/-	@2% of advertised cost	03 Month	"B/C/D"	"MH 2235-Social Welfare Department"
3.	Stage work within limits of Municipal Council Udhampur (Under FC Grant)	3.70	600/-	@2% of advertised cost	Upto 31.03.2025	"D"	"Under FC Grant"

**Position of AAA:-**      **Accorded**  
**Position of T.S:-**      **Accorded**  
**Position of funds:-**      **Available**

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website <http://jktenders.gov.in> as per below schedule:-

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	30-12-2024
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 31-12-2024 to 14-01-2025, 1800 Hrs
3	Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting.	08-01-2025 at 1200 Hrs. in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division, Udhampur.
4	Bid submission Start Date	31-01-2025 from 900 Hrs
5	Bid Submission End Date	14-01-2025 up to 1800 Hrs
6	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	15-01-2025 on or after 1200 Hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division, Udhampur.
7	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed.

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of **e-challan through Treasury indicating Treasury Voucher No. & date, name of work duly crediting to 0059 (Revenue) favoring Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division, Udhampur uploading a copy of treasury challan and EMD/Bid Security in the shape of CDR/FDR (The date of Treasury Challan/ Bid Security/Affidavits between date of start of bid submission and bid submission end date) duly pledged to Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division, Udhampur** as mentioned in the bid documents. The earnest money of the unsuccessful bidder shall be released only after submission of Treasury Challan.

No:- \_\_\_\_\_  
Dated:- **30-12-2024**

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
PWD (R&B) Division  
Udhampur

DIP/1-8749/24  
Date: 31-12-24

## EDITORIAL

## Assessing efficacy and challenges of compensatory afforestation

## Water security challenges in Ladakh

The Union Territory administration of Ladakh's decision to ban the digging of new borewells in nine "semi-critical" areas of Leh district is a crucial step toward addressing the region's mounting water security challenges. The Central Ground Water Board's findings underscore the gravity of the situation, highlighting areas such as Leh town, Choglamzar, and Phyang as zones at risk of transitioning to "critical" groundwater depletion if unchecked extraction continues. Ladakh's fragile ecosystem, already bearing the brunt of climate change, is further strained by rapid urbanization, a booming tourism industry, and an influx of migrant laborers. Seasonal water sources, primarily glacial and permafrost meltwater, are increasingly unreliable due to retreating glaciers and reduced snowfall. This, coupled with growing domestic, industrial, and agricultural demands, paints a bleak picture for the region's water sustainability. The visible effects of climate change—thinning glaciers, retreating streams, and declining snowfall—are exacerbating the region's vulnerability. The prohibition on new borewells is not merely a regulatory move; it is a desperate measure to avert a looming water crisis that could destabilize the region's socio-economic fabric. Groundwater, once considered a hidden reservoir of abundance, is now a depleting resource in Ladakh. The Central Ground Water Board's classification of key areas as "semi-critical" sends a clear warning: without scientific regulation and conservation, Ladakh's water future hangs by a thread. Over-extraction in these zones risks tipping the balance, transforming them into critical hotspots where water scarcity becomes the norm. The administration's decision to enforce the ban under the Jammu & Kashmir Water Resources (Regulation & Management) Act, 2010, reflects a proactive approach. Monitoring illegal borewells and imposing environmental compensation on unauthorized water extraction are necessary deterrents. However, these measures must be accompanied by strict enforcement and community participation to ensure compliance. Additionally, integrating these regulations into Ladakh's broader developmental framework is vital. Urban planning must prioritize water conservation, and industries, housing complexes, and commercial establishments should adopt sustainable water usage practices. While regulation is critical, Ladakh's water crisis requires innovative solutions and a shift in public consciousness. Rainwater harvesting, wastewater recycling, and promoting water-efficient practices can alleviate some of the pressure on groundwater. Educational campaigns must also play a role in instilling a culture of water conservation among residents, businesses, and tourists alike. Investing in alternative water sources, such as desalination technologies and advanced storage systems for seasonal glacial meltwater, could provide long-term solutions. Research into climate-resilient agriculture and efficient irrigation methods can help reduce the strain on water resources in the agricultural sector. Lieutenant Governor Brig (Dr) B.D. Mishra's acknowledgment of the water crisis highlights the administration's awareness of the challenge. However, awareness must translate into actionable strategies that combine regulation, innovation, and community engagement. The water crisis in arid region is not just an environmental issue; it is a matter of survival for its people and ecosystem. The ban on new borewells is a step in the right direction, but it must be part of a larger, cohesive strategy to secure the region's water future. As glaciers retreat and temperatures rise, time is of the essence. The administration, along with its residents, must act decisively to ensure that Ladakh's pristine landscape and unique way of life are preserved for generations to come.

BPK SINHA AND ARVIND KUMAR JHA

Compensatory Afforestation (CA) relates to the mitigation of environmental damage caused by the diversion of forest land for non-forestry purposes and is a mandatory requirement for obtaining clearances under the Forest Conservation Act, 1980; now Van (Sanrakshanev Samvardhan) Adhinyam (VSSA) 1980 and Rules. The Government of India guidelines state that normally CA must be carried out on a suitable non-forest land equal to the forest area proposed for diversion and for minimizing the adverse impact on the micro-ecology, such land should be located as near as possible to the diverted area. If suitable non-forest land is unavailable, CA may be carried out on degraded forest land equal to twice the area of the diverted forest land. The unavailability of non-forest land in a district is certified by the District Collector and in the exceptional case of its unavailability in the whole state/union territory (UT), the chief secretary has to certify accordingly and CA land may be identified preferably in a neighbouring state/UT. As regards CA, the Government of India guidelines of 2017 and 2019 emphasized compensation for loss of land by land and that of trees by trees.

They indicate that at least 1000 plants are to be planted in one hectare and in case 1000 plants are not possible to be accommodated, the balance may be planted in

some other government forest identified by the state government. The states having more than 75% forest cover, however, are exempted from the task of procuring non-forest land for CA. Their CA can be taken up in states with deficient forest land/cover. As regards size, lands smaller than 5 hectares can also be accepted for CA if it is contiguous to a wildlife conservation area like National Parks and Wildlife Sanctuaries. Area equivalence criterion often leads to an understanding that any forest can be equated with tree plantations of any kind but the concept of Net Present Value (NPV) is additionally used to calculate the worth of diverted forests by attaching a monetary value to a whole range of goods and services provided by them. This amount is recovered from the project proponent.

The World Bank's 2002 strategy elaborates the NPV to include goods and services like wood and non-wood items, ecosystem services, support to wildlife, climate regulation, soil & water conservation and flood prevention, carbon sequestration, nutrient cycling, health support systems and non-material benefits which may be spiritual, inspirational, recreational, aesthetic, educational etc. Its value thus extends far beyond economics and considering the interest of different stakeholders, the values of different components may also vary, such as the cultural significance of a tree species versus its commercial value as timber.

The January 2022 guidelines of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MoEFCC) have clubbed the forests of India into six Eco-classes to realize NPV instead of diverted forest land. Out of them, class I includes Tropical Wet Evergreen Forests, Tropical Semi Evergreen Forests, and Tropical Moist Deciduous Forests, while class II contains Littoral and Swamp Forests. Interestingly, the per hectare value of NPV for both these classes has been kept the same, an equality that appears surprising. It is crucial to arrive at a monetized figure for a unit of Nature/biodiversity and ensure that investing in it will offset the loss caused by diversion. Simultaneous sustainable development of biodiversity is of course a formidable challenge. Accordingly, any oversimplification of biodiversity assessment can lead to inaccuracies and undermine genuine conservation efforts.

The limitations faced in offsetting losses just through CA are amply covered by CAG reports. Unfortunately, the resource position at the world level also, despite the wrath of climate change being faced globally, shows an annual funding gap of about USD 700 billion in nature conservation. Against the above background, the proposed CA and NPV to mitigate the diversion of forest land in the "Holistic Development of Great Nicobar Island" (GNI) project is worth a look. The Rs72,000 crore investment will

divert 130.75 sq. km. of forest land for infrastructure development that includes a trans-shipment port, an airport, a power plant, a defence base, an industrial park, and a township.

The project involves the felling of an estimated one million trees with habitat destruction that would also impact the life, livelihood, and forest rights of the Shompen; a particularly vulnerable hunter-and-gatherer tribal group. The MoEFCC claims to have incorporated into the project some exemplary mitigation measures, including compensatory afforestation, into the project in compliance with the provisions of the VSSA 1980 while securing India's strategic national and defence interests.

Out of the total CA area of 26,000 hectares, locating 24,354 hectares in Haryana is justified by highlighting that planting native species in arid landscapes and near urban areas is of greater ecological value. Talks are said to be on with the Madhya Pradesh government for situating the balanced CA area. The CA in Aravali's arid/semi-arid region, approximately 2,400 kilometres away, to compensate for the loss of pristine rainforests of Great Nicobar is a significant departure from the guideline regarding the positioning of CA land. Reportedly, the CA with ₹3000 crore's investment is expected to be mostly a revival plan to improve the soil texture and fertility and to make stone boundary walls since the proposed area already

has root stock requiring just protection and supplemental planting wherever required.

Indicative of the natural limits imposed by edaphic, geographical, and climatic factors, the Forest Survey of India (FSI) 2021 report on forest status shows that the carbon stock per hectare in A&N forests is fourth highest in the country; next only to Himachal, Sikkim, and J&K while Haryana has the second lowest; next only to Delhi.

This fact does raise questions regarding the possibility and efficacy of compensating adequately Nicobar's loss of carbon stock and biomass by investing CA money in Haryana. Considering the aspect of NPV, it is worth noting that Nicobar Island forests are more like that of Malaysia and Indonesia while the Andaman Islands' flora is more akin to the species found in Myanmar, Thailand, and Northeast India. FSI's rapid biodiversity assessment in A&N islands in 2018-19 found that shrubs and herbs together were more than double the number of trees. Many species found there do not occur in mainland India. The understory and emergent layers with profuse regeneration, herbs, and shrubs indicate a vibrant ecosystem wherein approximately half of the mammals, a third of the birds, a quarter of the reptiles, and over a tenth of flowering plants are endemic. A crucible for the habitat rights of the Shompen tribe notwithstanding, it is home to the endangered Nicobar Megapode and

Leatherback Turtle, and has over twenty thousand coral reefs in its vicinity. In 1989, the UNESCO declared a significant portion of the island as a biosphere reserve. Despite such uniqueness, distinctive parameters, and ecological significance; its NPV per hectare is exactly equal to the forests in Eco-classes I and II. GIN is just one project.

An in-depth analysis of forest land diversion cases can provide, in addition to actionable issues related to limitations and risks in offsetting just through the prevalent CA and NPV model, important insights into ways to minimize harm to Nature, redeemability of loss to forest ecosystems, correct determination of NPV, efficient investments in Nature recovery and restoration initiatives, handling of habitat rights of the primitive tribes and pre-agricultural communities, and regulations needed to ensure accountability.

Nature's monetization and biodiversity markets are fast emerging as potential funding sources for conservation. Their effectiveness demands an honest valuation of diverted forests and a strict implementation of conservation strategies. The outcomes depend on those having the power to decide. Only time will tell, but the decisions made today will echo through the annals of history shaping the destiny of our country and of humanity itself.

(The writers are former PCCFs of U.P. and Maharashtra; views are personal)

## Overcoming the Grip of Fearful Thoughts

AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

We routinely become obsessed with fearful thoughts. The word obsession is defined as a persistent disturbing pre-occupation with an often unreasonable idea or feeling. We don't stop there; we think of the worst. What is the probability of that happening? But that does not prevent us from this common flaw; we do it willingly. There are several reasons for succumbing to this. We have many attachments. We are desperate for something like a good result, and a few like we shouldn't get

sick. Unfortunately, these are decided by the Divine Authority based on our past 'Karmas' (deeds). We have no say in it, and they manifest at their designated times. Fortunately, they are very rarely the worst we think of. If so, life would be hellish, which it is not. This earth's planet is a place of misery (The Bhagavad Geeta 8.15) alright, but is not a concentration camp by any standard. But our imagination has no bounds.

The next big offender is a refusal to be prepared to tolerate. We want zero tolerance. Is it possible? Everything is changing like the weather. Bad 'Kar-

maphalas' (results of bad deeds) will manifest for sure because this is no Vaikuntha; we have most certainly a past with many bad karmas. How else are we here, not even in Heaven? We feel that we are intelligent, but hardly anyone escapes making this mistake. Yes, we are supposed to get fearful, because that protects us from acting foolishly, but excessive fear is due to faulty assessment. Due diligence is required.

The fourth offender is greed. Our desires are open-ended. Is it wise? The evidence shows that downfalls occur due to being too greedy. But to

become greedy and then fear the consequences makes zero sense. Over-stress also causes fearful thoughts, especially about health. It is better to avoid to lessen this possibility. We want to control and are unable to. We act stupidly and then fear the worst. The same problem exists in acting big, which no one can ever become; we are intrinsically small and will remain eternally so.

Acting as the sole doer also evolves fearful thoughts. Giving control of our minds to fearful thoughts is making ourselves our enemies. Lord Krishna has warned about it (4.6). Similarly, intelli-

gence is supposed to curb this tendency but, again, we find some justification in harming ourselves. This is also a sad commentary on our knowledge, about which we are so proud. A soul has severe limitations, as we realize; he must remain in the shelter of God. This is the only worthwhile solution. I am sorry to be so stern, but the proliferation of mental diseases points to it only.

God controls the Creation (9.10) and He, therefore, has to guide and help to deal with it. By ourselves, we are quite helpless really. How it works? It is quite simple, but a very long drawn exercise,

because this problem involves our 'svabhava' (nature). This is what I do. The moment a fearful thought crosses my mind, I pray sincerely for guidance and help, because I need to know a way out. I need exact guidance for my actions.

God signals to me what I should do; He uses many ways to communicate. He helps where I fall short. Blissfully, my painful habit of fearing excessively is coming under some control. Thank God for this 'Kripa' (mercy).

(The writer is a spiritual teacher; views are personal)

## Indian agriculture and climate change: Challenges and strategies

PRAVESH SHARMA

affect the poor.

The agriculture and allied sectors play a central role in the sustainable growth and development of India's economy. These sectors not only ensure food and nutritional security for the country's 1.4 billion people but also contribute significantly to production, employment, and demand generation through various backward and forward linkages. While agriculture constitutes about 16% of India's GDP, it supports nearly 49% of the workforce (Economic Survey, 2018). However, with over 50% of India's cultivated land dependent on rain-fed irrigation, the sector is highly vulnerable to climate variability.

The ongoing challenges to sustain the natural resource base further amplify the adverse impacts of climate change, which disproportionately

## Challenges Posed by Climate Change on Agriculture

1. Rainfall Variability: The increasing intra-seasonal variability of rainfall has emerged as a major concern. Rainfall patterns are becoming increasingly skewed, characterized by fewer rainy days with higher intensity. This results in significant soil erosion and exacerbates the length of dry spells. Deviations in the hydrological cycle are contributing to extreme events, such as floods caused by intense rainfall or droughts triggered by prolonged dry spells, impacting different parts of the country.

2. Temperature Rise: Rising temperatures pose a greater threat to tropical countries like India, which already operate near the higher end of the temperature spectrum. Elevated temperatures influence various climatic factors,

adversely impacting crop production. For instance, extreme heat reduces fruit setting in citrus crops and increases transpiration losses in vegetables.

3. Livestock and Poultry Impact: Climate variability also affects animal production and reproduction. Increased temperatures and higher temperature-humidity index levels lead to reduced feed intake, lower milk yields, and decreased meat and egg quality. Poultry, in particular, suffers from heat stress, resulting in thinner eggshells and increased egg breakage.

4. Pests and Diseases: Climate change influences the population, survival, and geographic distribution of pests and diseases. Rising temperatures and humidity levels create favorable conditions for pest proliferation, making control measures more challenging and unpredictable.



## Mitigation and Adaptation Strategies

Adaptation to climate change involves anticipating adverse impacts and taking proactive measures to minimize damage or leverage emerging opportunities. Given that most Indian farmers are smallholders with limited coping capacity, building resilience is key.

1. Water Resource Management: Enhancing rainwater productivity through scientific rainwater harvesting, recycling, and precision water use is essential. Improved irrigation techniques and water budgeting can mitigate the impact of erratic rainfall.

2. Integrated Farming Systems: Combining crop cultivation with livestock, fisheries, and plantations offers diverse income streams and reduces climate vulnerability. Contingency planning for alternate crops and activities based on agro-climatic conditions further strengthens resilience.

3. Technology and Innovation: Developing stress-tolerant crop varieties, conserving agrobiodiversity, and promoting resource-efficient technologies are critical. Pest forecasting models, weather-based advisories, and agricultural risk management systems should be expanded to aid farmers in decision-making.

4. Community Involvement and Education: Engaging local communities in production system management and raising awareness about climate-resilient practices is vital. Farmers, consumers, and markets must be educated to embrace sustainable agriculture practices that align with cultural and social contexts.

## Government Initiatives to Address Climate Change

The Government of India has taken several steps to combat climate change. National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC): Guided by the Prime Minister's Council on Climate Change, the NAPCC includes the National Mis-

sion for Sustainable Agriculture (NMSA), focusing on resource conservation, soil health, integrated farming, and water-use efficiency. National Innovations on Climate Resilient Agriculture (NICRA): This initiative provides scientific and technical guidance for sustainable agricultural development. Key Program Interventions: Policies like the Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana, National Food Security Mission, and Soil Health Card Scheme aim to enhance soil health, water efficiency, and farm productivity. District Agricultural Contingency Plans: These plans provide integrated solutions for crop, livestock, and fishery challenges arising from weather anomalies, supporting farmers during extreme conditions.

(The writer is a retired IAS officer; the views expressed are personal)

## India's Rise as Sporting Nation in 2024

The year 2024 has cemented India's rise as a global sporting powerhouse, marked by a series of historic achievements across diverse disciplines. This remarkable success is the culmination of sustained efforts under PM Modi's leadership over the past decade, with landmark initiatives like Khelo India, designed to nurture grassroots talent, and the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), providing world-class support to elite athletes. Notable milestones of recent years, such as India won a record 107 medals in Asian Games 2023, the stellar performances of Neeraj Chopra in many championships and Olympic, the Fit India moment and various Khelo India Games editions underscore the steady progression toward this golden era of Indian sports.

Sports have evolved from being a mere pastime to a respected career option, inspiring millions of young Indians to pursue their athletic dreams.

**PM Modi: Biggest Cheerleader for Indian Sports!**

PM Modi has consistently engaged with athletes at various events, including the Olympics and national games. Even his speeches frequently highlight the successes of Indian athletes on international platforms, instilling a sense of pride among citizens.

After the Paris Olympics, he praises both medalists and those who narrowly missed out on podium finishes, emphasizing that every athlete's journey contributes to India's sporting legacy.

Ahead of the Paris Paralympics 2024, PM Modi publicly wished the Indian contingent success, stating that their courage and determination inspire the entire nation. After the event, all the players were invited to PM residence where PM welcomed them and lauded their efforts at the Games. Para-Olympian Yogesh Kathuniya called PM 'Param Mitra' highlighting the encouragement each player receives from him.

During a meeting with Neeraj Chopra, the gold medalist javelin thrower, PM Modi made a heartfelt gesture by connecting with his mother. He shared a light-hearted moment about how he was eager-

ly waiting for her to prepare her famous ladoos after Neeraj's victory at the Tokyo Olympics. This personal touch not only showcased Modi's warmth but also highlighted the importance of family support in an athlete's journey.

PM Modi felt emotional when he received a special gift from chess star Vantika Agarwal. She gifted him a treasured photo from the 'Swami Vivekananda Mahila Chess Mahotsav' in 2012, where PM Modi, then Chief Minister of Gujarat, was awarding her. There are countless moments that highlight PM Modi's personal connection with athletes, inspiring them, making them feel valued, and motivating them to win for the nation. He consistently interacts with them before, during, and after tournaments, cheering them on throughout, regardless of whether they win or lose. He is truly a pillar of strength for them.

**India's Sports Chasing Big Dreams**  
In a significant move towards realising PM Modi's vision of hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games in India in 2036, the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) has officially expressed the nation's interest. In November, the IOA submitted a Letter of Intent to the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Future Host Commission, marking India's formal bid for this prestigious global event.

### Khelo India and TOPS Boosts India's Global Sports Recognition

The Modi government's ongoing support for programs like Khelo India and TOPS is contributing significantly to India's rise in international recognition. The 'Khelo India' scheme, which aims to foster a mass movement for promoting sports excellence across the country. With an annual budget of USD 119 million, the scheme covers grassroots talent identification and development, and provides scholarships to more than 2,700 children each year.

In fact, a total of 124 athletes who were part of the Indian Contingent which participated in the Asian Games held in Hangzhou were Khelo India athletes, and they contributed by winning 42 medals out of 106 medals. Khelo India Women's League was renamed as Asmita



Women's League. About, four seasons of ASMITA have been held since 2021 which has seen a total participation of 83615 women in 20 sports from across 35 States and UTs.

Under the Khelo India Scheme, a total of 2,781 athletes (KIAs) have been identified and are provided with comprehensive support, including specialized coaching, equipment, medical care, and a monthly allowance. For the Paris 2024 Olympics, 28 KIAs were part of the Indian contingent of 117 athletes, highlighting the program's ongoing success and the critical role of KIAs in enhancing India's performance in national and international sports events. The 'Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS)' supports athletes in their preparation for the Olympics and other international competitions. Notably, out of the 117 athletes representing India at the Paris Olympics, 28 were Khelo India athletes. Similarly, India's Paralympic team, featuring 18 Khelo India athletes, has already secured 29 medals, the highest ever at the ongoing Paris Paralympics 2024.

### India at Olympics 2024

This year has proven to be a transformative year for India's sporting journey, marked by achievements in both the Olympics and Paralympics. The Indian government's unwavering commitment to sporting excellence has been evident through a historic funding allocation of over Rs 470 crore for the Paris 2024 Olymp-

pics. The Modi government demonstrated unparalleled support in ensuring that athletes have the best environment to thrive, provided the 40 portable air conditioners to the athletes at the Olympics Games Village. This responsiveness to the athletes' needs is a reflection of India's increasing focus on the finer details of sporting infrastructure.

Manu Bhaker created history by becoming the first Indian to win two medals at a single edition of the Olympics. Swapnil Kusale added a third medal in shooting to make it India's biggest haul in a sport in a single edition of the Olympics. Neeraj Chopra became the most successful individual Olympian after he claimed a silver medal in the Javelin throw. Aman Sherawat became India's youngest Olympic medalist when he won bronze in wrestling.

India's most successful Paralympic campaign to date unfolded at the 2024 Paris Games, where Indian athletes achieved an extraordinary feat, securing a record-breaking 29 medals; gold, 9 silver, and 13 bronze. This achievement marks a new pinnacle in India's Paralympic history, showcasing the nation's growing prominence on the world stage.

Avani Lekhara clinched gold in the Women's 10m Air Rifle Standing SH1, while Nitesh Kumar dominated in badminton, winning gold in the Men's Singles SL3. Sumit Antil and Dharambir added to the tally with golds in Men's Javelin Throw F64 and Men's Club Throw F51, respectively.

Archery saw Harvinder Singh secure gold in the Men's Individual Recurve Open, while Navdeep Singh triumphed in the Men's Javelin Throw F41. Many more athletes contributed to the nation's impressive medal count, making it a truly collective achievement for Indian para-sports. The support of government initiatives like Khelo India and TOPS has played a crucial role in empowering these athletes, enabling them to break barriers and redefine India's place on the global stage.

### Historic Achievements across Disciplines

In chess, Gukesh D. recently became the youngest ever World Chess Champion, bringing immense pride to India by achieving this historic feat at a young age. Throughout 2024 the legacy of chess continued with prodigious talent like Vaishali Ramesh Babu who has been awarded the title of Grandmaster by FIDE. Vaishali is the third Indian female Grandmaster, joining Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli. India's chess team made history at the 45th Chess Olympiad in Hungary, clinching gold in both the Open and Women's sections. The women's team secured the first-ever gold medals at this prestigious event.

In cricket, Virat Kohli, one of India's finest cricketers, was recognized with the ICC ODI Player of the Year 2023. Indian batter Suryakumar Yadav won the ICC Men's T20I Cricketer of the Year 2023 award.

This was his second successive award in the category. Divyakriti Singh a 23-year-old equestrian dynamo has secured a noteworthy Arjuna Award and earned her place as the first Indian woman to accomplish this feat in the domain of Equestrian.

India's women's doubles pair of Ayhika Mukherjee and Sutirtha Mukherjee made history, securing a historic bronze medal, the country's first-ever medal in the category, at the Asian Table Tennis Championships in Astana, Kazakhstan.

India's wrestlers earned four silver and five bronze medals at the Asian Wrestling Championships in Kyrgyzstan, proving their mettle on the continental stage. India clinched seven golds, 11 silvers and 11 bronze medals to finish third at the Asian U20 Athletics Championships 2024 held in Dubai. India's Gulveer Singh set a national record in the men's 10,000m event at the Hachioji Long Distance 2024 athletics meet in Japan. India's Man Singh claimed the gold medal at the Asian Marathon Championships 2024 with a personal best timing of two hours, 14 minutes and 19 seconds (2:14:19) in Hong Kong, China.

In the world of boxing, Indian boxer Mandeep Jangra won the U.S.-based National Boxing Association's intercontinental super featherweight title after defeating American Gerardo Esquivel at Toppenish City, Washington. India edged out Chinese Taipei and China to bag the silver medal at the Maruhaba Cup, a team event in the Asian Surfing Championships 2024 at the picturesque Thulusdhoo island in the Maldives. In Junior World Wushu Championship, Indian team bagged a rich haul of seven medals including two golds in Bandar Seri Begawan, Brunei.

Apart from these in a significant boost to women's cricket in India, UP Warriorz, a Women's Premier League (WPL) team owned by Capri Sports, has been recognised by UN Women as a 'Generation Equality Ally'. This remarkable year for Indian sports underscores the relentless dedication and talent of the nation's athletes.

## 2024: A Year for India's Youth to Go Big

The past decade under PM Modi's leadership has been nothing short of a youth-driven revolution, where dreams met opportunities and innovation became a way of life. From reimagining education through the transformative New Education Policy to nearly doubling the number of medical colleges, PM Modi has laid the foundation for a future brimming with possibilities. With initiatives like Start-Up India igniting entrepreneurial spirits, Khelo India fostering a generation of sports champions, and Digital India equipping the youth with cutting-edge skills, the government has not just supported young minds but empowered them to lead. More than 1.42 crore youth have been trained under Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY). The momentum of this transformative decade has propelled us into 2024, ushering in a new wave of opportunities for India's youth.

In 2024, the Modi Government has reinforced its commitment to empowering India's youth by launching forward-thinking policies and programs aimed at fostering innovation, skill development, entrepreneurship, and technological growth.

### Some of those initiatives are as follows:

#### Revival of Nalanda University:

The revival of the ancient Nalanda University is a testament to Modi Government's dedication to preserving its rich educational heritage. The university, once a global centre for knowledge and innovation, was rebuilt to serve as a hub for global collaboration, research, and cultural exchange.

#### The Public Examinations



### (Prevention of Unfair Means) Act, 2024:

To address systemic issues of cheating and unfair practices in public examinations, the government introduced this landmark legislation. It ensures stringent measures to prevent malpractices, including severe penalties for offenders. The Act aims to protect the integrity of India's examination system, providing a level playing field for hardworking students and restoring public trust in education.

### Vigyan Dhara Scheme:

Recognizing the importance of science and technology in India's future, the Vigyan Dhara Scheme aims to inspire and empower young minds to pursue careers in Science and Technology. The proposed budget for implementing this unified scheme is Rs 10,579.84 crore during the 15th Finance Commission period, spanning

from 2021-22 to 2025-26. The main objective of the scheme is to enhance the capacity of science and technology (S&T) to strengthen the innovation ecosystem in the country.

### PM's Package for the Youth:

A Rs 2 Lakh Crore Prime Minister's Package has been announced to provide a massive boost to employment generation and skill development initiatives. Targeted at 4.1 crore youth, the package includes funding for upskilling programs, startup incubation support, and sector-specific training initiatives. It aims to create opportunities in industries such as manufacturing, IT, green energy, and healthcare. This comprehensive package aligns with the government's vision of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' by equipping youth with skills to succeed in competitive global markets.

### PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme:

The PM Vidyalaxmi Scheme is a ground-breaking initiative to ensure that financial limitations do not obstruct India's youth from pursuing higher education. PM Vidyalaxmi is another key initiative stemming out of the National Education Policy, 2020, which had recommended that financial assistance should be made available to meritorious students through various measures in both public and private HEIs.

Under the PM Vidyalaxmi scheme, any student who gets admission in quality Higher Education Institution (QHEIs) will be eligible to get collateral free, guarantor free loan from banks and financial institutions to cover full amount of tuition fees and other expenses related to the course.

### 75,000 More Medical Seats

Addressing the growing demand for healthcare profes-

sionals in India, the government has approved the addition of 75,000 new medical seats across the country. This expansion covers undergraduate (MBBS) and postgraduate medical programs, particularly in underserved regions. By establishing new medical colleges and upgrading existing institutions, the government aims to improve access to medical education, bridge the doctor-patient ratio, and enhance India's healthcare infrastructure. The move will create more opportunities for aspiring doctors while strengthening the nation's healthcare system.

### Protection of Youth from Drug Menace

MANAS (Madak Padarth Nishedh Asuchna Kendra) helpline was launched to assist and report drug-related issues, contributing to Nasha Mukta Bharat. MANAS will have a toll-free number 1933, a web portal,

a mobile app and UMANG app so that citizens of the country can anonymously connect with NCB (Narcotics Control Bureau) 24x7 for seeking advice on deaddiction and rehabilitation, sharing information on drug trafficking.

The Department of School Education & Literacy, Ministry of Education, has developed a "ToFEI Implementation Manual" for schools, launched on World No Tobacco Day (WNTD) (May 31, 2024). The goal of the Tobacco-Free Educational Institutions (ToFEI) campaign is to ensure that educational institutions nationwide adhere to the ToFEI guidelines and become Tobacco Free Areas.

### Brighter Future for Sports: Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) Program:

To promote talent development and inclusivity in athletics, the Khelo India Rising Talent Identification (KIRTI) Program has been launched. KIRTI aims to cultivate sporting talent among the youth. Khelo India has made a significant contribution to India's Mission Olympics; in fact, 25% of the Indian contingent (28 athletes) at the Paris Summer Olympics 2024 were Khelo India athletes.

### Skilling 20 lakh youth over a 5-year period

While presenting the Union Budget 2024-25 in Parliament, the Finance Minister announced that 20 lakh youth will be skilled over a period of 5-years and 1,000 Industrial Training Institutes will be upgraded.

### Scheme for Internship Opportunities to 1 crore youth:

This scheme aims to provide internship opportunities to 1 crore youth, bridging the gap between education and employment. The initiative will help

young people gain practical work experience, develop skills, and improve their employability in various sectors. This program provides 12 months of real-life business exposure, with an internship allowance of Rs 5,000 per month and one-time assistance of Rs 6,000. Participating companies will cover training costs and 10% of the internship costs from their CSR.

### Appointment of Over 15000 Youth in First 100 Days of Modi 3.0:

First 100 days of the third term of the Modi Government was marked by several key initiatives and decisions which have positively impacted the lives of people and laid a strong foundation for Vikshit Bharat@2047. During the period of 100 days, appointment letters have been issued to over 15000 youth for government jobs by Central Ministries and Departments.

### A New Political Dawn for The Youth

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement in his I-Day Speech for involving 1 lakh youth from non-political backgrounds is seen as a move to democratize political participation. The initiative seeks to eliminate biases associated with traditional political families, thereby promoting meritocracy and new thinking in governance.

### A Leap Towards Excellence in Research and Development

Prime Minister Narendra Modi chaired the first meeting of the Governing Body of the Anusandhan National Research Foundation injecting Rs 50,000 crore over five years to energize the research ecosystem, spanning emerging fields from AI to semiconductors, quantum computing, and climate change.

## Stable political scenario, favourable policy, infra push to drive Indian economy in 2025

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, DEC 31

After a resilient performance in 2024 amid geopolitical headwinds, the Indian economy is poised to be supported by a stable political scenario, favourable policy environments, the effects of production-linked incentive (PLI) programmes, possibilities brought about by changes in the global supply chain and government emphasis on infrastructure spending.

The Central government is focused on growth through direct investments in the budget as well as through reforms like GST (increasing tax to GDP), lower corporate tax and ease of doing business (attracting private capex), and private capital through incentives for import substitution or export ecosystem cre-



ation.

A Canara Robeco Mutual Fund's report "Unfolding Perspectives" on Tuesday said that for 2025, corporate and bank balance sheets are in the best possible shape to drive capex and credit respectively, as consumer spending remains resilient.

"We anticipate easing of the lag effect caused by the rise in global commodity prices, both for food and

non-food items," according to the report.

Domestic institutional investment (DII) flows are as meaningful as FPI flows, with retail flows increasingly being directed in markets through insurance, EPFO and MFs.

"Current monthly SIP book of MFs in India is Rs 25,300 crore which should provide good support to the markets, in case we witness continued foreign

institutional investment (FII) withdrawals," the report mentioned.

The Indian macro remains strong among large markets except for the growth part.

The Current Account Deficit (CAD) has improved significantly and is expected to be 1 per cent for FY25.

Robust services exports and healthy remittances flow should help keep the country's CAD in the safe zone during the current financial year (FY 2024-25), according to a Crisil report.

"We expect CAD at about 1.0 per cent of GDP in fiscal 2024-25, as against 0.7 per cent last year. In addition, the impact of geopolitical issues will remain monitorable," the report stated.

Most domestic macro and micro indicators remain steady. Given

these aspects, the domestic equity market remains focused on earnings, according to industry experts.

Government spending has resumed, employment is on the rise, and supply bottlenecks are lessening.

According to industry watchers, the domestic stock market in 2025 is set to ride on strong economic growth and government efforts to boost infrastructure and digital innovation.

"Sectors like capital goods, technology, financial services, consumption, and healthcare are expected to shine, with emerging areas such as semiconductors, electronic and manufacturing, renewable energy and electric mobility grabbing more attention," said Deepak Ramaraju, Senior Fund Manager, Shriram AMC.

## BPSC is autonomous body and will act in candidates' interest: Samrat Choudhary

AGENCIES

PATNA, DEC 31

Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Samrat Choudhary addressed the ongoing protests concerning the Bihar Public Service Commission (BPSC) and reiterated that the commission operates as an autonomous body. He assured that BPSC would take decisions in the interests of the candidates.

Choudhary discussed the unrest during a meeting with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar at the latter's official residence, here on Tuesday. The agenda included addressing incidents of lathi charges and agitation by protesting candidates. This meeting followed Kumar's return from Delhi on Monday night, signaling prompt action on the BPSC issue.

Highlighting BPSC's independence, Choudhary remarked, "Unlike other states, the Public



Service Commission in Bihar is an autonomous body. It operates independently and will make decisions in the best interests of the students. The government has given BPSC a free hand to act in the students' favour."

Sitamarhi MP Devesh Chandra Thakur also expressed hope, stating that the state government has taken cognizance of the matter and is working towards a resolution.

He added that Bihar's Chief Secretary, Amrit Lal Meena, has engaged directly with the protesting students. Despite these assurances, candidates remain steadfast in their demand for a re-examination of the 70th Combined Preliminary Examination. Protests at Gardanibagh still persist, with aspirants awaiting a definitive stance from both the BPSC and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar.

## Varanasi's Nirmala Devi and her 'Green Army' praised by PM Modi for ushering in social change

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, DEC 31

Nirmala Devi, a resident of Deora village near Varanasi and her 'Green Army' have received a letter of praise from Prime Minister Narendra Modi for their commendable and laudable work in ushering a big societal change.

The Green Army, a group of determined women in Deora, has made a name for itself not just in their village and also getting the spotlight for bringing a revolutionary change in people's lives, through their collective effort and endeavour. Their selfless service recently got acknowledged and admired by none other than Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself.

These women, hailing from Deora, a small village near Varanasi, came together to empower each other and began their journey by establishing a shoe-making factory. Interestingly, the first slipper they made in the factory was not for sale, rather was sent to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. They sent the slippers to PM Modi with hope and conviction that if he wore them, the world would recognize their efforts and their dreams.

Days later, they received a letter of appreciation from the Prime Minister.

As Nirmala Devi shared the letter on cameras, her eyes gleamed with joy. "It felt like he was right here with us. It felt like I met PM Modi himself!"

The video of Nirmala Devi and her Green Army bringing in the societal change was shared by Modi Archive, a popular social media handle on X.

The inspiring letter by Prime Minister also carried a heartfelt message for the sisters of the 'Green Army', "I am delighted to learn about your slipper factory and deeply appreciate the thoughtful gift of your creation. It fills me with immense pride to see women like you leading the way, and contributing to the progress of our nation and society." This is not the only ground-breaking initiative launched by the 'Green Army'. They have also been running crusade against many social evils for years. They have undertaken awareness campaigns against drugs and gambling, visited homes of fellow villagers to celebrate the birth of every girl child like a festival and also launched a mass campaign against dowry.

## Ring in 'warm' New Year: Tourists from fog covered plains rush to Himachal to soak in sunshine

AGENCIES

SHIMLA/MANALI, DEC 31

As a thick blanket of fog descended over northern India on the last day of 2024, affecting routine life, holidaymakers are heading to the hills of Himachal Pradesh to soak in the sunshine and to ring in a "warm" New Year.

However, a word of caution: Get an advance booking of a hotel, otherwise, you may have to spend a night in the chilly cold.

Shimla's Meteorological Department on Tuesday said sunny weather would continue across the hill state till January 3. Thereafter, there are chances of more rain and snow.

However, it has warned of the occurrence of frost with a coldwave to continue across the state after last week's widespread snow and rain.

The weather in hill destinations of Shimla, Kasauli, Chail, Kufri, Narkanda, Dharamsala, Palampur and Manali is "warmer" and perfect for a break from the biting chill of the plains where the sun has largely been fogged out.

The hills near Manali, Kufri and Narkanda are still marooned in a white

blanket of snow. "What pleasant mornings are there in Shimla these days. We are really enjoying basking in the sun," remarked Abhey Singh, a tourist from Noida.

"We feel happy in the hills where the sun is regularly shining these days, compared to the plains where cold shivers down your spine," his wife Deepti added.

"We are asking the tourists to come and enjoy long sunshine in the hills when fog has engulfed the plains and they are excited to bask in the sun," a senior functionary of state-run Himachal Pradesh Tourism Development Corporation (HPTDC) told IANS.

In Shimla, located around 7,000 feet above sea level, the minimum temperature was 6.4 degrees Celsius with sunrise at 7.19 am and sunset at 5.29 pm. The maximum temperature stayed at 15.7 degrees, 2.7 degrees above normal.

Tabo, an ancient seat of Buddhist religion and culture in picturesque Spiti Valley, was the coldest habitat in the state, with a low of minus 17.3 degrees.

Elated with last week's snow, members of the



hospitality industry say most of the destinations have been chock-a-block with a sudden influx of tourists.

However, locals rue that owing to the sudden rush of tourists, there are massive traffic jams with parking lots constantly congested.

There have been snaking lines of vehicles throughout the day with minimal traffic management by the police at the state entry point of Parwanoo town on the Chandigarh-Shimla National Highway 5, impacting daily commuters who spent hours extra trying to travel.

Hill destinations like Shimla, Kufri, Narkanda, Kasauli, Chail, Manali, Dalhousie, Palampur and Dharamsala are flooded

with visitors.

Corporate executive Ravi Aggarwal told IANS, "Most of the hotels in Shimla and its suburbs have doubled their tariffs."

"Even taxi drivers are openly fleecing tourists by quoting high rates with no government mechanism to regulate," said his wife Jayshree, adding "It's simply fleecing of holidaymakers in the name of nature."

In the honeymooners' paradise Kufri and Naldehra, one of the oldest and most scenic golf courses in the country, both located in the suburbs of Shimla, each pony owner is virtually trying to poach a tourist without paying any heed to his or her refusals. And one will end up getting charged an exorbitant

fare for a ride in the terrain covered with horse poop as the trail cannot be traversed on foot.

In Manali, for a glimpse of a snowy landscape of the Atal Tunnel beneath the Rohtang Pass, one should be ready to shell out an extremely high fare to hire a cab.

"We have paid Rs 6,000 for hiring a cab for our to and fro journey from Manali to the Atal Tunnel with a brief stopover at Solang," Divya Dutta, a tourist from Delhi, told IANS.

The actual fare of a luxury cab is Rs 2,000 while an ordinary one costs Rs 1,000.

The south portal of Atal Tunnel is located 25 km from Manali at an altitude of 3,060 metres, while its north portal is located near Sissu in the Lahaul Valley at an altitude of 3,071 metres.

Another tourist hotspot is McLeodganj, the uphill quaint town that has already gained prominence for attracting a steady stream of Tibet enthusiasts, Buddhist scholars, back-packers and even Hollywood stars like Richard Gere.

A word of caution. The

police have been advising the public not to go near the banks of rivers and streams in the mountains as these places can be risky due to black ice formation where motorists can't see it, their tires can't grip it, and their brakes don't work properly on it.

Also government officials warned to get an advance booking of a hotel or a homestay unit before travelling as most of the hotels in the state capital Shimla, Manali, Kasauli and Dharamsala have 90 to 98 per cent occupancy till January 5.

"The occupancy in most of our properties is nearly 90 per cent. We are expecting to do a good business till the end of this week," the HPTDC official told IANS.

Himachal Pradesh has no high-end hotels and restaurants in far-off areas. The trend of rural homestays that was started in 2008 has been driving tourists to the interiors and they are the best option to stay and enjoy the pristine nature and snowy landscape.

The state's economy is highly dependent on tourism, besides hydroelectric power and horticulture.

## K'TAKA BJP LEADERS CONDUCT POSTER DRIVE AGAINST PRIYANK KHARGE, DETAINED

AGENCIES

BENGALURU, DEC 31

The Karnataka Police detained BJP leaders on Tuesday in Bengaluru for carrying out a poster drive against state Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Minister Priyank Kharge in connection with the contractor suicide case.

A group of BJP leaders began pasting posters bearing the picture of Minister Priyank Kharge. The posters claimed that the minister was responsible for the death of the contractor.

Some posters criticised the Congress-led Karnataka government, accusing it of being responsible for a series of suicides and "orchestrated" deaths.

The posters specifically alleged that Kharge was responsible for the death of contractor Sachin Panchal, former minister B.



Nagendra for the death of government officer Chandrasekaran, Women and Child Welfare Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar for the death of government employee Rudrana Hedavannanavar, and Congress MLA Chennareddy for the death of PSI Parushurama Nayaka.

The BJP leaders also questioned why Kharge's resignation was not being sought, when, in similar cases, former minister K. S. Eshwarappa from the previous BJP government,

Minister K. J. George from the last Congress government, and former minister B. Nagendra in the current government had faced calls to resign.

As BJP leaders pasted posters, raised slogans against Kharge and referred to the Congress government as "murderous", police arrived at the scene, seized the posters, and detained the BJP leaders.

Senior BJP leader and former MLC C. N. Ashwath Narayan strongly criticised

the police action. The detained BJP leaders were transported to a distant location without being allowed to speak to the media.

The Opposition Leader in the Legislative Council, Chalavadi Narayanaswamy, BJP MLC C. T. Ravi, and other senior leaders were present during the protest.

Meanwhile, sources revealed that the deceased contractor, Sachin, left a seven-page suicide note mentioning Kharge.

According to the note, Raju Kapanur, an aide to the minister, had claimed to be acting under Kharge's instructions.

The note alleged that Raju Kapanur had demanded a 5 per cent commission, amounting to Rs 80 lakh, for facilitating a tender worth Rs 15 crore, of which Rs 10 lakh had already been paid as an advance. Sachin also claimed to have met Kharge five or six times in Bengaluru, as directed by Kapanur.

Sachin, a 26-year-old contractor committed suicide in Karnataka's Kalaburagi district.

He alleged in his suicide note that threats and extortion by Raju Kapanur, an aide to Kharge, had driven him to take the extreme step. The note further alleged that Kapanur's actions were carried out under Kharge's instructions.

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, DEC 31

India has witnessed a tenfold rise in exports of bananas in the past decade and is now targeting \$1 billion in banana exports in the next five years after successful trial shipments to the Netherlands via the sea route, according to the Centre's Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA).

With the sea route opening up, Russia is expected to emerge as a major market for Indian banana exports. India is currently reliant on the air route which is a high-cost mode of transport and limits the quantity of the fruit that can be exported.

In the fiscal year 2023-24, India exported bananas worth US\$ 300 million, a significant increase from US\$ 176 million in 2022-23. The country's share in global banana exports

has risen from just 0.21 per cent in 2013 to 1.74 per cent in 2023, highlighting its growing presence in the international market, according to figures compiled by the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

To enhance export volumes, the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) is developing sea protocols for fresh fruits and vegetables, including bananas, mangoes, pomegranates, and jackfruit. These protocols aim to facilitate ocean transport, making it more feasible for Indian farmers to reach international markets.

The Indian government is actively supporting banana cultivation and export through various initiatives, including financial assistance for farmers, infrastructure improvements, and enhanced market access. As domestic farmers adopt modern

agricultural practices, they are producing higher quantities of better-quality bananas, positioning India as a key player in the global banana industry.

Meanwhile, among states, Uttar Pradesh has also emerged as a banana exporter. The state government has been proactive in promoting banana cultivation and has declared it as the One District One Product (ODOP) for Kushinagar.

This spells substantial benefits for banana growers in the state as they are being provided subsidies as incentives to cultivate high-quality bananas that meet market demands.

In Uttar Pradesh's Purvanchal and Awadh regions, districts like Kushinagar, Deoria, Gorakhpur, Maharajanji, Basti, Sant Kabir Nagar, Ayodhya, Ambedkar Nagar, Amethi, and Barabanki are extensively engaged in banana farming, the state government said.

# Pakistan joins Security Council in 2025; will get virtual veto on designating terrorists

AGENCIES  
UNITED NATIONS, DEC 31

Pakistan joins the UN Security Council on Wednesday subtly changing the balance in the world organisation's highest decision-making body and getting a virtual veto power over sanctioning terrorists it harbours.

Elected in June as a non-permanent member, it will replace Japan for a two-year term on one of the two seats for Asia Pacific countries in the Council.

Now Islamabad will not have to rely on Beijing to protect its terrorists like the mastermind of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks, Sajid Mir, at the Islamic State and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee, which designates individuals and groups associated with those two organisations as terrorists and imposes sanctions.

Although only perma-

nent members have a veto over decisions of the Council, non-permanent members have a virtual veto in the sanctions committees for terrorism because they act through consensus under accepted norms.

The virtual veto given by the consensus procedure has been denounced, with New Zealand, a former head of the Islamic State-al-Qaeda sanctions panel calling it "the single biggest inhibitor to Committee effectiveness".

India has described the working of the sanctions committees as "subterranean" based on "obscure practices" without legal basis and called for transparency so that the rationale for decisions and how they are made is revealed.

Pakistan also gets a soapbox at the Council to amplify its campaign on Kashmir, an issue it rou-



tinely brings up regardless of the subject under discussion, launching virulent attacks on India.

However, this will be more of a continuing publicity stunt because it has been a voice in the wilderness unable to get any other country to join in despite trying to link Kashmir to the Palestine problem.

When Pakistan takes the presidency of the Council in July, it can convene at least two of what are called Signature Events on topics

of its choice with high-level participation, both its own and invitees.

Even if it doesn't directly make it an "anti-India" show, it can take a topic that it can manipulate for propaganda on India and Kashmir.

With Japan retiring, there is a subtle change in the balance at the polarised Council where a triumvirate of China, Russia and Pakistan will emerge on many issues.

The other Asian member is South Korea,

which like Japan, is pro-Western.

In the General Assembly, Pakistan has tracked China's voting on many issues, especially Ukraine when it joined Beijing in voting on a resolution naming Russia as the aggressor, while generally abstaining.

On Palestine, Pakistan has been a vociferous supporter of its cause and can be expected to raise the decibel in the Council, where it can go head-to-head with the US, which will redouble its backing for Israel under President-elect Donald Trump who has said hardliner Elise Stefanik will be his nominee to be the permanent representative.

Islamabad straddles a dichotomy on terrorism -- while backing or deploying terrorists against India, it denounces terrorism directed against it by

groups like the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) that it says are based in Afghanistan.

It can be expected to denounce what it describes as Afghanistan's role in terrorism and try to get groups it says target it sanctioned.

The Asia Pacific group rotates its nominees for the Council, which are selected through consensus. The group's 53 members range from tiny Nauru in the east to Cyprus at the edge of Europe on the West.

After heavy canvassing, Islamabad got the backing of about 20 countries as diverse as China, Saudi Arabia, Iran, Malaysia, the United Arab Emirates, Lebanon and Singapore and the group endorsed it in 2023.

Pakistan received 182 votes in the 193-member General Assembly for its eighth turn on the Council.

## US court upholds \$5 million verdict against Trump in sexual abuse case

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON, DEC 31

A US federal appeals court has upheld a jury's decision ordering President-elect Donald Trump to pay \$5 million for sexually abusing and defaming writer E. Jean Carroll.

The verdict, reached after a nine-day civil trial in New York last year, found Trump guilty of sexually abusing Carroll in a Manhattan department store in 1996.

The jury awarded Carroll \$2 million for the abuse and an additional \$3 million for defamation after Trump publicly denied her claims.

Trump appealed the ruling, arguing that the testimonies of two other women who had accused him of sexual assault should not have been admitted as evidence.

However, the Second US Circuit Court of Appeals dismissed his appeal, stating, "Mr. Trump has not demon-

strated that the district court erred in any of the challenged rulings. Further, he has not carried his burden to show that any claimed error or combination of claimed errors affected his substantial rights as required to warrant a new trial."

In a separate case brought by Carroll, a jury awarded her \$83 million in damages.

Trump has also appealed that verdict.

Steven Cheung, a spokesperson for Trump, announced plans to appeal the \$5 million judgment. In a statement, Cheung accused Democrats of politically targeting Trump, calling the case a "hoax" and asserting that the "American people re-elected President Trump with an overwhelming mandate."

Cheung further criticised the judicial system, alleging political weaponisation and demanding an end to investigations against Trump.

## Australian PM spruiks 2025 opportunities to grow stronger in New Year's message

AGENCIES  
CANBERRA, DEC 31

Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese has used his New Year's message to declare that the country can become stronger in 2025.

In the short video message released on Tuesday, Albanese described Australia as the greatest country in the world.

"And in the year ahead, with new determination and renewed optimism, we can build an even stronger Australia together," he said.

He thanked Australians who have worked through the holiday period, including defence force personnel, emergency service and health workers and people in hospitality and retail, for their sacrifice and said he hoped everyone has had time to relax and celebrate.



Albanese will face a general election in 2025 where his Labor Party aims to win a second term in power.

The election must be held by May, Xinhua news agency reported.

In his own New Year's message, Peter Dutton, leader of the opposition Coalition, said that 2025 was an opportunity for Australia to get 'back on track.'

As the world prepares to celebrate New Year's Day on January 1, 2025,

millions of people across the globe are set to mark the occasion with celebrations that reflect both personal and cultural traditions.

The day represents more than just the start of a new calendar year—it is a moment of reflection, renewal, and optimism for the future.

The global celebration of New Year's Day is marked by a variety of unique customs and traditions. While the specific practices differ

from culture to culture, the common theme of renewal and new beginnings is universal. Many people use the occasion to make New Year's resolutions, pledging to improve themselves or their lives in some way over the coming year. These resolutions often focus on personal growth, whether through health, career, or relationships.

The celebration also involves family gatherings, meals, and festivities. Traditional New Year's foods vary by culture, but common dishes include black-eyed peas, cabbage, and champagne, each symbolising good fortune and prosperity for the year ahead. These culinary traditions are not just about food; they carry a deeper meaning, as many believe that certain foods bring luck, wealth, and happiness.

## US investigators, Boeing officials join on-site probe of South Korea plane crash

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, DEC 31

A team of investigators from the US government and aircraft manufacturer Boeing Co. have arrived at the site of the Jeju Air crash at Muan International Airport to participate in the investigation into the incident, Seoul officials said on Tuesday.

According to Seoul's transport ministry, one member from the US Federal Aviation Administration, three experts from the US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and four representatives from Boeing have joined officials of South Korea's Aviation and Railway Accident Investigation Board (ARAIB) for the investigation at the site of the accident, reports Yonhap news agency.

The US team arrived in South Korea on Monday



via Incheon International Airport and travelled directly to Muan, some 290 kilometres southwest of Seoul, to prepare for the investigation.

"South Korean and US investigators discussed the schedule procedures and specific areas of focus for the investigation," Joo Jong-wan, head of aviation policy at the transport ministry, said at a press

two nationals die in the accident, has reportedly chosen not to take part in this investigation.

According to the ministry, the US and Boeing representatives, together with 11 members of South Korea's ARAIB, are currently assessing the wreckage and debris at the crash site, searching for components that could offer clues about the cause of the accident.

Following the on-site probe, the investigation will proceed to the analysis phase, which will involve examining the recovered evidence and data extracted from the aircraft's two black boxes.

One of the black boxes, the aircraft's flight data recorder, was found to have suffered exterior damage and to be missing a connector that links its data storage unit to the power supply.

## South Korea: Yoon's lawyer calls arrest warrant 'illegal'

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, DEC 31

A lawyer for South Korean President Yoon Suk Yeol on Tuesday protested against a detention warrant for the impeached president over his botched martial law imposition, calling the warrant "illegal."

A Seoul court on Tuesday approved a request from law enforcement authorities to detain impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol over his brief martial law imposition, making him the first sitting South Korean President to face an arrest.

The Seoul Western District Court issued the warrant against Yoon on charges of masterminding the botched December 3 martial law declaration, orchestrating the insurrection and abusing power, according to sources.

Yun Gap-geun, one of Yoon's legal representatives, said the arrest and search warrants issued upon request by the CIO are "illegal and invalid" because the CIO has "no investigative rights" on charges of insurrection.

The Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials (CIO)

filed the detention warrant after Yoon ignored all three summonses from the anti-corruption agency requesting his appearance for questioning over the short-lived martial law, Yonhap news agency reported.

The court warrant gives the CIO 48 hours to take Yoon into custody for questioning and file for an arrest warrant.

However, uncertainties linger over whether the CIO can execute the warrant, as the Presidential Security Service has blocked investigators from entering both the presidential office compound and Yoon's official residence to carry out court-approved searches, citing military security concerns.

Although Yoon has presidential immunity from criminal prosecution, the privilege does not extend to insurrection or treason charges.

Yoon's defence team has argued the CIO lacks legal authority to investigate insurrection, a charge for which, in principle, police have investigative jurisdiction under the current system, amended during the previous government.

## US-British naval coalition strikes targets in Yemen's Hodeidah

AGENCIES  
SANAA, DEC 31

A US-British naval coalition conducted two airstrikes on Yemen's Hodeidah province, targeting the At-Tuhayta district in the southwest of the province, Houthi media agency reported.

The report did not provide further details, but residents in the district said on social media that two powerful explosions shook their homes.

The US Central Command has not yet commented on the incidents but typically issues a statement later to confirm any airstrike conducted by its forces.

The Houthi group, which controls much of northern Yemen, has been regularly launching rocket and drone attacks against



Israel and disrupting 'Israeli-linked' shipping in the Red Sea since November 2023, citing solidarity with Palestinians amid the ongoing Israel-Hamas conflict, Xinhua news agency reported, quoting Houthi-

run al-Masirah TV. Earlier on December 27, the coalition launched an airstrike on the Houthi-held Yemeni capital of Sanaa, targeting the 1st Armor Division in the city. The 1st Armor Division

was a military site under Houthi control.

The airstrike shook the entire city, and ambulances were heard rushing to the targeted site.

The fresh airstrike came one day after Israel

launched waves of airstrikes on December 26, targeting multiple Houthi sites in Yemen, including an airport, two power stations, and several ports. The Israeli offensive, the fourth of the year, killed at least 6 people and injured 40 others, according to Houthi television.

On December 22, the coalition launched an airstrike on a Houthi site in Yemen's Red Sea port city of Hodeidah.

The strike targeted the site in Hodeidah's Al-Luhayyah area, according to al-Masirah, which did not provide further details or report any casualties.

The US Central Command stated in a message on X that its forces had conducted precision airstrikes against a missile storage facility and a command-and-control facility

operated by the Houthis in the capital, Sanaa. Command forces had also shot down multiple Houthi one-way attack drones and an anti-ship cruise missile over the Red Sea, according to the statement.

The airstrikes came hours after the Houthis claimed responsibility for a ballistic missile attack on central Israel, which injured at least 20 Israelis in Tel Aviv.

Since November 2023, the Houthis have been carrying out rocket and drone attacks on Israeli cities and disrupting 'Israeli-linked' shipping in the Red Sea.

In response, the US-led navy coalition stationed in the area had been conducting regular air raids on Houthi targets since January in an effort to deter the armed group.

## South Korea: 174 out of 179 killed in plane crash identified, safety inspection underway

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, DEC 31

The remains of 174 of the 179 people killed in this week's Jeju Air plane crash have tentatively been identified, the land ministry said on Tuesday.

During a briefing for victims' families at Muan International Airport in

the county 288 kilometres south of Seoul, the ministry said it is still checking to identify the remaining five victims.

"Of the 32 people who could not be identified by fingerprints, we identified 17 people in the first DNA test and 10 more in the second round," it said.

"We are further confirm-

ing the remaining five due to DNA inconsistencies."

The bodies of four of the identified victims have been handed over to their families, and funeral arrangements have begun at their respective hometowns this day, according to officials.

Officials earlier said it could take up to 10 days

for all the remains to be identified and delivered to the bereaved families as most of the bodies were severely charred, reports Yonhap news agency. Authorities are preserving the remains of the victims in a temporary cold storage facility in a hangar at the Muan airport.

A team of US National Transportation Safety Board and Boeing officials also arrived at the scene earlier in the day to support South Korean authorities with the investigation. Only two people, both flight attendants, survived after the plane belly-landed and crashed into a barrier on

Sunday, killing 179 of the 181 people onboard.

Additionally, a special inspection to ensure the safety of military aircraft is underway as the defence ministry has ordered the military to examine all aircraft following the fatal Jeju Air crash, officials said Tuesday.

## Year Ender: NSDC aims to skill 1 lakh youth in AI, drones and cloud computing by 2025-end

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, DEC 31

The Skill India Digital Hub (SIDH) set up by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) has emerged as an integral centre for courses in AI, drone technology, data science, and cloud computing with a mission to take the number of learners up to 1 lakh by the end of 2025, said an official statement on Tuesday.

As of today, the portal is offering over 500 courses in emerging fields like AI, drone technology, data science, and cloud computing. The introduction of special courses on AI-driven solutions in agriculture and cybersecurity assumes much importance.

Engagements with tech giants like Meta for AI-driven learning and Microsoft for hands-on training further added richness to the experience.

NSDC's initiatives have some interesting economic contributions. The organisation has led a 3.5 per cent growth in the IT and manufacturing sectors. With the ambition of supporting India's dream



to become a \$1 trillion digital economy by 2030, over the next five years, it is expected that NSDC will create more than 5 million jobs in the new-age fields of AI and robotics, the statement said.

Focus on higher-level courses relating to Industry 4.0 technologies, such as automation and machine learning, ensures that graduates acquire competencies relevant to today's industry. The establishment of partnerships with international universities has also made it possible to achieve double certification in advanced digital competencies that enhance global employability.

In line with the National

Goals for Gender Equality and Empowerment, NSDC has launched many initiatives to promote women-led entrepreneurship. Partnering with big organizations such as Britannia Industries and HDFC Bank, NSDC is all set to empower 10,000 women entrepreneurs by 2025 through self-learning courses available in regional languages, the statement said.

The programme offers grants worth Rs 10 lakh to the most successful entrepreneurs, access to workshops and a Rs 150 crore venture capital pool. The initiatives will create around 30 million women-led enterprises by 2040, which would account for a significant chunk of India's

GDP.

SIDH is also embracing inclusivity, having enrolled more than 5,000 senior citizens across 505 districts of the country.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana (PMKVY) the NSDC's focus is on specialised courses in STEM, AI, and robotics and supports the development of a skilled workforce to meet Industry 4.0 demands. PMKVY 4.0 (2022-2026) targets skilling over 50 lakh youth with industry-relevant training.

It offers 429 job roles across sectors, including AI, robotics, and drones. Collaborating with IITs, IIMs, and industries, it includes initiatives like 'Drone Didi'.

With a Rs 12,000 crore Budget, it empowers India's workforce for future opportunities. Through the 30-Hour Upskilling Programme, NSDC has facilitated the deployment of 10,000 construction workers to Israel, ensuring their training aligns with global standards.

On the other hand, PM Vishwakarma Kaushal Samman focuses on

empowering traditional artisans and craftsmen, supporting 18 trades such as blacksmiths, carpenters, and potters. With a Rs 13,000 crore budget, it offers financial assistance, including Rs 15,000 for toolkits and collateral-free loans up to Rs 3 lakh at subsidised interest rates. The scheme also provides advanced skill training and market access to preserve and promote India's rich cultural heritage, the statement added.

NSDC International has also been instrumental in enhancing India's global workforce through various initiatives.

In Israel, NSDC has facilitated the recruitment of 10,000 construction workers, with 6,661 workers already deployed, under a PMKVY 4.0 special project focusing on Recognition of Prior Learning and a 30-hour Upskilling Program.

Its Skill Verification Programme (SVP) in Saudi Arabia assessed over 25,000 candidates, with nearly 24,000 certified, contributing to the quality of Indian blue-collar workers abroad, the statement added.

## Samsung to become largest shareholder in South Korean robotics startup

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, DEC 31

Samsung Electronics said on Tuesday it will become the largest shareholder in a South Korean robotics startup, Rainbow Robotics, as part of its push for advancing robotics technologies including humanoid robots.

The tech giant increased its stake in Rainbow Robotics to 35 per cent by exercising a call option on its initial 14.7 per cent holding, the company said. Samsung Electronics had invested 86.8 billion won (\$59 million) in the startup in 2023, reports Yonhap news agency.

With this increase, Samsung Electronics holds the largest stake in the startup, which will be incorporated as a subsidiary under its consolidated financial statements, the company added.

Rainbow Robotics, founded in 2011 by researchers from the Korea Advanced Institute of Science & Technology, specialises in humanoid robotics technologies. The founders have developed



Hubo, South Korea's first two-legged walking robot.

Samsung Electronics said it will combine its artificial intelligence and software capabilities with Rainbow Robotics' expertise to accelerate the development of intelligent, advanced humanoids.

The company also established the Future Robotics Office to drive innovation in robotics and secure competitiveness in technologies that could transform robotics into a key growth engine for the future.

Meanwhile, the company will unveil its new home appliances lineup

powered by artificial intelligence (AI) technology at the upcoming CES next month.

The lineup, comprising the new Bespoke refrigerator, washer and dryer applied with AI home solutions, will be showcased at CES 2025, set to take place at the Las Vegas Convention Center from January 7-10, according to the Korean company.

AI home refers to Samsung's solution of connecting all of its home appliances to its AI-powered SmartThings connectivity platform, allowing remote monitoring and control of the products, reports Yonhap news agency.

## December 31: Indian share market opens lower, prepares to move into New Year with caution

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, DEC 31

The domestic benchmark indices opened lower on Tuesday as selling was seen in IT, realty, auto, financial service, FMCG, media and private bank sectors on Nifty.

At around 9:25 am, Sensex was trading at 77,813.49 after declining 434.64 points or 0.56 per cent, while the Nifty was trading at 23,536 after declining 108.90 points or 0.46 per cent.

The market trend remained mixed. On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), 1,096 stocks were trading in green, while 1,040 stocks were in red.

According to market experts, "December has been weak for equity markets globally. S&P 500 is down by 2.34 per cent and Nifty is down by 2.6



per cent."

"Markets are preparing to move into the New Year with caution since uncertainty is high and valuations are stretched," they noted.

Nifty Bank was down 191.50 points or 0.38 per cent at 50,761.25. Nifty Midcap 100 index was trading at 56,944.80 after dropping 244.95 points or 0.43 per cent. Nifty

Smallcap 100 index was at 18,618.95 after dropping 21 points or 0.11 per cent.

On the sectoral front, buying was seen in the PSU Bank, Pharma, Metal, Energy, Commodities, PSE and Healthcare sector.

In the Sensex pack, Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech, TCS, Infosys, Zomato and NTPC were the top losers. Whereas, Tata Motors, ITC, Tata Steel, SBI, Kotak

Mahindra Bank and Nestle India were the top gainers.

The Dow Jones declined 0.97 per cent to close at 42,573.73. The S&P 500 declined 1.07 per cent to 5,906.94 and the Nasdaq declined 1.19 per cent to close at 19,486.79 in the previous trading session.

In the Asian markets, China was trading in red while Hong Kong was trading in green.

"The high U.S. bond yield and strong dollar will ensure that FIIs will continue to sell on every rise. DII buying will not be strong enough to take the market much higher," said experts.

Foreign institutional investors (FIIs) sold equities worth Rs 1,893.16 crore on December 30, while domestic institutional investors bought equities worth Rs 2,173.86 crore on the same day.

## India's out-of-home coffee market projected to reach up to \$3.2 billion by 2028

AGENCIES  
BENGALURU, DEC 31

As coffee emerges as a lifestyle choice for millions of urban consumers in a tea-loving nation, India's out-of-home coffee market is projected to reach \$2.6-\$3.2 billion by 2028, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 15-20 per cent, according to a report on Tuesday.

The premium coffee segment (above Rs 200), which represented 46 per cent of the market in 2023, is projected to grow to 55-60 per cent of the market at a CAGR of 20-25 per cent, underscoring its dominant role in shaping India's outside coffee landscape, according to the report by Redseer Strategy Consultants.

This segment targets affluent, discerning coffee



enthusiasts with artisanal brewing and experiential consumption.

The mass market (below Rs 100) had 50 per cent market share in 2023 which is projected to shrink to 30-35 per cent by 2028, growing at a CAGR of 8-10 per cent. While affordability remains its hallmark, the segment offers limited avenues for premium differentiation, the report mentioned.

Meanwhile, the mid-price range (Rs100-Rs 200)

which constituted just 4 per cent of the market in 2023 is expected to grow to 8-10 per cent of the market by 2028 at an impressive CAGR of 35-40 per cent. This space offers immense potential for introducing specialty brews, making it a critical driver of industry expansion.

"Coffee has moved beyond instant and traditional brews to premium experiences. It is now a lifestyle product for Indian customers, with the mid-

priced segment emerging as a whitespace to meet the growing demand for affordable options, offering both quality and enhanced experience," said Rohan Agarwal, Partner, Redseer Strategy Consultants.

This market is ripe for brands to step in and deliver high-quality, accessible specialty coffee solutions, redefining India's beverage landscape, he added.

While India's outside coffee market offers vast opportunities, businesses must overcome key challenges.

"Supply chain complexities make it difficult to maintain quality and timely delivery across regions.

Finding the right locations in high-traffic areas like malls and tech parks is crucial but highly competitive," it added.

## ADANI WILMAR SHARES TANK NEARLY 8 PC AS ADANI TO SELL STAKE IN CO

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, DEC 31

Shares of Adani Wilmar tumbled nearly 8 per cent on Tuesday after billionaire Gautam Adani's group announced its exit from the FMCG joint venture by selling its entire stake to the Singaporean partner in the open market for over USD 2 billion.

The stock tanked 7.95 per cent to Rs 303.30 on the BSE.

At the NSE, it tumbled 7.80 per cent to Rs 303.10.

In a statement on Monday, Adani Enterprises Ltd - which held 43.94 per cent stake in Fortune brand cooking oil, wheat flour and other food product maker Adani Wilmar Ltd - said it will sell 31.06 per cent stake to Wilmar International. The remaining about 13 per cent holding will be sold in the open market to meet minimum public shareholding requirements.



Adani will sell up to 40.37 crore shares (31.06 per cent stake) to Wilmar at no more than Rs 305 apiece to net Rs 12,314 crore. Adding the share sale through OFS, whose price will be determined on the day of sales, the total proceeds will exceed USD 2 billion (about Rs 17,100 crore).

"With this, AEL (Adani Enterprises Limited) will fully exit Adani Wilmar

Ltd," it said. "Adani's nominee directors will step down from the board of Adani Wilmar Ltd."

Pranav V Adani, director of AEL and nephew of group founder and chairman Gautam Adani, and Malay Mahadevia will resign from the board upon execution of the agreement.

The transaction is expected to conclude before March 31, 2025.

## AI helps identify causes of fuel cell malfunctions: Study

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, DEC 31

A team of researchers has developed a novel way to analyse the microstructure of carbon fibre paper, a key material in hydrogen fuel cells, at a speed 100 times faster than existing methods, thanks to digital twin technology and artificial intelligence (AI).

Carbon fibre paper is a key material in hydrogen fuel cell stacks, playing a crucial role in facilitating water discharge and fuel supply.

It is composed of materials such as carbon fibres, binders (adhesives) and coatings.

Dr Chi-Young Jung's research team from the Hydrogen Research and Demonstration Center at the Korea Institute of Energy Research (KIER) developed a technology that analyses the microstructure of carbon fibre paper using X-ray diagnostics and an AI-based image learning model.

Notably, this technology enables precise analysis using only X-ray

tomography, eliminating the need for an electron microscope.

As a result, it allows for near real-time condition diagnosis, according to the study published in journal Applied Energy.

The research team extracted 5,000 images from over 200 samples of carbon fibre paper and trained a machine learning algorithm with this data.

As a result, the trained model was able to predict the 3D distribution and arrangement of the key components of carbon fibre paper - including carbon fibres, binders, and coatings - with an accuracy of over 98 per cent.

"This study is significant in that it enhances analysis technology by combining AI with virtual space utilisation, and clearly identifies the relationship between the structure and properties of energy materials, thereby demonstrating its practical applicability," said Dr Jung.

## Year ender: Govt aims to build 2 crore houses under PM's scheme for rural poor

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, DEC 31

The Centre plans to construct additional two crore rural houses during FY2024-25 to FY 2028-29 under the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana-Gramin (PMAY-G) flagship scheme that is being implemented to provide "housing for all" in the country, according to the year-end review of the Ministry of Rural Development released on Tuesday.

As on December 30 this year, the cumulative target of 3.33 crore houses have been allotted to the states/UTs, out of which 3.22 crore houses have been sanctioned and 2.68 crore houses have been completed, according to the official statement.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi released the first instalment to more than 10 lakh PMAY-G beneficiaries on September 17 through single click in a national event.

An e-KYC app integrated with Aadhaar and equipped with AI-enabled

face authentication technology is being used to conduct verification of PMAY-G beneficiaries and prevent fraud, according to the government.

As per the Union Cabinet approval, the scheme has been extended to cover more people with the provisions regarding mechanised two wheelers, mechanised fishing boat, landline phone and refrigerator having been deleted as conditions that barred eligibility.

Further, the income criteria have also been enhanced from Rs 10,000 per month to Rs 15,000, and the land-related criteria have been simplified to make the scheme more inclusive.

The PMAY-G has introduced new technology-based solutions for effective and transparent management of the scheme. With the new phase being implemented the PMAY-G has introduced multiple features to maximise transparency and ensure sanctity in the process right from the identification to

completion of the houses.

The scheme is being implemented and monitored through an end-to-end e-governance solution, AwaasSoft and AwaasApp. AwaasSoft provides functionalities for data entry and monitoring of multiple statistics related to implementation aspects of the scheme to ensure transparency. These statistics include, physical progress, financial progress and status of convergence.

'Awaas+ 2024' is a unique app specially designed under PMAY-G, having features of assisted survey through pre-registered surveyors, housing technology selection, face authentication, Aadhaar-based e-KYC, data capture of household, conditions of existing house, time stamped, and geo tagged photo capture of existing house proposed site of construction. The app works in online as well as offline mode. "Self-Survey" facility is available for eligible households in Awaas+2024 app Survey for the next phase of PMAYG (2024-29).

# Bumrah captain, Jaiswal other Indian in Cricket Australia's Test Team of 2024

AGENCIES  
MELBOURNE, DEC 31

Cricket Australia has named India's premier pacer Jasprit Bumrah as captain of the Men's Test Team of the Year 2024. Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal is the other Indian named in the diverse playing XI featuring players from six countries.

Wicketkeeper-batter Alex Carey and pacer Josh Hazlewood are the two players from the Australian team to feature in the multinational XI.

England's prolific batter Joe Root, Ben Duckett and Harry Brook along with New Zealand's Rachin Ravindra and Matt Henry are included in the side. Keshav Maharaj from South Africa and Sri Lanka's Kamindu Mendis are sole representations from their countries.



India's 22-year-old batting prodigy Jaiswal showcased veteran-like composure throughout 2024. His back-to-back double centuries in February secured a home Test series win against England, while his brilliant 161 in Perth proved decisive. Jaiswal set records for most runs by an Indian opener in a calendar year and most sixes (36) globally in a year.

England's Duckett impressed with his aggres-

sive approach, scoring hundreds in Rajkot (153) and Multan (114) despite defeats. His strike rate of 87.04 underlined his value in England's attacking strategy.

Root added six centuries in 2024, including twin hundreds against Sri Lanka at Lord's and an unbeaten 262 in Multan, helping England secure a remarkable win over Pakistan.

His consistency and all-round contributions,

including 11 wickets, highlighted another stellar year.

New Zealand's Ravindra edged Kane Williamson for his heroics in a historic series win in India, including a match-winning 134 in the first Test. He also scored a double-century against South Africa at home.

Brook shone with series-defining hundreds against New Zealand and a stunning 317 in Multan, showcasing his match-winning brilliance under pressure.

Sri Lanka's Mendis, who began the year as a fringe player, ended with 1,000 runs in 13 innings, matching Bradman's record. His four centuries underlined a breakout year.

Australia's Carey was exceptional behind the stumps with 46 dismissals, while his unbeaten 98

in Christchurch was one of the year's best fourth-innings knocks.

Henry emerged as New Zealand's key bowler, highlighted by his 5-15 against India.

Bumrah's 2024 was historic, with 71 wickets in 13 matches at 14.92, making him a standout bowler in the year.

Australia's Hazlewood maintained excellence with a sub-14 bowling average, while South Africa's Maharaj proved pivotal in consecutive series wins, cementing his place in this XI.

Cricket Australia Men's Test of the Year 2024: Yashasvi Jaiswal, Ben Duckett, Joe Root, Rachin Ravindra, Harry Brook, Kamindu Mendis, Alex Carey (wk), Matt Henry, Jasprit Bumrah (c), Josh Hazlewood, Keshav Maharaj.

# United Cup: Boulter & Broom seal decider for Great Britain against Argentina in Group F

AGENCIES  
SYDNEY, DEC 30



Katie Boulter and Charles Broom clawed past Maria Lourdes Carle and Tomas Martin Etcheverry 7-6(4), 7-5 on Monday in Sydney to seal Great Britain's 2-1 victory against Argentina in the United Cup at the Ken Rosewall Arena here on Monday. With this result, Great Britain, Argentina, and Australia all still have a chance to win the group and advance to the quarterfinals of the mixed-gender teams competition.

Boulter opened the tie with a 6-2, 6-3 victory against Nadia Podoroska and later returned to Ken Rosewall Arena to partner Broom to the tie-deciding win. Great Britain will now take on Australia on Wednesday evening in what promises to be a thrilling, pressure-packed battle. At 5-5 in the second set of the mixed doubles,

Carle courageously saved two break points, but the Argentine was unable to stave off a third. Boulter hit a big forehand passing shot up the line and out of the reach of the net-hoovering Etcheverry to move ahead before serving out the important triumph for her country. Etcheverry forced a live mixed doubles against the British with a 3-6, 6-3, 6-2 win against Billy Harris.

The Briton claimed their lone previous ATP Head2Head meeting last year. But this time, the Argentine rallied from a

set down to triumph in two hours and 44 minutes. Etcheverry was fresh off a one-sided season-opening loss to home favourite Alex de Minaur. After dropping a gruelling first set, the 25-year-old could have allowed his slow start to the new season to hurt his performance.

But, instead, the No. 39 player in the ATP Rankings bounced back and played solid baseline tennis to grind down his opponent, leading to more errors from Harris and baseline rallies going in favour of Etcheverry.

# Premier League: Newcastle extend Man Utd's winless run, Ipswich stun Chelsea

AGENCIES  
LONDON, DEC 31

Newcastle United recorded their fourth straight Premier League win after a 2-0 victory over struggling Manchester United at Old Trafford.

This was Newcastle's fourth successive victory while United are beaten for the third straight match.

The result keeps the Magpies in fifth place in the Premier League table heading into January - just three points shy of a top four spot with half the campaign still to play.

Newcastle made a confident start and were 1-0 up inside just four minutes as superb build-up in the middle of the park led to Hall's inviting cross being nodded home by Isak.

Newcastle doubled their lead in similar fashion soon after, with Joelinton rising above Lisandro Martinez to bundle past Andre Onana, while only the offside flag prevented Isak from adding a third.

Rasmus Hojlund shot marginally wide as the



hosts sought a response at the other end, with Casemiro failing to hit the target from close range after a poor giveaway from Fabian Schar.

Amorim's side continued to threaten after the break and went close to pulling a goal back when Harry Maguire struck a post just before the hour mark.

Substitute Leny Yoro also headed wide from a corner as the breakthrough ultimately eluded the Red Devils, with New-

castle comfortably seeing out only a second Premier League win at Old Trafford, Premier League reports.

"Alexander Isak has been really, really good. His all round game is really strong. He can do a bit of everything.

Most importantly, he needs to be in the right place at the right time to score goals. Early in the match it was a great cross from Lewis Hall and Alex was there with the header," said Newcastle

manager Eddie Howe.

United boss Ruben Amorim said, "It is really hard. It is one of the worst moments in the history of our club, and we have to accept that. Another loss in front of our own supporters."

Elsewhere, Ipswich Town stunned Chelsea with a hard-fought 2-0 win as Liam Delap stole the show in his side's first home win of the Premier League season.

A penalty from Liam Delap and an Omari Hutchinson strike were enough to seal a hard-fought victory for Ipswich.

"One of the best nights. We've been privileged to have a lot of good nights. Special one for the players and supporters.

"We're trying to find a way to keep our identity even though our backs are to the wall a lot.

We try to keep the values that have got us here but know we're playing world class teams every week, so we're trying to find the balance," Ipswich manager Kieran McKenna said.

# LeBron reflects on turning 40, says he could play at high level for '5-7 years'

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, DEC 31

LeBron James, a player who has dominated the National Basketball Association (NBA) for two decades, turned 40 years old on Monday. While still being a top-ten player in the league, he reflected on his unprecedented career and claimed he could still play at a high level for another five to seven years.

"To just wake up and just be like, 'Oh shoot, oh damn, you're 40? It's kind of laughable, really, to know where I am, to see where I am still playing the game at a high level, still being such a young man but old in the scheme of how many years I got in this profession," James was quoted saying by The Athletic at Lakers practice.

"If I really wanted to, I could probably play this game at a high level for about another - it's weird that I might say this - but probably about another five to seven years, if I wanted to. But I'm not going to do that. I would



miss the hell out of (basketball), for sure. But no, I won't walk away and come back," James said.

LeBron entered the league as an 18-year-old in 2002, directly from high school, and joined his hometown team, the Cleveland Cavaliers. After entering as one of the biggest rookie prospects in the league history, he has dominated the game for 22 years, a feat that has never been accomplished in any sport.

The 40-year-old has won four NBA titles and played for three teams in his career-the Cavs, Miami

Heat, and Los Angeles Lakers - and believes that he will not be adding to that tally as he plans on retiring as a Laker.

"I think that's the plan. I would love for it to end here. That would be the plan. I came here to play the last stage of my career and to finish it off here. But I'm also not silly or too jaded to know the business of the game as well, to know the business of basketball. But I think my relationship with this organisation speaks for itself. And hopefully, I don't got to go anywhere before my career is over," he added.

The Los Angeles Lakers have acquired via trade forward Dorian Finney-Smith and guard Shake Milton from the Brooklyn Nets. In return, the Lakers sent guard D'Angelo Russell, forward Maxwell Lewis and three future second-round draft picks to the Nets. Although LeBron was honest about his team's status as championship contenders, he believes the recent trade can further bolster the side.

"Right now, I think we're a very good team. I think we have a chance to compete with anybody in the league. Are we at a championship level? Can we win a championship right now? No, I don't think so. But that's good because we have so much room for improvement, and we just added two new guys as well in DoeDoe (Dorian-Finney Smith) and Shake (Milton). So we'll see how we incorporate those guys. That should be fun as well. I'm happy that they're here," he concluded.

# UP Rudras secure comeback victory over Vedanta Kalinga Lancers in HIL

AGENCIES  
ROURKELA, DEC 31

James Mazarelo put in a match-winning performance to set up a 3-1 win for the UP Rudras against the Vedanta Kalinga Lancers in their Hockey India League (HIL) 2024-25 match at the Birsa Munda Hockey Stadium here.

Despite trailing to a first-quarter goal from Enrique Gonzalez (13'), the UP Rudras secured a superb comeback win thanks to goals from Kane Russell (45', 60') and Sudeep Chirmako (50') on Monday night.

It was the UP Rudras who set the tempo early in the first quarter with captain Hardik Singh dictating play from the heart of midfield. Though they had more circle penetrations than the Kalinga Lancers, the UP Rudras forward line did not test Krishan Bahadur Pathak in goal.

The Vedanta Kalinga Lancers finally found their rhythm midway through the quarter with English forward Nicolas Bandurak proving to be a menace for the UP Rudras defence with Arthur van Doren also having a crack at goal.

The Kalinga Lancers duly took the lead in the 13th minute with a clinical move down the right flank.

Sanjay made a run down the right channel and found the young Bobby Singh Dhani on the goal-line. Dhani threaded the Rudras defence to find Enrique Gonzalez who gave his side the lead with a first-time finish.

The Kalinga Lancers could have gone into the second quarter with a three-goal lead but for some good goalkeeping by Mazarelo.

The English goalkeeper first kept out Alexander Hendrickx's drag-flick before saving follow up attempts from Partap Lakra and Thierry Brinkman.

Mazarelo was a busy man in the start of the second quarter as well, with the Kalinga Lancers regularly finding ways to get inside the UP Rudras circle.

The UP Rudras were static in attack as they failed to create decent chances in front of goal. On top of that, they were up against a Kalinga Lancers defence which was proving difficult to break



down. Particularly impressive was 21-year-old Rosan Kujur who was playing in front of his home fans.

The Kalinga Lancers were the dominant side in the first half as they racked up 13 circle penetrations compared to six from the UP Rudras. Crucially for the Rudras, Mazarelo made five saves in the first half to keep them alive in the match.

The Englishman continued to keep his side in the game in the third quarter as he pulled off a diving save to deny Bobby Singh Dhani a stunning goal in the 33rd minute.

The UP Rudras attack finally began to click. In the 38th minute, Akashdeep Singh, who found himself in a promising position in the circle,

only had Krishan Bahadur Pathak to beat but saw his shot being blocked at point-blank range by Sanjay.

Pathak was tested a minute later when Lars Balk's pass from deep was delightfully deflected towards goal by Manmeet Singh. Pathak instinctively flung himself to his right to ensure his side kept their lead.

Pathak made another good save two minutes from the end of the third quarter to deny Tanguy Cousins.

The UP Rudras had a golden opportunity to draw themselves level in the 44th minute as they won their first penalty corner. Kane Russell made no mistake as he fired in his drag flick past Pathak

to set up a nail-biting final quarter.

The goal proved to be the wind in the UP Rudras' sails as they started the fourth quarter on the front foot. The Rudras won possession high up the pitch with Sudeep Chirmako forcing Pathak to give away a penalty corner.

The Lancers' captain was not going to be beaten for a second time from a penalty corner as he dove to his left to keep out the drag attempt.

The Rudras completed an incredible turnaround in the 50th minute to take the lead for the first time in the match. Lars Balk's drive from outside the circle was touched towards goal by Sudeep Chirmako.

Gurjot Singh challenged Pathak for the shot but neither player was able to get a touch as the ball rolled into the goal. The home crowd was stunned into silence.

The Lancers upped their tempo looking to the equaliser but struggled to find a way past the imperious Mazarelo.

Netherlands' 2024 Olympics gold medal-

ist Thierry Brinkman found himself in a promising position in the 54th minute only to see his attempt being smothered by Mazarelo.

The Lancers threw the kitchen sink in their hunt for an equaliser as they removed goalkeeper Pathak for an extra outfield player for the final three minutes.

However, it was the UP Rudras who came closest to scoring as Jobanpreet Singh failed to connect with a cross from the right with the goal gaping in front of him.

The Rudras did get their third goal late as Lalit Kumar Upadhyay won a penalty corner with 14 seconds left on the clock.

With no goalkeeper between the sticks and only four defenders to beat, Kane Russell secured his second of the night to give his side victory.

Player of the Match James Mazarelo said, "It is a massive win just to show that we know that even if we're down in the game, we're always in the match and then we can back ourselves to go and score multiple goals."

# Hayley Matthews back in top 10 of women's ODI batting rankings

AGENCIES  
DUBAI, DEC 31

West Indies opener Hayley Matthews capped off 2024 in style, smashing her seventh ODI century to re-enter the top 10 of the ICC women's batting rankings.

Matthews' brilliant 106 off 109 balls in the second ODI against India not only guided her team to a competitive total but also elevated her to a joint-seventh position in the rankings with a rating of 652. She now shares the spot with Australia's star left-hander Beth Mooney.

While Matthews excelled, Australia's Alyssa Healy, who scored a half-century earlier in the series, slipped one spot to third in the rankings (720 points), overtaken by Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu (733 points), who moved into second place.

India's Jemimah Rodrigues and Richa Ghosh also saw upward movement in the rankings. Rodrigues jumped four spots to 22nd after scoring 29 and 52 in the series, while Ghosh moved

up seven places to 41st, aided by her unbeaten scores of 13 and 23. Meanwhile, Chinelle Henry of the West Indies surged 21 places to 65th, courtesy of her resilient half-century in the final ODI.

India's Deepti Sharma was the standout bowler of the series, claiming eight wickets across two matches, including a career-best 6/31 in the third ODI. This dominant performance closed the gap between Deepti and South Africa's Marizanne Kapp in the bowling rankings. Deepti retained her fifth position but now sits just 12 points behind Kapp, with a rating of 665.

Hayley Matthews' off-spin also earned her a two-spot jump to seventh in the bowling rankings, surpassing England's Charlie Dean and Bangladesh's Nahida Akter. India's Titas Sadhu made her entry into the top 100 for the first time, marking a significant milestone in her young career.

Despite their stellar individual performances, neither Matthews nor Deepti climbed in the ICC all-rounder rankings.

## Major drive being launched to remove roadside encroachments in Kishtwar Town



**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
KISHTWAR, DECEMBER 31

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Rajesh Kumar Shavan today chaired a meeting to review the execution of Traffic Management Plan envisaging measures to address traffic congestion in the Kishtwar town and its peripheral areas.

The meeting held an in-depth discussion on the issues related to traffic congestion, such as roadside encroachments, unregulated street vending and the problem of

illegal parking and occurrence of road mishaps.

It was decided that all encroachments from Malipeth to Sangrambhata and Kuleed Chowk to 5 Sector shall be marked and steps initiated to evacuate the same at an earliest.

The Revenue Department was directed to conduct the demarcation for National Highway in presence of BRO and NHIDCL.

The DC also emphasized the need to relocate mechanical workshops and other establishments in and around the

bus stand area, as these obstruct smooth traffic flow and contribute to traffic congestion.

Additionally, the DC asked to implement traffic restrictions from 10:00 PM to 5:00 AM on movement of Passenger Buses from Thathri Nakka towards Kishtwar. He said that no night service bus shall be allowed in view of prevailing weather conditions.

The DC directed the traffic authorities to take strict action against violators by increasing compound challans to ensure

better traffic regulation across the district.

The meeting decided to conduct an extensive enforcement drive against roadside encroachments.

SSP Javed Iqbal highlighted the importance of completing the installation of road dividers and white line markings to improve road safety and traffic management. The meeting was also attended by ADC Pawan Kotwal, ACR Idrees Lone, ARTO Mohammad Saleem Manhas and representatives from the traffic department.

## DC Pulwama reviews preparations for Mission YUVA

**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
PULWAMA, DECEMBER 31

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pulwama, Dr. Basharat Qayoom chaired a review meeting on Tuesday to assess the final preparations for the launch of Mission YUVA, a program aimed at empowering youth, fostering entrepreneurship and creating job opportunities across the district.

The DC described Mission YUVA as a transformative initiative designed to channelize the immense potential of young individuals, enabling them to become job providers rather than mere job seekers. He highlighted the importance of nurturing first-generation entrepreneurs, empowering women and supporting low-income groups as



part of the program's commitment to inclusive and equitable growth.

Dr. Basharat emphasized the pivotal role of supervisors in ensuring the effective implementation of the program. As part of Phase 1, a district-wide survey will commence on January 1, where enumerators will conduct door-to-door surveys across every Panchayat and Ward in urban areas assigned to them. This survey is critical for gathering data on existing enterprises and identifying potential

entrepreneurs.

The DC directed officers to work diligently and collaboratively to guarantee the program's success, highlighting the importance of this initiative in fostering entrepreneurship and

economic growth in the district. The meeting reiterated the program's dual focus on supporting new enterprises and strengthening existing businesses, creating a robust ecosystem for job generation and economic progress. The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, DSEO Pulwama, AD Employment, along with other district and sectoral officers, who expressed their commitment to making Mission YUVA a resounding success in the district.

## DC Poonch reviews arrangements for Gurpurab celebrations

**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
POONCH, DECEMBER 31

Deputy Commissioner Poonch Vikas Kundal convened a meeting here today in the conference hall of the DC office to review the arrangements for the Gurpurab/Parkash Utsav of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

The meeting saw participation from departmental officers, members of the District Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, and other religious leaders.

Comprehensive discussions were held on critical issues, including the assurance of uninterrupted power and water supply, security measures during the Nagar Kirtan, and a special sanitation drive around the Gurdwaras, besides provision of ambulances, water tankers etc along the procession route. The Nagar Kirtan is scheduled on January 04, 2025, followed by the Gurpurab celebrations on



January 06, 2025.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the Exec-

utive Officer Municipality Council to conducted cleanliness around all

identified religious sites. He instructed the Public Health Engineering (PHE) and Power Development Department (PDD) to make sure a continuous supply of water and electricity, alongside additional water tankers at main venues.

The Deputy Commissioner directed the Fire Emergency department to be on alert during the celebrations, ensuring that adequate fire safety measures are in place. He also directed the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) to deploy ambulances during the procession to ensure prompt medical assistance, if needed.

Moreover, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need for robust security arrangements, directing police authorities to deploy adequate personnel for the procession and at key locations to ensure the safety and smooth conduct of the events.

## Srinagar Admin bids warm and affectionate farewell to Ali Mohammad Sheikh on superannuation



**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 31

The District Administration Srinagar on Tuesday organised an impressive function here to bid warm send off to Ali Mohammad Sheikh working in Deputy Commissioners Office on his superannuation from the Government services.

Additional Deputy Com-

missioner Srinagar, Dr Khalid Hussain Malik, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Syed Ahmad Kataria, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Aijaz Ahmad Shah, other Officers and Officials of DC Office were present on the occasion.

Addressing the farewell function, the Officers extended their best wishes to the Official for a happy

and prosperous post-retirement life.

They also appreciated the retiring Official for his dedicated service career and congratulated him on superannuation.

Other Officials and colleagues also spoke on the occasion and highlighted the contribution of the retiring Official in the Departments.

## NCORD meeting

## DC Rajouri calls for intensifying drug control measures

**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
RAJOURI, DECEMBER 31

A meeting of the District Level Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) was convened today under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma to discuss strategies for combating drug abuse in the district.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the enforcement measures taken across the sub-divisions, including Koteranka, Sunderbani, Kalakote, Nowshera, and Thanamandi, to identify and take action against drug peddlers. Emphasizing the importance of collective efforts, he directed all stakeholders to intensify measures to curb the drug menace.

The DC highlighted the critical role of public awareness and called for sustained campaigns to educate communities about the dangers of drug abuse. Regulation of pharmaceutical shops was another key point of discussion. It was informed that inspections were conducted on 124 pharmaceu-



tical shops, leading to the suspension of six licenses. Additionally, CCTV cameras have been installed in all pharmaceutical shops, while 679 shops have been computerized. The DC directed the completion of computerization for the remaining shops.

SSP Rajouri underscored the collective responsibility of the departments and the need for grassroots monitoring to address the issue effectively.

Further, the Deputy Commissioner instructed all ADMs to collaborate with BMOs to conduct home visits of individuals treated at drug de-addic-

tion centers. This initiative aims to gather feedback and ensure that rehabilitated individuals do not relapse into substance abuse.

The administration reaffirmed its commitment to eradicating drug abuse in the district through stringent enforcement, enhanced public awareness, and comprehensive rehabilitation programs.

The meeting was attended by SSP Rajouri, Gaurav Sikarwar; ACR, Mohd Jhangir Khan; ACD, Vijay Kumar; DSWO, Abdul Raheem, and other senior officers. ADCs and SDMs participated virtually.

## DC Kupwara reviews preparations of departments ahead of any possible weather exigency



**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
KUPWARA, DECEMBER 31

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today chaired a meeting of all concerned officers to review the preparations for dealing with the problems of the people ahead of any possible snowfall.

Addressing the meeting, the DC stressed upon the officers to work with greater coordination and utmost dedication on ground so that the people may not face any inconvenience due to possible snowfall. She impressed upon the officers to gear up their men and machinery to tackle any situation in case of heavy snowfall, besides, monitoring the situation closely.

On the occasion, the

DC took detailed feedback from all the departments regarding their preparations for the winter season.

She directed the officers of R&B, PMGSY, MED, BEACON and Municipalities to ensure timely snow clearance of major roads, markets and inner roads across the district so that the essential services to the people are not affected.

While taking review of medicines, the chair was informed that adequate medicines have been stored in the snow bound areas to be used during the winter period so that the people living in these areas do not face any inconvenience during snowfall.

Regarding the water supply, the DC directed

the concerned Executive Engineers to ensure uninterrupted water supply to the people especially Health Institutions and Government Offices, besides they were directed to make proper arrangements for tankers where water supply is affected due to freezing of pipes or any other reason.

Reviewing the power scenario, it was informed that buffer stock of 60 transformers in Electric Division Kupwara and 57 transformers in Electric Division Handwara have been kept for replacing damaged transformers.

ADC Kupwara, M Rouf Rehman; SE R&B, SDM, ACD, CPO, CMO, Executive Engineers of R&B, PMGSY, PDD and other concerned officials attended the meeting.

## Commissioner SMC reviews preparedness of field units



**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 31

In a proactive step to prepare for any weather forecast for the coming days, Commissioner SMC, Dr. Owais Ahmed convened a review meeting with concerned officials, here.

The meeting discussed strategies aimed at ensuring public safety and minimizing disruptions during the expected weather conditions.

Commissioner highlighted the importance of preparedness and collaboration among various departments within the SMC. "As we brace for

## Power Shutdown

**J I NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, DECEMBER 31

According to the Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPDC, in order to carry out stabilization of 33KV Sadiq Colony Tap line, the shutdown of 33KV Sadiq Colony tap line shall be observed due to which Receiving Stations at Hospital, Model town, Kapra and Noorbagh shall remain off while power supply to the Hospital, Model town, Kapra and Noorbagh in Sopore town will be affected from 09:00 AM to 03:00 PM on 02 January, 2025.

Similarly, in order to replace rotten/damaged poles and facilitate gate construction at Lalad Amargrah Sopore, the shutdown of 33KV Baramulla-Ist line shall be observed due to which Receiving Stations at Baramulla-Ist, Kanli Bagh and GMC Baramulla shall remain off while the power supply to the Baramulla-Ist, Kanli Bagh and GMC Baramulla will be affected from 11:00 AM to 02:00 PM on 02 January, 2025.

Also, the shutdown of 33KV Baramulla-II shall be observed due to which Receiving Station at Baramulla-II shall remain off while the power supply to the Old town and Janbazpora of Sopore will be affected from 11:00 AM to 02:00 PM on 02 January, 2025.

Further, the shutdown of 33KV Delina-Sopore line shall be observed due to which Receiving Station at Sopore-II shall remain off while the power supply to the Krankshivan Colony, Amargrah and Zonal Bank at Sopore will be affected from 10:00 AM to 03:00 PM on 02 January, 2025.

Moreover, in order to facilitate the execution of work at 33 KV Tap line to 1x10 MVA under construction Receiving Station Ompora under PMDP-R, the shutdown of 33KV Budgam-SIDCO line shall be observed due to which Receiving Station SIDCO shall remain off while the power supply to the Ompora Housing Colony, Khanpora, NIFT and Police line Ompora areas falling under Budgam district will be affected from 11:00 AM to 04:00 PM on 02 January, 2025.