

DENGUE WARNING SIGNS

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

Watch out for dengue warning signs!

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

- Severe and continuous abdominal pain
- Disorientation
- Present vomiting
- A sharp rise in temperature
- Disorientation
- Severe pain joints or muscles, headache, or dizziness

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

JINDRAH IMAGES

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Jammu Railway Division historic milestone, Govt committed to build Vikshit Bharat: PM Modi



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 6

Terming new Jammu Railway Division a historic milestone in the development of Jammu and Kashmir's connectivity and infrastructure, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday reiterated his government's resolve to build "Vikshit Bharat."

Addressing the nation after inaugurating the new railway division virtually, PM Modi, according to the news agency,

said, "It's a symbol of India's collective progress under the vision of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas," filling colours in the dream of 'Vikshit Bharat' (Developed India)."

"To achieve Vikshit Bharat, it is essential to develop Indian Railways," he said, adding that the past decade has witnessed a transformational change in railway infrastructure modernization, enhanced connectivity, and

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 4



ECI set to announce schedule for bye-polls for Budgam, Nagrota

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 6

The Election Commission of India (ECI) is set to announce the schedule for the bye-election for Budgam and Nagrota assembly segments of Jammu & Kashmir, sources disclosed.

Sources told news agency that the poll-body is expected to unveil

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 4

Soldier found dead in Poonch

JI NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, JAN 6

An Army jawan died under suspicious circumstances in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district on Monday, officials said.

Soldier Krishna Yadav, a resident of Rajasthan

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 4

Army foils woman's bid to cross over to PoJK in Poonch

JI NEWS SERVICE
POONCH/JAMMU, JAN 6

The Army on Monday thwarted an attempt by a woman to cross over to Pakistan-occupied-Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) following a domestic dispute in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 4

LG Sinha lauds Indian Railways for connecting Kashmir to national grid



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 6

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Monday said that Indian Railways has laid the foundation for a prosperous and integrated future for J&K by connecting Kashmir to the national railway network.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of new Jammu Railway Division here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency,

said, "Connecting Kashmir with Kanyakumari through the railway network was a dream for decades, and today, under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, this dream has come true."

He expressed his heartfelt gratitude to PM Modi and Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw for their focused efforts toward the development of Jammu and Kashmir.

LG Sinha lauded the efforts

of the Indian Railways for spearheading a new era of development and integration in Jammu and Kashmir. "The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) will seamlessly connect Kashmir to Kanyakumari, boosting tourism, trade, and employment opportunities in the region," he said.

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 4

Jammu will not face losses, will reap benefits from Kashmir Rail Link: CM



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 6

Addressing inauguration ceremony of new rail division at Jammu, Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah

promised that Jammu would not suffer economic losses due to the direct rail link to Kashmir. Instead, the new division is expected to create jobs, enhance trade, and

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 4

Snowfall: Sgr-Jmu NH open, Mughal Road, SSG still closed

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 6

The Srinagar-Jammu national highway continued to remain open for vehicular movement on Monday while the other roads including Mughal Road and other highways have not been thrown open for the public due to the snow accumulation.

A noticeable slow movement was observed on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway

due to the breakdown of heavy motor vehicles and single-lane traffic, officials told the news agency, adding that passengers and light motor vehicles (LMVs) are advised to travel during daylight hours, as there is a possibility of shooting stones between Ramban and Banihal.

An official said that as heavy snowfall disrupted normal life in the valley, slow movement was seen on the

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 4

CS reviews implementation of PM Gati Shakti in J&K

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 6

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, while chairing a meeting of all the Administrative Secretaries and Deputy Commissioners about the implementation of PM Gati Shakti (PMGS) Master Plan, remarked that departments should take lead in adding as many layers as possible by mapping all their projects besides those among the social sector.

He called upon the Administrative heads to onboard



themselves on the local portal of this national plan to add specific layers pertaining to their departments. He advised them

to be innovative in adding these layers as they can take cue from other States/UTs as well.

Dulloo enjoined upon them to go through the portal developed by Jal Shakti

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 4

Devotees gather at Gurudwara Chatti Padshahi to observe Guru Gobind Singh Ji's birth anniversary

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 6

A large number of Sikh devotees gathered at the historic Gurudwara Chatti Padshahi in Rainawari on Monday to observe the Prakash Parv of Guru Gobind Singh, the revered tenth Sikh Guru.

The Gurudwara reverberated with prayers and hymns as devotees celebrated the birth anniversary of the Guru with spiritual fervour. According to the news agency, the day was marked by special prayer services, Kirtan (religious hymns), and the traditional langar (community meal) offered to



all visitors. On this occasion, one of the devotees, Harpreet Singh said, "The great message

of Guru Gobind Singh Ji motivates us toward life of valour, humbleness and service. Such

a message seems relevant in present times."

Kuldeep Kaur, another devotee, said the celebration of Prakash Parv at Gurudwara Chatti Padshahi is a proud moment for the Sikh community in Kashmir. It is a day of reflection and devotion, she remarked.

The management committee of the Gurudwara appreciated the participation of devotees from different parts of the valley. The authorities had made proper arrangements for the smooth flow of devotees. Police personnel were deployed there to maintain law & order and security.

IAS Officer Trainees of 2024 Batch call on J&K Lt Governor



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 6

A group of IAS Officer Trainees of the 2024 Batch, called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhawan on Monday.

During the interaction, the

Lieutenant Governor extended his best wishes to the Officer Trainees. He advised them to work with sensitivity, honesty, and dedication and make their valuable contribution to achieve the goal of Viksit Bharat.

"Civil Servants are the

backbone of the administration. You must follow the values of integrity and merit for the nation building process. Your aim should be to reach out to the last man in the queue and focus on people-centric inclusive

CONTINUED ON » PAGE 4

ADGP Jammu zone chairs crime review meeting of district Jammu



JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 6

Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Jammu zone, Shri Anand Jain, IPS, chaired a comprehensive crime review meeting of district Jammu. Sh. Shiv Kumar Sharma, DIG JKS Range; Sh. Joginder Singh, SSP Jammu; all SsP, SDPOs, SHOs and ICPPs of district Jammu were present on the occasion.

During the meeting, the ADGP took stock of the crime situation in the district, focusing on recent crime trends, with a special focus on cases related to narcotics smuggling, illegal cross-border activities, and organized crime. He reviewed the status of investigation and prosecution, and emphasized the importance of timely and

effective investigation to ensure justice for victims.

The officers were directed to develop a robust database for tracking habitual offenders, increase vigilance at vulnerable points, including border outposts, and reiterated the commitment to gather actionable intelligence, enhance community policing, and foster public trust.

All the officers present were asked to remain vigilant and strengthen intelligence-sharing mechanisms to thwart any attempts by anti-national elements to disrupt peace and tranquility. The ADGP further emphasized the need to work on actionable strategies to overcome challenges in evidence collection, and operational bottlenecks identified.

DC Baramulla visits Gurdwara Chatti Padshahi



JJ NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, JANUARY 6

In a spirit of unity and celebration, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa Monday extended heartfelt greetings to the Sikh community and all those celebrating the 358th birth anniversary of the 10th Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

On the occasion, Minga Sherpa visited the Chatti Padshahi Gurdwara in Baramulla and joined devotees to participate in the religious festivities.

In his message, the DC lauded the life and teachings of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, emphasizing his role as a spiritual leader, warrior, poet and philosopher.

Minga Sherpa further highlighted Guru Gobind Singh Ji's unwavering commitment to justice, equality and compassion, which continues to inspire generations across the world.

Meanwhile, gurdwaras across the district witnessed special prayers, kirtans and langars to pay homage and honor the legacy of Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

Advisor Nasir Aslam reviews winter preparedness in Budgam

JJ NEWS SERVICE
BUDGAM, JANUARY 6

Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, today reviewed the winter preparedness measures in Budgam, focusing on snow clearance operations and the availability of essential services.

During his visit, the Advisor was accompanied by Deputy Commissioner Budgam, Akshay Labroo. Nodal Officers of the district briefed the Advisor on the steps being taken to ensure uninterrupted services despite the challenges posed by the weather.

The meeting was also attended by elected representatives, including MLA Khansahib Saif Din Bhat, MLA Chadoora Ali Mohammed Dar, and MLA Beerwa Dr. Shafi Ahmad Wani. Senior offi-

cial, such as the district's Executive Engineers and the Chief Planning Officer, were also present.

Advisor Nasir Aslam underscored the need for coordinated efforts among all departments to ensure timely snow clearance, restoration of essential services, and uninterrupted availability of supplies for the residents.

He stressed that proactive and efficient measures are crucial for minimizing disruptions and providing relief to citizens during snowfall. Reassuring the public, the Advisor affirmed the government's commitment to safeguarding the well-being of the people during the harsh winter season.

He assured that all necessary resources are being mobilized to address the needs of the residents.

SMC intensifies Snow clearance, dewatering operations in Srinagar

JJ NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 6

The Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) has launched extensive operations to address the pressing issues of snow clearance and waterlogging throughout the city following recent snowfall and rain.

With a dedicated workforce and advanced machinery, SMC teams have been actively clearing snow and excess water from lanes and bylanes since early morning.

To enhance efficiency, dewatering operations are being monitored through the SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system. Currently, 67 out of 100 dewatering stations are under real-time surveillance, allowing for effective management of water levels.



The SCADA Main Control Centre at Darish Kadal oversees pump operations, DG set performance, and sump water levels to ensure optimal water management.

In parallel, snow clearance activities are being managed through the SMC's 24x7 Control Room, augmented by a Vehicle Tracking System (VTS). This technology enables better deployment and coordination of machinery across the city.

Dewatering pumps have been strategically deployed at key locations to mitigate water accumula-

tion, and all pump stations remain fully operational. The sanitation workforce is diligently clearing roads of snow and water, providing essential relief to residents affected by the inclement weather.

The SMC Commissioner has been closely monitoring all operations to ensure timely and effective implementation. "Our teams are doing outstanding work under challenging conditions," stated the Commissioner, reaffirming the SMC's commitment to alleviating the hardships faced by residents due to snow and waterlogging.

For assistance, residents are encouraged to reach out to the SMC's 24x7 Control Room helpline at 0194-2470465, 0194-2474499, or the Toll-Free Number 1800-180-7038.

DC Kupwara inspects snow clearance ops, visits key locations



JJ NEWS SERVICE
KUPWARA, JANUARY 6

In order to assess the snow clearance operations and evaluate the overall post-snowfall situation in Kralpora area, Chowkibal and other towns of Kupwara district, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan conducted a comprehensive tour on Monday.

During the tour, the DC reviewed snow clearance activities being undertaken on Chowkibal-Tangdar road and Chowkibal-Manchattar road and inspected efforts to ensure roads are cleared off snow.

As part of her extensive tour, the DC visited the R&B Snow Control Room at Kralpora to review the deployment and functioning of snow clearance machinery.

She inspected the availability and operational status of snow removal equipment and other machinery. She interacted with the staff on duty and appreciated their efforts in ensuring prompt action during snowfall.

The DC directed the R&B and Beacon authorities to sprinkle salt on slippery spots of the roads.

During her visit to Sub

District Hospital Kralpora, the DC interacted with the staff and patients, ensuring that healthcare services are functioning efficiently despite the inclement weather.

She reviewed the availability of essential medicines, heating arrangements, and other facilities, instructing hospital management to address any shortcomings promptly.

The DC also visited the main market area of Reddi Chowkibal and Kralpora to check the clearance of snow from roads and inner links and interacted with public ensuring that their concerns are addressed promptly.

While interacting with locals, DC listened to their grievances and assured them that the administration is working round the clock to restore all essential services.

She assured the public that the administration is fully committed to mitigate the challenges posed by the harsh weather besides reiterating that the district administration is monitoring the situation round the clock and urged all departments to maintain coordination to ensure minimal disruption.

Power shutdown

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 6

Chief Engineer (Distribution) JPDCL, Jammu has informed that the power supply to Main Bazar, Jarai, Parliwand, PHE installations, Main Bazar, Ward No. 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12, Taraf Sanji, Bhagthali, Court, Jail, PHE installa-

tions, Parliwand, Basantpur, Lakhampur Dhanna, Thein and adjoining areas will remain affected on January 07, 09 and 11 from 8 am to 3 pm.

Similarly, the power supply to Prabble, Humble Mangota and its adjoining areas will remain affected on January 07 and 8 from 9 am to 3 pm.

UCO Bank celebrates 83rd Foundation Day



JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 6

UCO Bank, a premier nationalized bank today celebrated its 83rd foundation day. Established on 6th of January 1943 having its head office in Kolkata; the foundation of the bank was laid by great industrialist G.D Birla.

On this momentous milestone of the bank, the Garhi branch of the bank following its corporate call observed financial literacy cum digital onboarding week from 1st of January to 6th of January 2025. Joining the corporate call a customer meet was organized within the branch premises with the main

objective to spread financial awareness among the masses. On the occasion Branch Head Mr. Vikrant Sharma addressed the gathering and threw light on the different scheme's run by the bank in public interest; special emphasis was on digital products of the bank. Account opening drive was also conducted and various deposit accounts were opened including Saving's account, PPF account etc.

Those who were present Vikrant Sharma (Branch Head), Daniyal Tariq Raina (ABH), Davinder Kumar (Staff), Tajinder Singh, Summit Sharma, Amit Sharma, Y P Abrol, Bikram Singh Bandral etc.

Operation Theatre made functional at CHC Thathri



JJ NEWS SERVICE
DODA, JANUARY 6

Marking a major milestone towards strengthening local patient care, the Operation Theatre at Community Health Centre Thathri has been made functional with a minor surgery conducted successfully today.

The Surgery was conducted for an ingrowing toe nail of one 60 years

old female under Ayushman Bharat PMJAY.

Dr. Bishan Singh Thakur (Consultant Orthopedic Surgeon) Assisted by Haroon OT Technician performed the Surgery, The local Anaesthesia for safe conduct of surgery was also ensured by Dr Bishan Singh Thakur. The patient is recovering well in the ward under the care of the medical team of the hospital.

DC Baramulla condoles with Pandrerthan incident victims



JJ NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, JANUARY 6

In a tragic incident, five members of a family from Gingle, Uri, including a couple and their three children, died yesterday due to suffocation in their rented accommodation in the Pandrerthan area of Srinagar district.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, expressed deep sorrow over the untimely demise of the family. He

conveyed his heartfelt condolences to the grieving family and assured that the district administration would provide all possible support to the affected family during this difficult time.

Minga Sherpa urged residents to take necessary precautions during the winter season, especially while using heating appliances. He emphasized the importance of maintaining proper ventilation to prevent such unfortunate tragedies.

DC inspects Water Supply Station in Poonch town



JJ NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, JANUARY 6

Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal on Monday undertook a comprehensive inspection of the Jal Shakti Water Supply Station Poonch town and Kamsar, focusing on the functionality of water distribution systems and the provision of clean drinking water to residents.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner evaluated the operational status of pipes and service reservoirs (SR Tanks), stressing the importance of delivering water directly to every household in the region.

The Deputy Commissioner inspected the water testing laboratory, directing Jal Shakti Department officials to conduct rig-

orous quality testing of drinking water. This initiative aligns with the ongoing efforts under the Jal Jeevan Mission, aimed at ensuring that all drinking water adheres to essential safety standards.

The Executive Engineer of Jal Shakti provided the Deputy Commissioner with a detailed briefing on the status of water service schemes in the region, including the number of households receiving tap water.

Following the briefing, the Deputy Commissioner emphasized the need for a continuous, round-the-clock water supply. He instructed the Executive Engineer to ensure that there are no complaints or concerns from the public regarding water availability.

SDM Lolab monitors Snow clearance operations, inspects SDH Sogam



JJ NEWS SERVICE
KUPWARA, JANUARY 6

Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Lolab, Javid Masoodi Sunday monitored the snow clearance operations on various roads of Lolab sub division after fresh spell of snowfall.

He reviewed the progress and ensured that roads are being cleared promptly to facilitate smooth movement of the public.

The SDM also paid a

late evening visit to Sub-District Hospital (SDH) Sogam to assess the functioning of the hospital during the ongoing weather conditions.

He interacted with the hospital staff and directed them to remain vigilant and prepared to handle any emergency situations.

The SDM assured the residents of Lolab that the administration is committed to ensuring that all essential services remain operational despite the heavy snowfall.

BME25-Largest Building Material Exhibition concludes with great enthusiasm, fanfare

J I NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 6

BME25, the largest building material exhibition was concluded today with great enthusiasm and fanfare. The valedictory function was graced with the presence of MP Sh. Jugal Kishore Sharma as Chief Guest and former Dy Mayor Sh. Baldev Billowria as guest of honour. Sh. Jugal Kishore highly praised the initiative taken by Architects to take the growth of J&K towards new heights by organising such an event where in the companies from Jammu as well as from entire country participated boosting the concept of Vocal for Local and Make in India. Sh. Baldev Billowria also appreciated the work done by Architects team of IIA and others



who contributed tirelessly for successfully organising such an event. The IIA JK awards were introduced for the first time involving various Architects and students who participated with their projects for various categories. Vikas Dubey, Chairman IIA J&K Chapter presented the Welcome address for the event. The IIA J&K Chapter has been playing a major role in promoting the architectural profession in the Union territory

by bringing the architects and allied business houses dealing with the construction industry on one platform. The Indian Institute of Architects J&K Chapter involves Ar. Vishal Abrol as Vice Chairman, Ar. H P Singh as Jt. Hon. Secy, Ar. Sanjeev Mahajan as Hon Treasurer with nine executive members and two coopted members. The function concluded with vote of thanks by Ar. Anil Verma, Jt. Hon. Secy. IIA J&K Chapter.

ADDC inspects Developmental Works in Block Pangrain



J I NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, JANUARY 6

Acting on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Abhishek Sharma, Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa today conducted an extensive inspection of MGNREGA, SBM, Capex and SSY works in different parts of Block Pangrain of District Rajouri.

Dr. Thapa was accompanied by District Panchayat Officer (DPO) Ch Mohammad Nawaz and other RDD officials. The team inspected several

worksites and assessed the progress of projects aimed at strengthening rural infrastructure and community welfare.

Dr. Thapa reviewed the quality of construction works and emphasized the need for strict adherence to specified standards. He directed the executing agencies to ensure timely completion of all ongoing projects under both State and Central government schemes.

Highlighting the importance of transparency and accountability, the ADDC instructed officials to geotag all assets cre-

ated under MGNREGA to enhance monitoring and documentation.

Later, Dr. Thapa chaired a review meeting at the Block Headquarters Pangrain to evaluate the financial and physical progress of ongoing works.

Officials from the Rural Development (RDD) and other departments presented updates on the implementation of various schemes.

He emphasized the importance of community participation in developmental initiatives to ensure their sustainability and effectiveness.

Dy CM participates in Guru Gobind Singh Ji's Jayanti celebrations at Nowshera



J I NEWS SERVICE
NOWSHERA, JANUARY 6

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today paid a visit to the revered Gurudwara in Nowshera to join the celebrations of 358th birth anniversary of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

While interacting with the devotees and people, he extended his heartfelt greetings and prayed for peace, harmony and prosperity to all on this auspicious occasion.

Later, the Deputy CM inspected the ongoing construction work of car parking facility being developed by the Municipal Committee Nowshera at the Bus Stand. The project, being raised with an estimated cost of Rs 4.75 crore, is a significant step towards addressing parking challenges in the area.

During the inspection,

Surinder Choudhary directed the executing agency to expedite the construction work, ensuring its timely completion. He emphasized that this facility will greatly benefit locals and visitors by providing a convenient and organized parking space.

"This project is a much-needed initiative to cater to the growing demands of the region. Once completed, it will improve the overall traffic management and ease the lives of commuters," said the Deputy CM. The visit underscored the government's commitment towards improving urban infrastructure and promoting communal harmony through meaningful engagements and development initiatives. ADC Nowshera, Babu Ram Tandon and senior officer accompanied the Dy CM during this inspection.

State Taxes Enforcement team conducts surprise inspection at Dalogra Rajouri

J I NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, JANUARY 6

Deputy Commissioner, State Taxes Enforcement Wing Samba Sanjay Gupta conducted a surprise inspection here today at Dalogra Rajouri.

During the inspection conducted on the directions of the Commissioner State Taxes P.K. Bhat and under the close supervision of Additional Commissioner State Taxes Jammu Namrita Dogra, the team intercepted several vehicles to verify their e-way bills and tax invoices to ensure compliance with tax regulations. Highlighting the department's efforts to curb tax evasion, Sanjay Gupta informed that a total penalty of Rs 19.56 lakh was imposed and recovered from tax evaders in Samba, Rajouri, and Poonch districts during December 2024. The cumulative penalty realized from April 2024



to December 2024 stands at an impressive Rs 1.48 crore, with 2,92,922 e-way bills verified during this period.

As part of the inspection today, a few vehicles were detained for physical verification and detailed scrutiny of documents to ascertain compliance with tax laws.

The DC State Taxes emphasized that no GST evasion shall be tolerated and urged all dealers and transporters to ensure strict compliance with

GST regulations. Such operations demonstrate the department's unwavering commitment to ensuring tax compliance and deterring evasion through rigorous enforcement measures.

The inspection was conducted in the presence of STO Enforcement Rajouri-Poonch Range, Farooq Choudhary; Inspector Anil Sharma; Sub-Inspector Shahbaz Ahmed; and other officials of the State Taxes Department.

Sakeena Itoo conducts whirlwind tour of South Kashmir, assesses post-snowfall scenario

J I NEWS SERVICE
PULWAMA/SHOPIAN/KULGAM/ANANTNAG, JANUARY 6

Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today undertook a comprehensive tour of South Kashmir districts of Anantnag, Kulgam, Pulwama and Shopian to gather first hand account of impact of recent snowfall in these districts.

She chaired meetings at each district headquarter and took stock of snow clearance operations, availability of essential commodities, restoration of essential services like water supply and power supply and other public welfare measures.

At Pulwama, Sakeena Itoo inspected district hospital and took stock of medical facilities available for patients. She interacted with on duty doctors and paramedical staff at these hospitals.

The Minister also chaired a meeting at district headquarters Pulwama and took stock of post snowfall scenario in the district.

Deputy Commissioner Pulwama, senior officers of district administration and other concerned district and sectoral officers were also present in the meeting.

Later, Sakeena Itoo visited Shopian and chaired a meeting to review snow clearance operations and provision of essential service delivery in the district.

Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar, apprised the Minister of snow clearance plans in place and prompt response of the administration in snow clearance and restoration of power and road connectivity post yesterday's snowfall.

During her visit, the Minister also inspected District Control Room to review its functioning and the grievance redressal mechanism in place for winter mitigation measures.

She also inspected the



District Hospital Shopian and reviewed the healthcare facilities. She emphasized on the augmenting heating arrangements in healthcare institutions across the district. MLA Zainapora, Showkat Husain Ganie; MLA Rajpora, Gh. Mohi-ud-din Mir and other senior officers also accompanied the Minister during the visit.

Afterwards, the Minister visited district Kulgam and took stock of post-snowfall scenario in the district.

She chaired a meeting with the administration of district and reviewed snow clearance operations, availability of essential services and other public welfare measures in the district.

MLA Devsar, Peerzada Feroz Ahmad; Deputy Commissioner Kulgam, district and sectoral officers were present in the meeting.

Addressing the officers during the meeting, the Minister stressed upon the officers for timely clearance of snow in several remote areas which are blocked due to recent snowfall. She asked them to prioritise roads leading to hospitals and other essential service institutions.

The Minister also

called for timely restoration of drinking water supply in affected areas. She directed the concerned officers for regular deployment of drinking water tankers in affected areas till restoration.

During the visit, the Minister also inspected district hospital Kulgam and took stock of medical care facilities. She inspected different sections of the hospital and also interacted with on duty doctors, staff patients and their attendants.

She stressed on the district administration for augmenting heating arrangements in view of the harsh cold.

Later, Sakeena Itoo visited district Anantnag and took stock of post snowfall scenario. She also visited GMC and Associated Hos-

pital Anantnag and took stock of medical care facilities at the facility.

Chairing a meet at district headquarters Anantnag, the Minister called upon the officers of district administration for timely restoration of all essential services.

While reviewing the snow clearance operations in the district, the Minister delved upon the officers for timely restoration of connectivity in all remote areas. She asked them to prioritise roads leading to hospitals, CHCs and PHCs. She also asked to provide alternative sources of drinking water in affected areas till pipelines are restored.

During the meeting, the Minister said that the government is work-

ing round the clock to address the immediate challenges brought about by the heavy snowfall.

"Our priority is to ensure that basic services are restored swiftly and that no one is left behind", Sakeena said. She highlighted that the district administrations have been directed to continue their efforts and provide relief in the most effective and timely manner. Deputy Commissioner Anantnag, senior officers of district administration and other concerned district and sectoral officers were also present in the meeting.

Pertinently, the tour was held in the backdrop of Chief Minister's direction of moving around the districts to review the situation on the ground.

Dr. Rameshwar lays foundation stone for New CHC Bani Building

J I NEWS SERVICE
BANI, JANUARY 6

In a significant step towards improving healthcare infrastructure in the region, Dr. Rameshwar Singh, MLA Bani, laid the foundation stone for the new building of the Community Health Centre (CHC) Bani. The project includes the construction of an OPD complex, parking area, and a conference hall at an estimated cost of Rs 1.5 crore. The project is funded by the NHPC Department, which approved and released the necessary funds to address this long-pending demand of the Bani constituency. Speaking at the event, Dr. Rameshwar Singh expressed his gratitude to NHPC for their support and reaffirmed his commitment to addressing the public's needs. "This initiative marks a crucial step in fulfilling the aspirations of the people of Bani. I thank NHPC for their cooperation and assure the public that the work will be car-



ried out with utmost dedication and transparency," he stated. Dr. Rameshwar Singh highlighted his unwavering commitment to the welfare of the people living in hilly and remote areas, emphasizing that their long-standing demands and challenges remain a top priority in his development agenda. He assured the people that every effort would be made to address their concerns and ensure the timely completion of projects aimed at improving their quality of life.

Block Medical Officer (BMO) Bani, Dr. Dev Raj, also extended his appreciation to the NHPC and

Dr. Rameshwar Singh for their proactive approach. He highlighted additional requirements of the health facility and presented them to the MLA for consideration.

District Development Council (DDC) Bani, Reeta Devi, graced the occasion with her presence and lauded the efforts being made to enhance the region's healthcare services.

The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from the local community, who expressed their optimism about the improved medical facilities that will soon be available in the area.

NORTHERN RAILWAY						
E-TENDER NOTICE						
Sr. DEE/G/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites E-Tenders (www.reps.gov.in) against below titled Tenders. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only.						
Tender No.	Name of Work	App. Cost (in ₹)	Earnest Money (in ₹)	Completion Period	Opening of Tender	Website Particulars
251-Elect-T-51-2024-25	Electrical work in c/w Resurfacing of PF 1 and PF 2 & 3 at Pathankot Railway Station.	Rs. 23,03,309.56	Rs. 46,100.00	6 Months	27.01.2025 after 15:00 Hrs.	www.reps.gov.in
251-Elect-T-52-2024-25	Electrical work in c/w Platform surfacing & Replacement of 02 Nos. at BNGL, 06 nos. at UCB TYPE-II pway gang quarters under SSE/P/PTK Jurisdiction.	Rs. 32,33,779.29	Rs. 64,700.00	6 Months	27.01.2025 after 15:00 Hrs.	www.reps.gov.in
No.: 251-Elect/T/Notice No. 43-Elect/2024-25 Dated: 06.01.2025						
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE						

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

Jammu Railway...

improved facilities for passengers."

CONGRATULATES J&K PEOPLE

PM Modi congratulated the people of Jammu and Kashmir, saying, "Integration of J&K into the national railway network is a monumental step towards transforming Indian Railways into a global leader in efficiency, speed, and passenger experience."

"The Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Railway Link (USBRL) project is a landmark achievement that demonstrates India's engineering excellence."

Highlighting the feats of modern engineering, he said, "India's first cable-stayed rail bridge, the Anji Khad Bridge, and the iconic arch bridge over the Chenab River—the world's highest railway bridge—are marvels that are making waves globally."

The Prime Minister emphasized that the new Jammu Railway Division would not only benefit the people of Jammu and Kashmir but also extend its advantages to Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, and Ladakh.

RAILWAYS NEARING 100% ELECTRIFICATION

PM Modi said that the government has laid more than 30,000 kilometers of new railway tracks in the last 10 years, nearing 100% electrification, compared to just 35% in 2014. Additionally, he noted that the country has eliminated all manual crossings on broad-gauge tracks.

"Today is a big day for new-age connectivity. It shows that the entire nation is moving forward together," he remarked.

The Prime Minister stressed that new railway divisions, terminals, and modernized stations are creating unprecedented opportunities for trade, business, and employment.

"The development of railways is creating lakhs of job opportunities. In the last 10 years, lakhs of youth have been employed in the railways, and initiatives like Gati Shakti University will further enhance the workforce's skillset," he said.

BULLET TRAINS IN OFFING

Referring to the strides in high-speed train services, PM Modi noted that more than 50 Vande Bharat trains are now operational, connecting long distances in shorter times and setting a benchmark for modern Indian trains.

"The time is not far when bullet trains will traverse across the country, making railway journeys memorable," he added.

PM Modi emphasised that the railways are undergoing a transformation with the promotion of Made in India. "Modern coaches are being developed for metros and railways. Stations are also being redeveloped, Solar panels are being installed at stations and 'One Station, One Product' stalls are being set up at railway stations," PM said, adding, "All these initiatives are generating millions of new employment opportunities in the railway sector."

LAUDS EXPANDING METRO NETWORK

The Prime Minister also lauded India's expanding metro network, which has grown from just 5 cities in 2005 to 21 cities today, with over 1,000 kilometers of operational tracks.

Stressing the importance of indigenous development, PM Modi said, "Under the 'Made in India' initiative, railway stations are being modernized, and high-speed train corridors are being developed. This will ensure India leads from the front in connectivity and infrastructure."

He reiterated the government's commitment to making Indian Railways the backbone of a developed and self-reliant India, saying, "This is not just about connectivity but also about fulfilling aspirations and creating a better future for millions."

The Prime Minister emphasised that such projects not only enhance the ease of living but also promote the ease of doing business, aligning with India's broader infrastructure goals.

EXPRESSES CONFIDENCE IN BHARAT'S GROWTH
PM Modi noted that India is currently undergoing a massive infrastructure expansion, including expressways, waterways and metro networks.

He said that the number of airports has grown from 74 in 2014 to over 150 today. "Projects are part of a larger roadmap towards a developed India, which is now a mission for every citizen of this country."

Expressing confidence in Bharat's growth, the Prime Minister said, "I am certain that, together, we will accelerate this growth even further."

He congratulated the citizens of India on these milestones and reaffirmed the government's commitment to nation-building.

Prominent dignitaries who were present on the occasion included Union Minister of Railways, Information and Broadcasting, Electronics & Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnav, Union Minister G Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of State for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences, and MoS PMO, Dr. Jitendra Singh, Union Minister V. Somanna, Minister of State Ravneet Singh Bittu, Union Minister Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Governor of Odisha, Jishnu Dev Varma, Governor of Telangana, Hari Babu Kambhampati, Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, Manoj Sinha, Chief Minister of Jammu & Kashmir, Omar Abdullah, Chief Minister of Telangana A Revanth Reddy and Chief Minister of Odisha Mohan Charan Majhi.

Besides inaugurating new Jammu Railway Division, PM Modi laid the foundation stone for Rayagada Railway Division Building of East Coast Railway and also inaugurated Charlapalli New Terminal Station in the Medchal-Malkajgiri District of Telangana. KNO

LG Sinha lauds Indian...

the world, with the region being elevated to the status of a new railway division. This, he said, will bring unprecedented connectivity and opportunities to the Union Territory.

BY JANUARY END KASHMIR WILL BE FULLY CONNECTED

The LG announced that by the end of this month, the Kashmir Valley will be fully connected to the national railway grid, marking a transformative moment for the region. He emphasized the significance of the world's

Godrej Agrovet launches Pride Hog Feed Range to Boost Pig Health, Immunity

JI NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, JANUARY 6

Godrej Agrovet Limited (Godrej Agrovet), a leading diversified agri-business company, today announced the launch of Godrej Pride Hog, a scientifically developed pig feed range designed to provide optimal nutrition at each stage of a pig's lifecycle. The range includes Starter, Grower, and Finisher variants, ensuring balanced nutrition for better health, immunity, and growth.

Commenting on the launch, Balram Singh Yadav, Managing Director, Godrej Agrovet said, "With half of the country's -9-million pig population located in the North East, pig farming is a vital source of livelihood for small and marginal farmers. In line with our commitment to

As part of the launch, Godrej Agrovet organized a roundtable discussion in Guwahati to address preventive measures against African Swine Fever (ASF)

and best practices for pig farm management. The event saw participation from industry experts, including Dr. Purnananda Konwar, General Manager, Assam Livestock and Poultry Corporation Ltd and Capt. (Dr.) A.Y. Rajendra, CEO, Animal Feed Business, Godrej Agrovet.

Commenting on the launch, Balram Singh Yadav, Managing Director, Godrej Agrovet said, "With half of the country's -9-million pig population located in the North East, pig farming is a vital source of livelihood for small and marginal farmers. In line with our commitment to



uplift farming families, Pride Hog offers a high-quality, research-backed feed solution that enhances pig health, boosts immunity, and maximizes growth potential. We are confident it will contribute to improving farmer prof-

itability and productivity." Since its first detection in 2020, ASF has posed significant challenges for pig farmers in the North East. This highly contagious viral disease affects domestic and wild pigs, causing severe economic

consequences due to its high mortality rate.

Dr. Purnananda Konwar, General Manager, Assam Livestock and Poultry Corporation Ltd, noted, "The North East's vulnerability to ASF outbreaks highlights the urgent need for preventive measures and modernized pig farming practices. Initiatives like the

National Livestock Mission are helping farmers and businesses adopt scientific approaches to build resilience in the sector."

In the absence of a vaccine, effective management of ASF relies on preventive measures such as strict biosecurity

protocols, controlled pig movement, quarantine

periods, and maintaining proper hygiene. Additionally, providing high-quality feed to enhance immunity is crucial for mitigating the disease's impact. Speaking on the nutritional benefits of Pride Hog, Capt. (Dr.) A.Y. Rajendra, CEO - Animal Feed Business, Godrej Agrovet, said, "Pride Hog is more than just feed—it is a comprehensive nutritional solution designed to meet the unique needs of pigs at every growth stage. From preventing piglet mortality and diarrhoea to enhancing immunity, our feed ensures faster growth and overall health."

From preventing piglet mortality and diarrhoea to enhancing immunity, our feed ensures faster growth and overall health."

highest railway bridge over the Chenab River, a marvel of engineering and a symbol of India's progress.

"The railway network will become the lifeline of J&K, driving economic progress and industrialization in the region. Enhanced connectivity means more opportunities, more jobs, and a brighter future for the people of J&K," LG Sinha said.

SURVEYS ON TO CONNECT J&K TOWNS

He said that surveys are ongoing for the Anantnag-Bijbehara-Pahalgam (78km) and Awantipora-Shopian (28kms) rail lines. "DPR is under examination for new line between Baramulla-Uri (46kms), Baramulla-Kupwara (39kms), Jammu-Poonch via Akhnoor, Rajouri (223kms), Manwal-Talra via Ramkote, Billawar and Dundera (117kms), Sopore-Kupwara (37kms), Pathankot-Leh (664kms), Bilaspur-Manali-Leh (489kms) and doubling of Baramulla-Banihal line," he said, adding, "By linking key towns and regions, these projects promise to unlock the region's untapped potential and boost local economies," he added.

EXPLORE POSSIBILITIES TO SET UP PRIVATE FREIGHT

TERMINAL

In view of the rapid industrialization taking place in J&K and emergence of Jammu, Samba and Kathua as industrial hubs, the Lieutenant Governor emphasized that Indian Railways should explore possibilities for establishment of Railways' Private Freight Terminal to facilitate the transportation of goods and products of traders and industries of these areas.

Highlighting the progress achieved in the past decade, LG Sinha said, "The government has prioritized infrastructure development, with significant achievements in railway expansion and modernization. In the last ten years, over 5,309 kilometers of new railway lines have been added across the country, and more than 1,800 kilometers of track have been electrified."

"Under the leadership of PM Modi, projects worth Rs 40,000 crore are being implemented in Jammu and Kashmir to further enhance the railway network," he added.

VANDE BHARAT TRAINS REVOLUTIONIZING TRAVEL

LG Sinha also highlighted the role of Vande Bharat trains in revolutionizing travel across India, stating, "Soon, Vande Bharat trains will reach Kashmir, marking yet another milestone in modernizing the region's transportation."

The LG stressed that better connectivity has already started yielding results in J&K, with significant industrialization taking shape under the Modi government's vision. The railway network, he said, will facilitate the movement of goods from J&K to other parts of India, creating new markets for local businesses and artisans.

RECALLS EFFORTS OF LATE DEVENDER RANA

In his address, LG Sinha paid rich tributes to senior BJP leader late Devendra Rana and acknowledged his efforts in bringing J&K's concerns to the attention of the Railway Ministry. "Consistent engagement of late Rana and another leader Sunil Sharma with the Railway Minister were instrumental in realizing these landmark projects for J&K," he noted.

LG Sinha reiterated that connectivity is the foundation of progress and promised that the government will continue to focus on building world-class infrastructure for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The dignitaries present on the occasion included Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology, Earth Sciences (Independent Charge), MoS PMO, DoPT Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Atomic Energy, Space, Dr Jitendra Singh; Chief Minister, Omar Abdullah; Member of Parliament, Jugal Kishore Sharma; Members of Legislative Assembly Sunil Sharma and Vikram Randhawa; Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo; General Manager Northern Railways, Ashok Kumar Verma; senior officials, political leaders and prominent citizens.

The creation of the Jammu Railway Division, with 742.1 KM comprising Pathankot - Jammu - Udhampur - Srinagar - Baramulla, Bhogpur Sirwal - Pathankot, Batala - Pathankot and Pathankot to Joginder Nagar sections, will significantly benefit Jammu and Kashmir and surrounding regions, fulfilling the long pending aspiration of the people and improving connectivity to other parts of the country. It will create employment opportunities, infrastructure development, promote tourism and lead to overall socio-economic development of the region. KNO

Historic Milestone...

leading to this achievement, recalling that the railway station had witnessed its first train arrival in 1972, over five decades ago.

According to the news agency, he noted that the gap between that milestone and today's achievement raises important questions. "Was it due to administrative inefficiency, a lack of political will, or certain elements

opposing the integration of Kashmir with the rest of India through rail connectivity?" he asked.

Dr. Singh credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership for transforming this vision into reality. "Perhaps it was destiny that we had to wait over 50 years, until the advent of PM Modi's leadership, to witness this moment. It was under his guidance that this dream, once considered impossible, has now been fulfilled," he said.

He recalled the initial steps taken during Modi's tenure, including a significant public event at Katra Railway Station in 2014. Despite challenges and delays caused by technical issues, shifting priorities, and changes in government, progress resumed with renewed vigor under Modi's administration.

Dr. Singh expressed optimism about the project's impact, emphasizing that it will open new horizons of development for the region. "This is a historic day, not just for Kashmir but for Indian Railways, as it symbolizes the fulfillment of a dream that seemed impossible long ago," he said. KNO

Jammu will not...

boost tourism.

"This is a historic moment for Jammu & Kashmir. The people of Jammu have long demanded their own railway division, and today, that dream has been fulfilled," Omar said as per the news agency.

He reassured citizens that the new connectivity would strengthen Jammu's economy, noting, "We anticipate significant benefits, including a surge in trade and tourism, and we will ensure that Jammu reaps the rewards of this development."

The Chief Minister also highlighted the opportunities in recruitment that the new railway division would create. "With control and coordination now based in Jammu, local recruitment will be prioritized. This will bring employment opportunities to the region, benefiting our youth and boosting the local economy," he said.

The inauguration also marked the connection of the Srinagar-Katra rail line, which is set to revolutionize travel in the region. Omar said that this connectivity would resolve long-standing challenges, such as disruptions in winter flights and exorbitant airfare. Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, Union Minister of State Dr. Jitendra Singh, Leader of the Opposition Sunil Sharma, and other dignitaries joined the event. Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the division. KNO

Snowfall: Sgr-Jmu NH...

Jammu-Srinagar National Highway, caused by the breakdown of heavy motor vehicles and single-lane traffic.

He further said that the passengers as well as the light motor vehicles (LMVs) are urged to travel during daylight hours, as the likelihood of shooting stones between Ramban and Banihal is high.

Regarding the traffic advisory for January 7 (tomorrow), he said it is subject to fair weather and improved road conditions, LMVs, passenger vehicles, and HMs will be allowed to travel from both Jammu and Srinagar on the highway.

About Kishtwar-Sinthan-Anantnag road he said, the road is still closed due to snow accumulation along with Srinagar-Sonamarg-Gumri road also closed due to snow accumulation.

About Mughal Road, he said it is still closed due to snow accumulation, and the Baderwah-Chamba road is also closed due to snow accumulation. KNO

CS reviews implementation...

Department to have an idea about the procedure to map their assets. He encouraged them to add every new project to it besides those existing already.

The Chief Secretary maintained that there is a great scope to add hundreds of new layers for the Departmental like social sector layers in addition to the infrastructural assets owned by them. He stressed on adding polygon data instead of simple points while creating geo-referenced maps of the same.

He maintained that such mapping on the PMGS portal would make our planning process quite effective and result-oriented for these maps in addition to physical infrastructure would give us clear ideas about other social indicators prevalent in the specific area.

The Chief Secretary also advised the Department of Industries & Commerce, which is the nodal department for its implementation, to work out modalities for designating a threshold limit of Rs 20 Cr for PM Gati Shakti National Master Plan Portal for planning of projects here.

The Commissioner Secretary, I&C, Vikramjit Singh gave an overall view of the performance made by the UT in the implementation of PMGS in J&K. He made out that all the 38 departments of the UT had been onboarded that in turn had added more than 600 data layers to it till date.

He further apprised the meeting that J&K is among the top 3 States/UTs at national level. It has also been categorised as 'Fast Mover' in LEADS (Logistics Ease across Different States)2024 report launched by DPIIT while it was ranked as 'Aspirer' consecutively for the last 3 editions.

Regarding adoption of PMGS at district level the meeting was informed that a session was conducted with all DCs and CPOs there. A handbook of PMGS area development planning was also shared with them to enhance their capacity for making the process easy for all the districts.

In a first, Kupwara was selected from J&K in a pilot phase of PMGS District Master Plan to adopt it at district level. The same model in future is going to be adopted by other districts as well.

As far as the performance of different departments is concerned H&UDD and Jal Shakti Department were said to stand as major achievers in the UT with all of their assets mapped. It was further given out that all the departments had almost mapped their offices and other major assets over the UT Master Plan portal.

It was further revealed that 50 projects across 10 departments had been discussed in TSU/NPG meetings till date. Orientation session and portal demonstration on project planning was also held earlier in 2024 for the understanding of nodal officers.

As far as the future prospects of the PMGS is concerned it was given out that the integration for issuance of intra department NOCs and clearances would be done through the PM Gati Shakti portal.

In addition, development of district level portals would be accomplished with focus on usage of existing data to identify infrastructure gaps in the district.

Moreover, geo-referencing of all 6500 revenue maps would also be achieved in the year ahead. The PMGS under Unified Logistics Interface Platform (ULIP) would enhance coordination between various government departments for seamless execution of projects here in J&K. KNO

ECI set to announce...

the schedule for the election for these two seats in the next few days.

"The announcement in this regard is likely to be made this week," they said, adding that voting would take place in the second or third week of February.

While Budgam seat was vacated by Omar Abdullah, who chose to retain the party stronghold of Ganderbal, the Nagrota seat became vacant following the demise of BJP leader Devinder Singh Rana.

While BJP is likely to field Devinder Singh Rana's daughter, Devyani Rana, as its candidate from Nagrota seat, all eyes are on who will be NC's candidate from Budgam seat. The NC has not even provided any inkling about who will be its candidate from the seat, evoking widespread curiosity among political observers and voters alike. In 2024 J&K polls, Omar Abdullah won Budgam seat by defeating Muntazir Mehdi, son of separatist leader Agha Hassan, by a margin of more than 18000 votes. Rana won Nagrota seat by defeating Joginder Singh of National Conference by 30,472 votes.

Soldier found...

and who was posted in Sawajian, was found dead under suspicious circumstances, they said.

His body was shifted to the hospital where doctors conducted a post-mortem.

According to the doctors, he suffered a head injury. "After receiving all the reports, we will reach a conclusion about the cause of death. I cannot say if it was suicide or not. Let the reports come first," a doctor said.

Army foils woman's...

district, sources said. Jammu local businesses Shaheen Akhtar, 35, wife of Mohd Akram Faiza, was intercepted by Army troops near the Line of Control (LoC) in the Shapur sector while attempting to cross into PoK, they said.

After thorough questioning and necessary verification, Shaheen was handed over to her family members.

The woman is a resident of Mohalla Jatna in the Shapur belt. Shaheen's husband is currently working in Saudi Arabia. Angry over a quarrel with her in-laws, she tried to cross to PoJK, the sources said.

The local police and administration have been informed, and further investigation into the matter is underway.

IAS Officer Trainees ...

development. Your professional and personal conduct must reflect the core values and high morals of this prestigious service," the Lieutenant Governor said.

The Officer Trainees also shared the experience from their visit to Jammu Kashmir, as a part of the Winter Study Tour programme. KNO

Dogra Front, Shiv Sena jointly demand NC govt to fulfill election promises

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 6

The workers of Dogra Front & Shiv Sena under the leadership of president Mr Ashok Gupta took out a massive rally jammu city reminding NC govt of its election promises.

More than two months have passed but not even a single poll promise as contained in the election manifesto of NC has been implemented. He further said that simply holding media interaction and making no announcement relating to the poll promises is fooling people.

The promised free electricity rings hollow in the face of regular disruptions and exorbitantly priced electricity. This talk is now replaced by the promise of an uninter-



rupted power supply conditional to the installation of smart meters - which the common masses complain has added to their financial burdens.

What makes such failures even more jarring is the inability of the new government to set its spending priorities right. The National Conference is under fire for going on a vehicle-buying spree,

the optics of which look extremely jarring, if not cruel. While essential services remain in disarray, there is a grand splurging on luxury items.

The people are eagerly looking at the newly elected Chief Minister as he promised 12 free LPG cylinders to the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

The party president further stated that the CM is

still talking about the business rules stating his reasons like the smart meters have not been completely installed and there is a lot of line loss during his 2 press conferences. When the CM promised these things he didn't stated these reasons and excuses at that point of time.

The CM should fulfil his promises so that the people can get some relief from these huge power bills and expensive cylinders. The party people who were present at the time of protest were Sandhya, Shankar, Bantu, Prem, Naresh, Rampal, Vikas, Vinay, Abhishek, Narinder and various others were present.

JSS, Jammu Shines at National MMA Mixed Martial Arts Championships

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 6

Jammu Sanskriti School, Jammu, has achieved remarkable success at the recently concluded National MMA (Mixed Martial Arts) Championships, which were held from December 26 to December 30, 2024, at the Mihir Sen Sports Complex in East Maharashtra. The school's exceptional athletes showcased their unparalleled skills and determination, returning home with an impressive collection of medals, marking a proud milestone for the institution.

The top performers from Jammu Sanskriti School include: Gold Medals: Taniya Singhand Shubampreet Kour, Silver Medals: Ayushi Choudhary, Pragma Rajput and Dhruv



Mehra, Bronze Medals: Prabiyat Kour, Samarpreet Kour and Manveer Singh. In addition to these outstanding medalists, other participants namely Avianshu, Rivaan Verma, Kanish, and Saransh also played a significant role

in enhancing the school's proud representation on the national platform.

The remarkable achievements of these young athletes reflect not only their immense talent but also their commitment, hard work, and

discipline, both on and off the training mat. Their success is a testament to the unwavering dedication of their mentors, Shalvi Saini and Amit Jamwal, who have been instrumental in shaping the athletes' skills and fostering a culture of excellence in the school.

Rohini Aima, Principal cum Vice-Chairperson of Jammu Sanskriti School, expressed her immense pride in the achievements of the students and the coaching staff. "These remarkable victories are a reflection of our students' perseverance, discipline, and dedication. I wholeheartedly congratulate each one of them for their outstanding performance, and I extend my gratitude to our coaches, Shalvi Saini and Amit Jamwal, whose guidance and support have been vital in this success."

Jammu witnesses a literary celebration as Ashu Bansal launches Kavita Ka Safar

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 6

The vibrant city of Jammu became the center of a poetic celebration as Smt. Ashu Bansal launched her debut poetry collection, Kavita Ka Safar, at KC Emporia. The event, hosted by Ashu Bansal's family, including her husband, Shri Ajay Bansal, and daughters, Kyra and Dhanak Bansal, brought together literature enthusiasts, eminent dignitaries, and well-wishers for a memorable evening.

Published by The Penman Press, Kavita Ka Safar is a collection of 50 heartfelt poems that delve into themes such as relationships, nature, aspirations, childhood, and the kaleidoscope of emotions that define life's journey. The book reflects Ashu



Bansal's unique voice as an emerging poetess, drawing from her life experiences to create verses that are both deeply personal and universally resonant. During the event, Ashu Bansal spoke about her journey in creating the book, sharing insights into the inspirations and reflections that shaped her poetry. The highlight of the evening was the official unveiling of Kavita Ka Safar by Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Former Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, a dynamic statesman, a visionary leader, and a

patron of arts and culture. Dr. Abdullah delivered a thoughtful speech, praising the poetess for her ability to weave emotions into powerful poetry. His presence, along with other notable dignitaries, added grace to the occasion. Guests of Honour included Shri Sanjay Aggarwal, Managing Director Jammu Motors (P) Ltd and Chairperson of the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association Jammu; Dr. Sanjay Bansal, National President of the Federation of Trade and Industry of India (FTII) and Member

of the National Traders Welfare Board, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India; and Shri Bharat Chowdhary, Managing Director of KC House of Realty. The event began with a ceremonial lamp lighting, creating an inviting and auspicious start to the evening. Ashu Bansal's heartfelt address was followed by an inspiring and thoughtful speech by the Chief Guest, which resonated deeply with the audience. Thereafter, attendees had the opportunity to interact with the poetess and dignitaries, fostering engaging conversations in a celebratory atmosphere. The event was eloquently anchored by Ms. Sheeba Kant, a renowned voiceover artist, who charmed the audience with her impeccable hosting.

New Railway Division to boost commuting, freight, business, jobs in J&K: Chugh

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 6

The Modi government has transformed Jammu & Kashmir into a region of opportunity and growth, fulfilling the aspirations of its people. Highlighting the government's commitment to multi-faceted development, Chugh emphasized that the establishment of a new railway division and the expansion of the rail network up to Baramulla will revolutionize commuting, freight movement, business opportunities, and job creation in the Union Territory.

Tarun Chugh, National General Secretary, BJP & Prabhari, J&K BJP, said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ushered in an era of development in Jammu & Kashmir by strength-

ening its road and rail infrastructure, which has directly bolstered tourism. His visionary approach has transformed J&K from a terrorism capital to a tourism capital, supported by liberal funding and strategic planning."

He noted that the inauguration of the new railway division would generate significant employment opportunities for local youth and provide a much-needed boost to trade and the regional

economy.

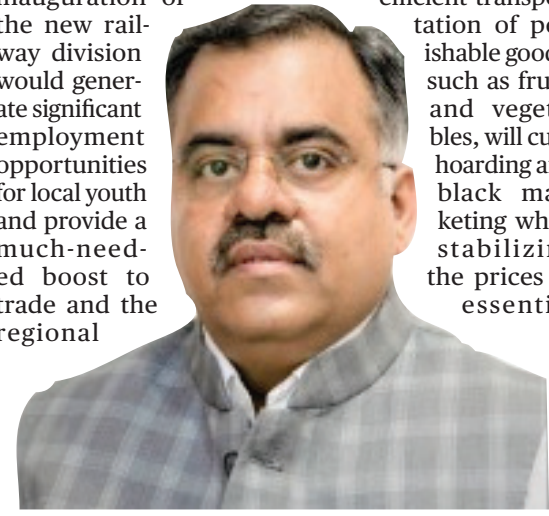
"The development of road and rail networks has not only enhanced the commuting experience but also improved freight movement between destinations, reducing costs and transportation time," Chugh said. He added that

efficient transportation of perishable goods, such as fruits and vegetables, will curb hoarding and black marketing while stabilizing the prices of essential

goods across various cities, especially during challenging times.

Highlighting the project's economic potential, Chugh stated, "The rail network, with an estimated investment of Rs 40,000 crore, will catalyze the development of Jammu and Srinagar as twin economic hubs, opening new avenues for businesses and accelerating existing ventures. Additionally, multiple small business hubs will emerge at various train halts, further stimulating the region's economy."

The Modi government's unwavering commitment to Jammu & Kashmir's holistic development continues to bring tangible benefits to the region, setting it on the path of unprecedented growth and prosperity.



Parkashpurab of Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj celebrated at Gurdwara Digiana Ashram, Jammu

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 6

358th Parkashpurab of 10th Guru Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj was celebrated at Gurdwara Digiana Ashram Jammu under the supervision of Shriman Mahant Manjeet Singh Ji of Shiromani Dera Nangali Sahib Poonch. In the Gurdwarab-samagam thousands of devotees participated along with various Sikh organization of J&K including Sikh United Front J&K, Bhai Kanhiya Nishkam Sewa Society J&K, Shiromani Akali Dal J&K, Sikh Naujwan Sabha, Local Gurdwara Committees, Members DGPC Jammu along with others participated with zeal and enthusiasm.

The Ragi Jathas including Bhai Sukhpreet Singh Ji Hazuri Ragi Shri Darbar Sahib Amritsar, Bhai Gurpreet Singh Ji Ragi Jatha Jalandhar, Harbhinder Singh Ji Incharge Sikh Mission J&K, Bhai Gagandeep Singh Ji Kirtan Jatha Simbal Camp, Bhai Bachan Singh Ji UPHazuri Ragi Digiana Ashram Jammu threw light on the life of Dashmesh Pita Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj.

Former CM J&K Dr Farooq Abdullah while



attending the gurdwarab-samagam highlighted the sacrifices made by Guru Gobind Singh Ji for the weak and downtrodden and asked everyone to follow virtuous path shown by the guru so that we can transform ourselves into an egalitarian society. Dr Abdullah also said that he always stand by the genuine demands and needs of the sikh community and will always work for the betterment of the sikh community.

S. Sudershan Singh Wazir Chairman Sikh United Front J&K spoke and threw light on the life of Guru Gobind Singh Ji Maharaj. He highlighted

that Guru Gobind Singh Ji fought 21 battles and won all of them, Wazir added that for the sake of humanity Guru Gobind Singh Ji sacrificed his whole family including his four sons. Wazir said that sikh have always been on forefront whenever the country needed as he talked about the contribution of Late Dr Manmohan Singh former PM during 1990s when he saved Indian economy which was on the verge of collapse. Mrwazir also talked about restoring statehood to J&K as promised by the Hon'ble PM and Hon'ble Home Minister in parliament of India after assembly elections

in J&K.

On behalf of Mahant Manjit Singh Ji Mr. Wazir thanked Dr. Farooq Abdullah and highlighted his cordial relations with Sikh community and his role in the establishment of Mahant Bachittar Singh College of Engineering and Technology in 1999.

Other Political leaders from various parties including Raman Bhalla Working President J&K JKPCC Dr Narinder Singh MLA, Vikram Randhwa MLA, Rattan Lal Gupta Provincial President Jammu Province NC, Dr. Mustafa Kamal also greeted people on the occasion of gurdwarab.

Mahant Manjit Singh Ji of Shiromani Dera Nangali Sahib Poonch while addressing the Sangat asked the people to follow the preachings of Guru Gobind Singh Ji who sacrificed all his family to save humanity and stress upon Sikh community to adopt the path shown by Guru Gobind Singh Ji in every field of life to become true and pure Sikh for serving the poor and needy people in the society and who work for the betterment of the country and become Amritdhari and come to the field of edu-

cation. All human beings are creation of one God so all should be treated equally irrespective of caste color, creed, religion and region. Mahant Ji said that all parents should keep close watch on their children to save them from drugs and other evil deeds. The other Sikh organizations and leaders who participated in gurdwarab-samagam were S. Darbinder Singh President Shiromani Akali Dal J&K, S. Mohinder Singh Chief Organizer Bhai Kanhiya Nishkam Sewa Society and Ex member DGPC, S. Rajinder Singh Gen Sect Shiromani Akali Dal J&K, S. Surinder Singh Kala President Vegetable Association Narwal Mandi, S. Gajan Singh President J&K Motor Transport Company Association Jammu, S. Avtar Singh Member DGPC, S. Karan Singh Bali Member DGPC, Kulwant Singh Khajuria Joint Secretary Shiromani Akali Dal J&K, S. Charan Singh Bali Convenor Kashmir Province Shiromani Akali Dal J&K, S. Manmohan Singh Chairman Gurdwara Singh Sabha Gole Gujral Jammu, S. Kulwant Singh, S. Kulvir Singh, S. Parmaj Singh Ex Corporator, Prof. Yudhveer Singh Ex Corporator, S. Charanveer Singh (Laad).

Ajaz Jan conducts tour to snow-bound areas, assess people's problems

JI NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, JAN 6

Ajaz Jan, Senior National Conference (NC) leader and MLA Haveli Assembly constituency in district Poonch, conducted an extensive three-day tour of snow-bound areas in Mandi, Sawjian Sector, Loran, and other affected regions to assess the situation and oversee the restoration of essential services disrupted by heavy snowfall.

During his visit, Ajaz Jan ensured that priority was given to restoring power supply and providing relief to residents grappling with the challenges posed by extreme weather conditions. Highlighting the commitment of the present National Conference government, led by Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, Jan reiterated that the administration is dedicated to alleviating public hardships and ensuring swift action during such crises.

The MLA expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Deputy Commissioner of Poonch and the Indian Army for their prompt support in extending assis-



tance to the affected population. Their coordinated efforts have been instrumental in providing relief and mitigating the impact of the snowfall.

In a move to streamline relief efforts and improve coordination, Ajaz Jan announced the formation of dedicated teams to address the pressing issues faced by people in snow-covered regions. In Mandi Block, the team headed by Abdul Haq Bhat, Bashir Niak, and Abdul Zabbar Tantray. Meanwhile, in Poonch Block, the team comprised of Bag Hussain Rathore, Peer Inayat Bukhari, Issar Khan, Zahoor Khan, Ch. Shabir, Ch. Sofi Qyoom, Mukhtyar Rathore, Jahan-gir Sagar, Javed Lone, and

Ajmal Khan.

Ajaz Jan said that these teams will serve as a vital link between the people and the administration, ensuring that concerns related to basic amenities such as ration, water, and power are promptly addressed. He emphasized that these efforts reflect the commitment of Omar Abdullah Government in resolving people's issues in challenging times, especially in hilly and remote areas affected by harsh weather conditions.

The MLA assured residents that the Omar government will continue to prioritize infrastructure development and disaster preparedness in snow-bound areas to prevent future disruptions.

EDITORIAL

A game-changer for J&K!

The creation of a dedicated Jammu Railway Division under the Northern Railways has sparked widespread optimism about its transformative potential for the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir. This strategic move, aimed at streamlining rail operations and improving connectivity, is not just a technical adjustment but a harbinger of socio-economic progress for the region. Prime Minister Narendra Modi while virtually inaugurating the new Jammu Railway Division called it a historic milestone in the development of Jammu and Kashmir's connectivity and infrastructure. For decades, Jammu and Kashmir has grappled with challenges stemming from its rugged terrain, limited infrastructure, and geopolitical sensitivities. The expansion of railway infrastructure has long been seen as a crucial step toward overcoming these hurdles. With the establishment of a Jammu Railway Division, the focus will now be on enhancing operational efficiency, ensuring better maintenance of infrastructure, and expanding rail connectivity to some of the most underserved areas of the region. The creation of this new railway division is expected to unlock significant economic opportunities. Improved rail connectivity can lower transportation costs, making the movement of goods and raw materials more efficient. This is particularly beneficial for industries like handicrafts, horticulture, and tourism—sectors that form the backbone of the region's economy. Jammu, known as the gateway to the picturesque valleys of Kashmir and Ladakh, stands to gain immensely. With better rail services, the influx of tourists is likely to increase, providing a much-needed boost to the hospitality and retail sectors. Additionally, improved freight services can facilitate the export of Kashmir's famed products like saffron, apples, and Pashmina shawls to larger markets across India and beyond. Railways have always played a pivotal role in knitting together diverse regions of a country. For Jammu and Kashmir, which has often been perceived as remote and isolated, enhanced rail connectivity can serve as a bridge to the rest of India. The Jammu Railway Division will not only improve accessibility but also foster a sense of inclusion among the people of the Union Territory. Moreover, the ambitious Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project, a cornerstone of India's railway expansion plans in the region, is nearing completion. Once operational, it will provide all-weather connectivity to the Kashmir Valley, ensuring uninterrupted transport even during harsh winters. Integrating this project under the Jammu Railway Division can further enhance its efficiency and impact. While the prospects are promising, the road ahead is not without challenges. The region's difficult topography requires innovative engineering solutions and significant investment. Security concerns, given the sensitive nature of the area, will also demand robust measures to safeguard infrastructure and ensure passenger safety. Additionally, the success of this initiative will depend on effective policy implementation and coordination between the railway authorities and local administration. Timely execution of projects, community involvement, and addressing environmental concerns will be critical to realizing the full potential of the Jammu Railway Division. The establishment of the Jammu Railway Division marks a significant step in the government's efforts to integrate Jammu and Kashmir more closely with the national mainstream. It aligns with the broader vision of infrastructural development as a means to drive socio-economic progress in the region. If executed effectively, this initiative could be a game changer, transforming Jammu and Kashmir into a hub of economic activity and a shining example of development-driven integration. As the wheels of progress gain momentum, the people of Jammu and Kashmir can look forward to a future of enhanced connectivity, economic growth, and greater opportunities. The Jammu Railway Division, thus, is not just about railways; it's about laying the tracks for a new era of prosperity.

Bhagwat champions unity as the path to India's Vishavguru vision

SUKHDEV SINGH

Delivering a Sahjevan Vyakhyan-mala series lecture on the topic, India—the Vishavguru, the RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat expressed his concern over the recent upsurge of 'Mandir-Masjid' disputes and pointed out: "After Ram Mandir, some think they can become leaders of Hindus by raking up similar issues in new places". Rejecting the practice, he said, "This is not acceptable." Echoing his comment on Gyanvapi Masjid that "We look for a Shivaling beneath every mosque," implying that we should not, he cautioned: "The days of hegemony are gone," and that now "People choose their representatives, who run the government." Questioning the "language of dominance," he acknowledged the pluralistic nature of Indian society, where 'tradition' allows people to live in harmony while following their respective faiths. Drawing a comparison of India with the world, where similarity is the principle of unity, for India, he said, "Diversity is an ornament of unity, and we should respect and accept it."

Rejecting hatred, malice,

enmity, and suspicion daily under the burden of the past, he ruled out the 'majority-minority' binary and emphasised, "Every one is equal here." To be a Vishavguru, India should be a nation of people who can rise above caste and religious differences. By what he has said, Bhagwat has targeted more than one point while acknowledging the reality of about 200 million Muslims besides the Christians, Sikhs, and others in India, on the one hand, and the geopolitical realities, on the other.

If that is so, then the word 'Hindu' needs to be accepted as an Arabic-Persian cognate of the Sanskrit 'Sindu' and 'Hindustan' as a reference to the land of Hindus, i.e., the people living beyond the river Sindhu, but not a place of and for the people of a specific religion. The historical chronicles state that the river 'Sindu' was pronounced as 'Indus' by the Greeks and 'Al-Hind,' which later became 'Hinds' or 'Hindus' by the Arabic Iranians.

The Greeks called 'the land of Indus' India, while the Arabic-speaking people called the region 'Hindustan.' It was a reference to the geographical region

of old Punjab. The land of Hindus i.e. the people of river Sindhu, called Hindustan or India in the above sense, is a land of several religious faiths, such as Shaivism, Buddhism, Jainism, and Sikhism, besides the principles of ancient Vedas and Puranas, and the word 'Hindu' has been a geographic and a cultural identifier to distinguish between the indigenous people and others who came as traders or invaders, like Muslims, Christians, and Jews, etc., at the initial stages of their entry into the region; the distinction, however, did not mean religious opposition.

It only acted as an identifying communicative 'sign': for communication is organised on two axes: the axis of similarities and the axis of differences. The people from the 'other' lands gradually became the people of the land called Hindustan, or India, settling permanently and adding to the diversities on the land of the river Sindhu.

Since there is no definite founder and no single holy text to establish a religion called 'Hinduism,' it remains only a set of socio-cultural practices while the people practice a variety of

their respective religious worship.

The words 'Hindu' and 'Hindustan' have remained signifiers for the geographic-cultural practices until projected as a religious and national identifier in the early twentieth century in opposition to the colonial rule and in reaction to the Khilafat Movement by the Muslims in support of the Turkish Ottoman Sultan during the freedom movement of India.

The Indian national identity was codified by a section of people as a Hindu national religious identity and an Islamic national identity, dividing the people on religious lines. The division was perpetrated by the colonial British in more than one way, leading to the partition of India. Since 1947, free India has been a sovereign state nation, though it should have been a state of cultural nations politically united as a federal political state, settling the issue of religious nations forever. Yet India has stood the test of its unity in diversity with some collisions on the sidelines.

The internal dynamism of society and state is its continued collision and cohesion in their weaving: the more complex a society

or a state is, the higher its level of collision-cohesion dynamics. For the well-being of the land and its population, the political drivers must turn the power to strengthen 'diversity' against the 'forced homogeneity' as a principle of organisation. But with the rising assertion of Hindu religious identity and a Hindu nation-state over Hindu geographic-cultural identity juxtaposing with the recent upsurge in 'Mandir-Masjid' controversies, rightly perceived by Mohan Bhagwat, the danger to the unity and cohesion is more imminent than not.

The sooner the ideologies of identities understand it, the better it is for the people living together for centuries. Mohan Bhagwat seems to have realized it, and rightly so, he has underplayed the slogan—'one nation, one people'—stating, "Without Muslims, Hindutava is incomplete": Hindus and Muslims are different but complementary. Hindustan, or India, or Bharat, is a land of diversities, and only by choice of the ideology and practice of inclusion, it can become Vishavguru.

To be the Vishavguru is to experience and accommodate more diversity. The

Vishav, i.e., the universe, is organized into networks of similarities and differences, yet the precursor of life on earth is the 'difference' that engenders diversity.

Mohan Bhagwat's nuanced remarks underscore the importance of unity amidst diversity in India's journey toward becoming a Vishavguru. Acknowledging India's pluralistic fabric, he emphasised harmony over divisive narratives like 'Mandir-Masjid' disputes and rejected notions of religious hegemony. Bhagwat traced the historical and cultural origins of terms like 'Hindu' and 'Hindustan,' advocating for their geographic and cultural significance rather than a singular religious identity. He urged political and social leaders to strengthen diversity as a foundation for national cohesion. By embracing inclusion and mutual respect, India can truly embody the universal ideals required to be a global guide and leader.

(The writer is Professor (Retd), Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Vice-Chairman, Indian National Trust for Art & Cultural Heritage, New Delhi; views are personal)

Harmony: A prerequisite for national unity

ATUL SEHGAL

The global communal ecosphere is showing change for the worse. The word communal here connotes and covers ethnic, racial, religious and sectarian communities. The last seven decades since 1950 have not seen very many episodes of communal conflict or conflagration in the global society. After the terrible death and destruction wrought by the Second World War (1939-1945) and the horrible communal riots following the partition of India into two independent states, episodes of communal violence have been relatively less compared to that in earlier periods of world history. Of late, the world is riven by acrimony and wars at multiple locations and communally divisive sentiments across global societies appear to be rising again. It seems that during the above period, the sentiments of mutual hatred and antipathy among certain global communities remained suppressed, only to resurface now.

It is time to review and

relook at the elements that go into building and strengthening communal harmony. With the world in the terrible throes of wars at several locations, it is perhaps time to strengthen communal harmony and amity globally, particularly in our society and not to allow it to be undermined. History has been written largely by the conquerors of countries and the governing elite. We often do not have true accounts of history do not read true history or otherwise are inclined to interpret facts wrongly, driven by our deep-seated prejudices.

If we look closely at the picture and analyse it dispassionately, we shall find that it is generally the politicians and rulers who incited communal violence for their own selfish needs or vile vested interests. Often, these acts of incitement are obscured through disinformation campaigns.

There are cultural and ideological differences between communities. What to talk of mainstream religions like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity or Bud-

dhism, there are major and minor variants of these religions and sub-ideological sects whose number touches almost three thousand. They all have major or minor ideological differences. Notwithstanding the many differing and dissonant injunctions of their scriptural texts, peace and harmony are basic to the progress and prosperity of citizens in every country, and every society and they are dear to all human individuals. That is why there are constitutions, laws and regulations in every country for proper governance that incorporates the functional upholding of universal peace promoting human values of justice and equality. Hence, we need to expose the machinations of the political elite to strengthen communal harmony in today's world. In the context of the current global scenario, the incidence of violence against Hindus in Pakistan or Bangladesh is more because of mischief and misdeeds of the ruling elite.

During the colonial period in India, commu-

nal riots were frequently triggered by politicians or the governing elite. In our country with a population of 145 crore, nearly 21 crore are Muslims. They have been a part and parcel of our society for ages. We need to better integrate them, not appease them for petty political gains. The need of the hour is ideological realignment.

And we should quickly brace ourselves for it. Let us not allow the demolition or destruction of religious buildings anywhere, but build monuments of universal, secular and humanistic culture to promote communal harmony. Let us build buildings and institutions that bind humans, not separate them. Let us educate global humans on the eternal metaphysical truths that apply to all, everywhere. Let us awaken humanity to the threads of universal knowledge about the Creator, creation and their relationship.

Bharat has been the cradle of human civilisation because the divine knowledge emanating from the one Creator was revealed

in this land to sages at the dawn of civilization. That core knowledge enshrined in the divine scriptures Vedas and ideology based on that needs resurrection today. Humans can live sensibly and peacefully for ages if they wish to.

Only they need to be aligned with universal Dharma. Man-made sects separate; universal Dharma (righteousness) unites—because the latter comes from the omniscient Creator of all humans. When we talk of Sanatan as the religion of the inhabitants of Bharat, we refer to the above said broad-based, universal and eternal religion of humanity that transcends caste, creed, ethnicity and sect. Sanatan Dharma is the prescribed code of living handed down to the earliest humans by the Creator. Let us strengthen adherence to that eternal code of living expected from humans by the one master of the Universe whose subjects we all are. Let us focus on the common, positive strands of ideology that exist in various mainstream religions and let us deliberate on the

ideological strands that are dissonant with the universal Sanatan Dharma. Let us not mix religion with politics; rather let us give politics a more humanistic complexion. That is what is required today. We Indians are in the process of nation rebuilding after centuries of lying low due to depredation by foreign invaders. Now is the time for fast-track progress and we must beware of nefarious designs of foreign powers to create impediments to our progress. We should try to reform our political and legal institutions to make them truly secular and democratic. Let us make our national fabric strong, placing it above caste, creed, faith or religion. At the same time, we should strive to dissolve our ideological differences in the bright shining light of Sanatan Vedic Dharma which has been the beacon of guiding light of all humanity for eons since the dawn of civilisation.

(The author is a management consultant based in New Delhi; views are personal)

The Bhagavad Gita: A blueprint for resilience, holistic health and leadership

KASHINATH SAMAGANDI

The Bhagavad Gita is revered as a profound source of resilience, wisdom, and ethical guidance, often referred to as the essence of the Upanishads. Known as Brahmaidya or "Superior Knowledge," it offers timeless insights into life, existence, and cosmic truths. Despite being composed millennia ago, the Gita remains relevant today, providing practical teachings for navigating the complexities of modern life.

Its wisdom extends across diverse fields such as management, leadership, psychology, and medicine. For example, many prestige.

The Relevance of Beeja Sanskara and Garbha Sanskara

A lesser-known yet sig-

nificant aspect of the Gita is its emphasis on Beeja Sanskara (pre-conception practices) and Garbha Sanskara (post-conception practices). Through the concept of Atmaja Bhava, it highlights the importance of establishing a deep connection with the unborn child. These practices, rooted in Ayurveda and Yoga, nurture wisdom, emotional stability, and virtuous qualities in the foetus, fostering holistic development. The scripture also underscores the importance of Satvika Ahara—a pure, balanced diet.

During pregnancy, this diet not only supports the physical health of the mother and foetus but also nurtures emotional and spiritual harmony, laying the foundation for a well-rounded individual.

Resilience, Energy and Cosmic Balance

Rather than considering the Gita as the book of any person, caste, creed, country or religion, it is a guide to one's own personal, mental, social, and spiritual resilience and adaptability.

Its teachings on perseverance, balance, and inner strength resonate deeply with those facing modern challenges. The Gita's perspective on energy and cosmic balance aligns with contemporary scientific principles.

Ayurvedic Insights on Foetal Development

The Gita's teachings influence Ayurvedic principles, particularly in prenatal care. It identifies six essential Bhavas contributing to foetal development: Matruja Bhava (mother's qualities), Pitruja Bhava (father's qualities), Atmaja



Bhava (soul connection), Satmyaja Bhava (compatibility), Rasaja Bhava (nutrition), Satvaja Bhava (mental stability).

These emphasize the importance of parental health, nutrition, emotional well-being, and spiritual

alignment in shaping the child's future. Such principles form the core of Garbha Sanskara practices, increasingly recognised in modern prenatal care for their holistic approach.

The Balanced Mind:

Sthitaprajna

One of the Gita's most profound teachings is the concept of Sthitaprajna. This idea of remaining unaffected by success or failure, challenges or triumphs, is particularly relevant in today's fast-paced world. Cultivating such equanimity fosters mental resilience and emotional stability, enabling individuals to navigate life's ups and downs with composure.

Holistic Health Through Integration

The Gita advocates an integrated approach to Ahar (diet), Vihar (lifestyle), Nidra (sleep), Achar (conduct), and Vichar (thoughts).

These elements must work cohesively to promote comprehensive health and wellness. This

holistic philosophy supports inter-science and intra-science integration in medicine. Intra-science integration ensures that all aspects of a medical system work together to manage chronic conditions effectively, while inter-science integration leverages the strengths of multiple systems for optimal care. This collaborative approach is essential for addressing both acute and chronic conditions.

Holistic Development and Liberation: The Gita offers a roadmap for holistic self-development, encompassing physical, mental, and spiritual growth.

Its teachings on Dharma (duty), Karma (action), and Bhakti (devotion) provide practical guidance for leading a purposeful and ethical life. Moreover, the Gita provides insights into personality development,

emotional mastery, and the attainment of Moksha (liberation).

Its universal principles resonate across disciplines such as psychology, philosophy, and leadership, offering a framework for self-realisation and collective well-being.

In conclusion, the enduring relevance of the Bhagavad Gita lies in its universal message of harmony, balance, and self-awareness. It inspires individuals and societies towards holistic growth and ethical living.

Whether guiding inner conflicts or addressing societal complexities, the Gita remains an effective tool for achieving balance, resilience, and self-mastery in an ever-changing world.

(The author is Director of the Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga; views are personal)

No HMPV cases in Maharashtra, govt urges citizens to follow dos and don'ts

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JAN 6

The state health department on Monday said that no case of human metapneumovirus (HMPV) has been detected in Maharashtra. However, the health department issued an advisory asking the district administration to keep vigil while stepping up surveillance of patients with cold and cough.

The Health Department Director, Dr Nitin Ambadekar, said, "Human metapneumovirus (HMPV) causes respiratory infections. This virus was first detected in the Netherlands in 2001. It is a common respiratory virus that causes infections in the upper respiratory tract. It is a seasonal



epidemic and occurs in winter and early summer, like the flu. So far, no case of HMPV has been found in the state." With the increased risk of HMPV, the Health Department has analyzed the respiratory infection statistics in the state. There was no increase in respiratory infections in the state in December 2024 compared to 2023. As a precaution-

ary measure, the Health Department has said that citizens should take precautions to protect themselves from respiratory infections. In its advisory, the state health department has released dos and don'ts for the citizens.

The list of dos includes Cover mouth and nose with a handkerchief or tissue paper when coughing or sneezing

Wash hands frequently with soap, water, or alcohol-based sanitiser

Stay away from public places if anyone has a fever, cough, or sneeze

Drink plenty of water and eat a nutritious diet

Maintain adequate ventilation in all areas to reduce infection.

The list of don'ts comprises Avoid Handshake, tissue paper and handkerchief recycling, close contact with sick people, frequent touching of eyes, nose and mouth, spitting in public places, and medicines without doctor's advice.

"There is no reason to worry about the ongoing HMPV epidemic in China. Necessary precautions are being taken in this regard and there is no need to

create an atmosphere of unnecessary fear. Against this backdrop, the health department officials have been asked to intensify the surveillance in their respective areas of work and submit regular survey reports of cold and cough patients," said Dr Ambadekar.

The health department's advisory comes in the wake of the detection of two HMPV cases by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in Karnataka. According to the Health Ministry, both cases were identified through routine surveillance for multiple respiratory viral pathogens. The surveillance is part of ICMR's ongoing efforts to monitor respiratory illnesses across the country.

Alzheimer's cases in 8 major markets to reach 22.51 million in 2033: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6



The prevalent cases of Alzheimer's disease (AD) in the eight major markets globally are set to register an annual growth rate (AGR) of 4.08 per cent from 15.99 million in 2023 to 22.51 million in 2033, according to a report on Monday. China will have the highest number of total prevalent cases of AD (by DSM-IV criteria) at 10.4 million cases, whereas Spain will have the lowest number at 0.62 million cases in 2033, according to the report by GlobalData, a leading data and analytics company.

"In 2023, women were more affected than men, accounting for approximately 73 per cent of the total prevalent cases," said Antara Bhattacharya, associate project manager,

epidemiology team.

Older adults in ages 75 years and above accounted for almost 79 per cent of the total prevalent cases of AD in the eight major markets in 2023, while comparatively younger adults in ages 65-74 years accounted for approximately 21 per cent of the cases. The report estimated that in 2023, approximately 55 per cent of total prevalent cases of AD were mild, whereas only 16 per

cent of total prevalent cases of AD were severe.

"Mortality remains a significant concern for individuals living with AD and their families. Efforts to prevent or delay the disease are expected to have a profound impact on long-term outcomes, as the value of treatment will largely depend on a therapy's effectiveness in reducing morbidity and extending life expectancy," said Bhattacharya.

Doctors at KIMS hospital save life of a Tribal girl by performing complex surgery

AGENCIES
HYDERABAD, JAN 6

A 15-year-old tribal girl from Khammam district in Telangana was diagnosed with a rare tumor located between her heart and lungs. Additionally, a large hole (Atrial Septal Defect, ASD) in the wall separating the chambers of her heart was also discovered. Struggling with these two severe conditions, she underwent a complex surgery performed by Dr. Nisarga, Chief Cardiothoracic Surgeon, and Dr. C. Rohan Reddy, Consultant Minimal Invasive Onco-Thoracic Surgeon, at Kondapur KIMS Hospital, saving her life.

"The girl, daughter of a daily wage laborer, had congenital heart problems, including a significant ASD, which went unnoticed due to her parent's lack of awareness and literacy," the Hospital said in a release here on Monday.

When she began experiencing breathlessness, she was taken to local doctors, who referred her to

KIMS Hospital.

Upon examination, she was found to have a mediastinal teratoma, a rare tumor situated in a complex location between the lungs and in front of the heart.

It was also at KIMS that the previously undiagnosed ASD was detected. The hole in the heart could cause a mixing of oxygenated and deoxygenated blood, leading to severe complications in circulation.

Doctors first performed surgery to remove the teratoma with limited incisions. The tumor had already invaded the heart's outer layer (pericardium) and partially adhered to the lungs.

Its complete removal required excising a small portion of the lungs. Fortunately, this did not affect lung function. The hole in the heart was causing a mixing of pure and impure blood. ASD surgical closure was done after stopping the heart and connecting it to a cardiopulmonary bypass machine.

HMPV NOT NEW VIRUS, MAJORITY INDIAN POPULATION IMMUNE TO IT: EXPERTS

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

The Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) is not a new virus and most of the Indian population are immune to it, said health experts on Monday, even as the number of reported cases climbed to three in the country.

On Monday, health officials in the country reported three cases of HMPV -- babies aged three- and eight-month-old from Bengaluru (Karnataka) and a two-year-old child in Gujarat's Ahmedabad.

"Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) is not a new virus. It has been part of the circulating flu virus in India for long. Hence, the majority of the Indian population has developed immunity against it," Dr. Harshal R Salve, Additional Professor, Centre for Community Medicine at AIIMS, New Delhi, told IANS.

He added that the

"chances of a severe disease are very rare".

HMPV was first discovered in 2001 and is part of the Pneumoviridae family along with the Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). The symptoms commonly associated with HMPV include cough, fever, nasal congestion, and shortness of breath.

"Like for any other flu viruses, elderly people, children and people with comorbidities must take care. There is no need to create panic, and one should stop rumour-mongering in the public," Salve said.

The two cases from Karnataka were detected via routine surveillance by ICMR in a 3-month-old girl and an 8-month-old boy.

Both had a history of bronchopneumonia -- a form of pneumonia, a lung infection, and were admitted to a private hospital. Bronchopneumonia affects both the alveoli in the lungs and the bronchi.



The Health Ministry informed that while the baby girl "has been discharged", the baby boy "is now recovering"

In the third case, the child, from Rajasthan, was admitted to a private hospital in Chandkheda's area of Ahmedabad, after showing symptoms of cold and cough.

The child is stable now, reports quoted civic officials as saying.

"HMPV is not a new virus. It commonly causes

colds among children and also some adults. For self-limiting colds, we don't do expensive tests to diagnose which specific virus it is due to.

Therefore, the finding of this virus upon testing is not anything unusual or worrisome," Dr Rajeev Jayadevan, Chairman of the Kerala State IMA Research Cell, told IANS.

"All over the world, HMPV is a well-known cause of common cold," he added.

HMPV is already in circulation globally, including in India, and cases of respiratory illnesses associated with HMPV have been reported in various countries, particularly in China.

"Common cold is more common in winter, therefore it is being reported from China at this time. People should not get the impression that a new virus from China has now reached Bangalore," Jayadevan told IANS.

Notably, the three cases of HMPV have no travel history. Thus, it currently remains unknown whether the cases are related to the outbreak seen in China.

"They (infected children) have not traveled to China, Malaysia, or any other country.

The outbreak in China is linked to a new variant of HMPV. We do not yet have full details, and the government is still gathering information," said

Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao, while speaking to the media.

"HMPV isn't new. What we don't know is whether the strain is novel and has a virulence that's different from what we've experienced in the past. Unless one knows that it is a novel strain, cases have been detected all the time! Hopefully, whole genome sequencing and clinical information will clarify soon," said Lancelot Pinto, an Indian pulmonologist and epidemiologist, in a post on social media platform X.

Meanwhile, the government has issued precautionary measures such as covering mouth and nose with handkerchiefs or tissue paper while coughing, or sneezing; washing hands often with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizer; avoiding crowded places; staying away from public places while having fever, cough, or sneezing.

HMPV cases in India: After Bengaluru, Gujarat reports its first case; third nationwide

AGENCIES
AHMEDABAD, JAN 6

Gujarat has confirmed its first case of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV), the third in India. Authorities are vigilant about respiratory illnesses. Two cases were earlier detected in Bengaluru. The Health Ministry reassures there is no need to panic. Kerala advises caution, particularly for the elderly, pregnant women, and children, amid reports of an outbreak in China.

According to the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation, the infant is in stable condition and remains isolated for monitoring.

This case marks the third confirmed HMPV case in India. Earlier on Monday, two HMPV cases were confirmed in Bengaluru, Karnataka, as part of ICMR's ongoing respiratory pathogen surveillance.

The first case involved a three-month-old female infant with a history of bronchopneumonia. She was admitted to Baptist Hospital, treated, and subsequently discharged. The second case, detected on January 3, 2025, involved an eight-month-old male infant, also admitted to Baptist Hospital with a similar medical history. This infant is currently recovering and in stable condition.

Notably, neither of the cases in Bengaluru had any history of international travel, indicating the infections were locally acquired and unrelated to the surge in China.

Vigilance amid rising HMPV Cases concerns The detection of this case comes as health authorities across India step up vigilance against respiratory illnesses, particularly in light of a recent surge in HMPV cases reported in China. However, the Union Health Ministry has assured the public that there is no need to panic. Robust surveillance systems, including those operated by the Indian Council of Medical

Research (ICMR) and the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP), are in place to monitor respiratory illnesses across the country.

Health Ministry's preparedness and assurance The Health Ministry has emphasized that HMPV is not a new virus and is already circulating globally, including in India. The ministry noted that data collected through ICMR and IDSP has not indicated any unusual surge in Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) or Severe Acute Respiratory Illness (SARI) cases in India.

The Ministry continues to monitor the situation through available channels and is in communication with the World Health Organization (WHO) to stay updated on developments in China. The ICMR has also committed to tracking HMPV circulation trends year-round and increasing laboratory testing capacity.

Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) is a common respiratory virus known to cause upper respiratory infections. It primarily affects children, the elderly, and individuals with weakened immune systems. Though the virus is not known to cause pandemics, its symptoms can sometimes lead to complications in vulnerable groups.

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Israeli researchers discover virus defence system in marine bacteria

AGENCIES
JERUSALEM, JAN 6

Israeli researchers have discovered a unique mechanism in marine bacteria that protects them from virus attacks, the Israel Institute of Technology (Technion) said in a statement.

A new study published in Nature Microbiology focused on the battle between bacteria and phages, viruses that infect bacteria.

This constant struggle leads to the mutual evolution of these two populations in marine environments, Xinhua news agency reported.

In some areas, viral infections drastically

reduce large bacterial populations, and without resistance mechanisms, the bacteria would be wiped out.

The study revealed that bacteria use a passive defence mechanism against viruses, involving extremely low doses of molecules in protein creation during genetic translation.

The research examined the relationship between Synecococcus, a marine bacterium, and the phage Syn9.

Synecococcus is crucial because it produces oxygen through photosynthesis and is a key contributor to the food chain, making it vital to marine ecosystems.

The researchers found that Synecococcus resists Syn9 by lowering the levels of transfer RNA (tRNA), a molecule essential for gene translation.

When tRNA levels are normal, the bacteria are more susceptible to the virus, but when tRNA levels are reduced, resistance increases.

This pattern of resistance is passive, with the loss of certain intracellular functions boosting the bacteria's ability to survive viral infection.

The researchers noted that this resistance does not stop the phage from entering the bacterial cell but prevents new virus formation, allowing the bacteria to survive.

Telangana Health Min announces establishment of CMS in every dist

AGENCIES
HYDERABAD, JAN 6

Telangana Health Minister Damodar Rajanarsimha has announced the establishment of central medicinal stores (CMS) in every district and the provision of vehicles for medicine distribution. Speaking after inaugurating a Pharmacy and E-Medicine Workshop

at the MCRHRD Institute in Hyderabad on Monday, the Minister extended New Year greetings to health staff, doctors, and officials, emphasizing the department's critical role in the daily lives of the people.

He highlighted the government's commitment to addressing challenges in the healthcare sector and implementing reforms to

ensure the availability of medicines and equipment.

Additionally, computers and internet facilities have been made available in all CMSs and pharmacy stores to streamline operations. Despite these efforts, he acknowledged reports of medicine shortages and directed hospital superintendents and senior officials to investigate and address

the root causes of the issue.

"Wherever negligence is identified, strict action will be taken against the concerned officers and staff," the Minister warned, stressing the government's serious approach to ensuring no patient faces inconvenience.

To monitor medicine availability, he announced the formation of a three-

member committee in each district, comprising the DMHO, DCHS, and the superintendent of the teaching hospital.

The committees will oversee the supply of medicines in all hospitals and address any issues brought to their attention by pharmacists.

The Minister urged pharmacists, doctors, and hospital administrators to work in coordination. Pharmacists were instructed to keep doctors informed about the availability of medicines in pharmacies, and doctors were encouraged to utilize the e-Aushadhi portal to check medicine inventories.

Hospital superintendents and resident medical officers (RMOs) were advised to conduct daily checks of

pharmacy stores to ensure proper storage and availability of medicines, resolving any issues immediately.

The Minister reiterated the government's dedication to strengthening the healthcare system and ensuring the uninterrupted availability of essential medicines in all healthcare facilities.

The workshop was

attended by Health Secretary Christina, Commissioner RV Karnan, TGMSIDC Managing Director Hemant, TVVP Commissioner Ajay Kumar, Director of Health Ravinder Naik, pharmacy supervisors, district medical and health officers (DMHOs), district coordinators of hospital services (DCHSs), and superintendents of teaching hospitals.

PM inaugurates Charlapalli Railway Terminal in Hyderabad for regional development

AGENCIES
HYDERABAD, JAN 6

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday virtually inaugurated the Charlapalli Railway Terminal in Hyderabad and said this would accelerate regional development.

It is the fourth terminal station in Telangana after Secunderabad, Hyderabad and Kacheguda.

The new terminal in the Medchal-Malkajgiri district on the eastern side of Hyderabad has been developed as a new coaching terminal along with the provision of second entry with a cost of around Rs 413 crore.

The Prime Minister highlighted its potential to accelerate regional development by connecting to the Outer Ring Road.

"This station, connected to the Outer Ring Road, will significantly boost development in the region," he stated.

PM Modi also highlighted the station's modern



amenities including its platforms, lifts, escalators, solar-powered operations, saying, "This is a step forward in creating sustainable infrastructure."

He stated that this new terminal will ease the pressure on existing stations in Secunderabad, Hyderabad, and Kacheguda,

Telangana Governor

making travel more convenient for the people.

This environment-friendly terminal, having good passenger amenities, will ease congestion on the existing coaching terminals in the city like Secunderabad, Hyderabad and Kacheguda.

Telangana Governor

Jishnu Dev Varma, Union Minister for Coal and Mines and Telangana BJP president G. Kishan Reddy, Union Minister of State for Railways V. Somanna, Union Minister of State for Coal Bandi Sanjay Kumar, Telangana's IT and Industries Minister D. Sridhar Babu, South Central Railways (SCR) General Manager Arun Kumar Jain and others participated in the inauguration ceremony held at the new terminal station.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy participated virtually and made requests to the Prime Minister to sanction the Regional Ring Rail for Hyderabad.

The Charlapalli terminal can handle an additional 15 pairs of trains with four extra high-level platforms.

The existing five platforms were also extended to accommodate full-length trains.

Another 10 lines are available, taking the total capacity to 19 lines.

The new facility fea-

tures spacious concourse areas, illuminated facade, two spacious foot-over-bridges and lifts and escalators.

A 12-metre-wide foot-over-bridge connects all the platforms directly from the concourse while a six-metre-wide foot-over-bridge is for inter-platform movement.

The station building comprises of six booking counters, separate waiting halls for men and women, as well as an upper-class waiting area and an executive lounge on the ground floor.

Additionally, the first floor houses a cafeteria, restaurant, and restroom facilities.

All nine platforms would have escalators and lifts that is total seven lifts and six escalators for facilitating passenger movement.

It will also have coach maintenance facilities for facilitating originating and terminating trains at the station.

Assam offers lucrative investment opportunities in chips, tourism and other sectors: CM

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JAN 6

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday held a roadshow in the financial capital for the mega investment and infrastructure summit, to be held in the state on February 25-26.

He earlier had intense discussion with top industrialists on the future roadmap of investment in the state.

Sarma told reporters he had productive talks with several business groups, including Tata Group, which has already made significant investments in the state, and is building a semiconductor plant worth Rs 30,000 crore.

"Apart from this, we are working with Tata Trust in cancer care, with whom we have established 17 hospitals," Sarma told reporters.

"Assam can become a natural hub for defence



production. We are also focusing on the development of the sector in state. We have spoken to top industrialists, including Adani Group, to expand the defence sector in the state," he noted.

"We have five refineries. We also have a robust tourism sector. Apart from these, the focus will now be on how to bring investment in new sectors. We have done a lot of work in semiconductors, technology and electronics manufacturing. We are trying to create a complete ecosystem for semiconductors

in Assam," said the chief minister, adding that the summit will play an important role in the development of Assam.

When asked how much investment may be announced during the summit, the chief minister said he is not working with any target in mind at the moment. CM Sarma has been in Mumbai for the last three days and held meetings with top industrialists. He said the government has been working towards making Assam a favourable destination for investors.

1.55 cr eligible to vote in Delhi Assembly polls; Vikaspuri largest seat with 4.26 lakh voters

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

The total number of electors in the finally published electoral roll in Delhi is 1.55 crore, indicating a 1.09 per cent increase over the electors in the draft electoral roll published on October 29, 2024, said the city's Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) on Monday.

The CEO said in a statement that eight FIRs have been filed against 24 people for submitting false or tampered documents to obtain voter ID.

On a day when the ruling Aam Aadmi Party alleged manipulation, including illegal addition and deletion of names, in the electoral roll in the New Delhi Assembly constituency, the CEO cautioned against submission of false and fabricated documents for getting



new voter ID.

The CEO identified Vikaspuri as the largest Assembly constituency with 4.62 lakh voters.

Delhi Cantonment is the smallest constituency with 78,893 voters.

The election office said 83,49,645 voters in the city are male, 71,73,952 female, and 1,261 third-gender. As of October 29, 2024, when the draft roll was published, there were

1.53 crore voters.

The CEO said the final roll indicates that the gender gap among voters has reduced by four points since the draft was published.

An unprecedented number of 5.1 lakh Form-6 were received for new enrollment in the last 20 days, Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) to do field verification/scrutiny/in-person hearing to iden-

tify genuine eligible applicants, the election office said.

The Special Summary Revision of electoral rolls with respect to the qualifying date of January 1, 2025, started in all 70 Assembly constituencies of NCT of Delhi with the commencement of pre-revision activities on August 20, 2024, the statement said.

"After completion of pre-revision activities, a draft electoral roll was published on October 10, 2024, calling for the filling of claims and objections from October 29, 2024, to November 28, 2024. The total number of electors at the time of draft publication was 1,53,57,529. Following the ECI guidelines, draft electoral roll was also displayed at all designated locations all over Delhi," the statement added.

AGENCIES
RANCHI, JAN 6

Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren on Monday transferred Rs 2,500 each as the December instalment under the 'Maiya Samman Yojana' to the bank accounts of over 56 lakh women across the state. A grand event was organised at Namkum Khojatoli Ground in Ranchi to mark the occasion, with approximately two lakh women from various parts of the state attending.

Addressing the gathering, CM Soren said, "This initiative is a significant step towards making women financially self-reliant. I am pleased to fulfill the promises made by our government before the elections."

By pressing a remote button, the CM transferred a total of Rs 1,415.44 crore



to the accounts of 56,61,791 women under the scheme.

Initially launched five months ago with a monthly instalment of Rs 1,000, the scheme saw an increase to Rs 2,500 per month following a Cabinet decision ahead of the announcement of elections.

CM Soren emphasised the importance of gender equality in achieving comprehensive development. He said, "The vision of holistic development

cannot be realised unless men and women walk shoulder to shoulder. This initiative aims to empower women and bring them to the forefront."

He further criticised the Opposition for doubting the government's ability to fund the scheme. "When we started with Rs 1,000 per month dole, we were ridiculed. When we announced that the amount would be increased to Rs 2,500, the Opposition questioned

the feasibility. Today, we have proved them wrong," Soren remarked.

The Chief Minister urged women to actively participate in the state's development and emphasised the importance of small savings for securing their children's future. He encouraged them to use the funds to combat malnutrition for themselves and their children.

Soren also expressed his gratitude to women for their overwhelming support during the elections. "We have formed the government with your blessings, and our priority is to ensure your self-reliance and development," he said.

The event also included speeches by Jharkhand's Finance Minister Radha Krishna Kishore, Minister Chamra Linda, and MLA Kalpana Soren, among others.

NPCI offers seamless mobility via RuPay to 3.2 million Chennai MTC commuters

AGENCIES
CHENNAI, JAN 6

The National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI) on Monday partnered the Metropolitan Transport Corporation (MTC) here to integrate RuPay on-the-go, a contactless payment solution for transit.

Over 3.2 million daily commuters of Chennai MTC will benefit from this efficient transit system.

With this, RuPay on-the-go would enable multi-modal ticket payment across Chennai Metro, MTC buses and Chennai Metro parking facilities with a single card, thus addressing commuter issues such as long queues, need for exact change, and complex ticketing processes.

RuPay on-the-go,

launched under the National Common Mobility Card (NCMC) programme, simplifies public transit across multiple cities in India.

"With the integration of the RuPay on-the-go card across the MTC bus network, Chennai is taking a significant step towards a smarter, more efficient urban mobility ecosystem," said Kunal Kalawatia, Chief of Products, NPCI.

It offers travellers a seamless, hassle-free, and contactless experience on metros and buses with a single card, marked by the distinctive RuPay contactless symbol.

"The MTC Singara Chennai One City One Card can be used in Chennai Metro Rail (CMRL), likewise the CMRL Singara Chennai One City One Card can be

used in MTC bus network," according to the NPCI.

"This partnership marks a transformative milestone for Chennai's public transit system. By integrating the RuPay on-the-go card across MTC buses and Chennai metro, we are offering our passengers a seamless multi-modal travel experience. We look forward to seeing the positive impact this will have on the lives of Chennai's residents," said Dr Alby John Varghese, Managing Director, MTC Chennai.

Users can avail the RuPay on-the-go card not just in Chennai, but also across a growing list of transit networks, including cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Chennai, Ahmedabad and Kanpur, as well as bus services in several cities.

Will stay in NDA, removed those suggesting changing alliance, says CM Nitish Kumar

AGENCIES
PATNA, JAN 6

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has reiterated that he will remain in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) dismissing any possibility of aligning with other political groups.

The CM was in Vaishali on Monday during his ongoing Pragati Yatra. While talking about his past decisions to switch alliances, he stated that such suggestions came from individuals who were subsequently removed.

"The mistake was made twice, but now I will remain in NDA. Those who suggested changing alliances were removed," Kumar said.

Reflecting on his long-standing ties with the NDA, he acknowledged the support of late Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee,



highlighting collaborative efforts during their tenure.

Earlier on January 2, RJD Chief Lalu Prasad Yadav said that his door was open for Nitish Kumar.

Lalu earlier said, "My door is always open. Nitish Kumar should also keep his door open." On whether

he would forgive Nitish Kumar if he returned, Lalu stated, "Forgiving has been my job. If he comes back, I will forgive him without any problem. Everyone will work together."

During the Pragati Yatra in Vaishali, Kumar announced development

schemes worth crores of rupees, underscoring the government's focus on grassroots development.

CM Nitish Kumar highlighted the success of the Jeevika initiative, which empowers women through self-help groups. CM Kumar took pride in

coining the name "Jeevika", a model later adopted nationally as "Ajeevika".

He also said that such self-help groups under Jeevika are now in urban areas as well. It has been empowering women, leading to improved financial independence and confidence.

"Earlier, women did not speak much; now they are confident and financially stable. Such groups were rare in Bihar before we expanded the programme," Kumar said.

CM Nitish Kumar recalled his contributions to introducing self-help groups during his tenure at the Centre, emphasizing their role in empowering communities. He reaffirmed his government's commitment to promoting women's development through Jeevika and similar initiatives.

Sisodia blames Centre for law, order situation in Delhi; slams Bidhuri's remarks

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) senior leader and former Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Monday launched a sharp critique of the Central government over the poor law

and order situation in the national Capital.

Sisodia contrasted the Centre's responsibilities with its actions, pointing out that while Prime Minister Narendra Modi urges Delhiites to vote for the BJP, his government has failed to handle the

only task entrusted to it -- ensuring security in the city.

Referring to the recent shootout in Sangam Vihar on Sunday night due to a gang war, Sisodia highlighted the deteriorating law and order situation in Delhi.

"Incidents of gang wars are increasing in the national Capital. Almost every day, bullets are being fired openly. In the Sangam Vihar incident last night, bullets were fired for an hour, leaving two people critically injured and three others wounded," he said.

He accused the BJP-led Union government of neglecting Delhi's security while criticising the AAP's governance.

"The Prime Minister abuses Arvind Kejriwal in front of the people of Delhi and asks them to

hand over the Delhi government to the BJP. I want to say that the people of Delhi have already given the Prime Minister, Amit Shah, and the BJP the responsibility of maintaining law and order. But the situation has worsened to the point where news of

gang wars and shootings are common. Despite this, the Prime Minister continues to demand control over schools, hospitals, electricity, and water," Sisodia said.

He claimed that the people of Delhi were well-aware of the BJP's

"inability" to handle law and order and, therefore, fear what might happen if other responsibilities were handed over to the party.

"The law and order situation is already dire. In the coming times, together with the people of Delhi, we will make Delhi safe."

Tensions rise as Pakistan warns Afghanistan of more cross-border strikes

AGENCIES
ISLAMABAD, JAN 6

Justifying its recent airstrikes in Afghanistan's Paktika province, the Pakistan government on Monday stated that it would carry out more such attacks inside the Afghan territory to target Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) hideouts, if necessary.

"We have the legal right to continue these operations if Afghan soil is used to attack Pakistan," Rana Sanaullah, Special Assistant to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on political affairs, was quoted as saying by the local media on Monday. On December 24, Pakistani air strikes inside Afghanistan resulted in the death of 46 people, including several women and children, inviting worldwide criticism and a stern warning from the Taliban regime in the war-torn country.

The airstrikes by Pakistani fighter jets on parts of Barmal district in Paktika province was the second instance in 2024 of Islamabad directly hitting "civilian areas" on Afghan territory.

In March 2024, a similar strike had killed eight



people, including three children.

Sanaullah's statement came at a time when Islamabad has intensified its "counter-terrorism operations" against the TTP and other "anti-state militant groups" while accusing Afghan Taliban for providing a safe haven to insurgents and supporting them in their terror activities inside Pakistan.

The comment is also being seen as a response to repeated threats issued by various Taliban leaders against Pakistan since the airstrikes.

"Afghans will not forget the invasion of their territory, and Pakistani rulers should adopt a measured policy," said Acting Afghan Foreign Minister Amir

Khan Muttaqi, two days after the air strikes, calling the Pakistani act not only a violation of Afghanistan's territorial sovereignty, but also one which can act as a trigger for potential major conflict between the two countries.

Over the weekend, Afghanistan's Deputy Foreign Minister for Political Affairs Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai had also warned that Afghanistan has fighters who can act like an "atomic bomb".

"Islamabad should not test the patience of its western neighbour. Pakistan should not exploit the patience of the Afghanistan government. We have fighters with a capacity equivalent to an atomic bomb. If we release

just five sons of Mahmud Ghaznavi, Babur and Ahmad Shah Abdali, from this border towards you (Pakistan), then not even the Indian Ocean will be able to stop them," said Stanikzai while addressing a graduation ceremony in Kabul on Saturday.

Islamabad insists that it is the Afghan Taliban which is lending support to TTP, including all the funding needed to operate against Pakistan, and it was Kabul's failure to take action against them that had prompted the airstrikes.

The TTP, meanwhile, continues to target military and security installations in Pakistan and is now looking to extend its radius of targeted attacks.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the militant group stated that it will now extend its targeted attacks to the Pakistani military's business entities, including housing societies, banks, fertilizer companies, cement companies and the ordnance factories spread across the country.

"The TTP will solely be targeting the security forces. As everyone knows that the Pakistan Army relies heavily on its different sources of businesses, because of which it has occupied the whole country for 70 years. It is in this context that TTP has decided that, from now on, attacks will also be carried out on all military-owned and military-led businesses," read the TTP statement.

The TTP also gave a three-month deadline to all the companies associated with Pakistan's military establishment, warning shareholders of major consequences.

The statement specifically mentioned military-led businesses in the country, including National Logistics Cell, Frontier Works Organisation, Fauji Cement, Askari Bank,

Fauji Fertilizer Company, Askari Cement, Pakistan Ordinance Factory, Fauji Foundation, Fauji Foods, Askari Fuels and Defence Housing Authority.

"All companies holding shares with the military-led companies should withdraw within three months. All employees working in military-led companies are also given a deadline of three months to leave their jobs and find work elsewhere. All shops, which have kept products of military-led companies, have been given two months to remove them and stop selling them in the future," the TTP said.

"If, after two months, such products are still kept in shops, then our workers will be directed to burn them all or remove them by all means. Similarly, vehicles being used to transport military-led products will also be burnt," the statement added.

The TTP has also warned political parties, including the ruling party Pakistan Muslim League - Nawaz (PML-N) to stop referring to TTP as "fitna al khawarij", warning them of attacks if they do not stop doing the same.

Investigators probing New Orleans Islamic State terrorist's Canada link

AGENCIES
NEW YORK, JAN 6

As investigations into the New Orleans attack cross international borders, a spotlight has been put on the terrorist's possible links to Canada from where terror threats to the US emanate.

Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) Special Agent Lyonel Myrthil said on Sunday that Shamsud-Din Jabbar had visited Ontario Province in Canada for three days last year.

His visit there in July 2023 followed a trip to Egypt starting the previous month.

"Our agents are getting answers as to where he went, who he met with and how those trips may or may not tie into his actions here in our city," Myrthil said at a news conference in New Orleans.

Jabbar has proclaimed his allegiance to the Islamic State (IS) and said he had joined.

Myrthil said the investigation is now "crossing state and international borders."

Although FBI Deputy Assistant Director Christopher Raia had earlier ruled out that "anyone else is involved in this attack," the trip to Canada raises the prospects of others

helping him or goading him because of documented terror threats from Canada to the US.

According to a Canadian Customs and Border Protection Service, 358 people on terror watch lists were caught trying to enter the US from Canada in the fiscal year 2024.

Last year, two members of the House of Representatives, Mike Kelly and Ryan Zinke, who head the Northern Border Security Caucus, introduced a resolution calling for action against "the alarming number of suspects on the terror watchlist who are crossing into the United States along the Northern border with Canada."

Just last September, a Pakistani, Muhammad Shahzeb Khan, was arrested near Canada's border with the US as he was on his way to New York allegedly to carry out terrorist attacks.

He also had IS links, according to US officials, who charged him with attempting to provide support to the terrorist organisation. Fourteen people were killed, and 35 were hurt when Jabbar drove a vehicle flying the black IS flag into a crowd of people celebrating the dawn of the New Year in New Orleans French Quarter, a tourist draw.

South Korea: Ruling party lawmakers protest against warrant to detain Yoon

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JAN 6

Around 30 ruling party lawmakers of South Korea gathered near the presidential residence to rally against investigators' efforts to detain impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol on Monday.

Last Friday, the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials (CIO), handling the probe on Yoon's short-lived martial law imposition, attempted to detain Yoon at his official residence but called it off after an hourlong standoff with the Presidential Security Service.

"The CIO is pretending as if it has the right to exercise the authority over investigations when it does not have the rights," Kim Gi-hyeon of the ruling People Power Party (PPP) said during the rally.

hyun, Cho Bae-sook, Park Dae-chul and Kim Seok-ki were among the participants.

The CIO has asked the police to take over the execution of the warrant, Yonhap news agency reported.

Yoon has refused to cooperate with the CIO's summonses for questioning or warrant execution as the agency is not technically authorised to investigate charges of insurrection that he faces over his brief imposition of martial law on December 3.

The PPP's interim leader, Kwon Young-se, also stressed that the CIO has no right to "subcontract" investigations to the police.

"The warrant itself is problematic because the CIO does not have the authority to investigate (insurrection charges), and it has no authority to subcontract it to the

police," Kwon told reporters after a party meeting at the National Assembly.

Earlier in the day, President Yoon Suk Yeol's legal defence team filed complaints with the prosecution against the head of the state anti-corruption agency and 10 others over last week's attempt to execute a warrant to detain the impeached president.

An attempt by the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials (CIO) to carry out the warrant for Yoon's detention failed last Friday after an hourlong standoff with security staff at the presidential residence in central Seoul. Yoon's lawyers submitted complaints against Oh Dong-woon, head of the CIO, and others to the Seoul Central District Prosecutors Office, claiming the CIO illegally executed warrants to detain Yoon and search his residence.

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

India on Monday condemned the recent Pakistani airstrikes on Afghanistan, emphasising that it is Islamabad's "old practice" to blame its neighbours for its own internal failures.

"We have noted the media reports on airstrikes on Afghan civilians, including women and children, in which several precious lives have been lost," said Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), on Monday while responding to media queries regarding airstrikes on Afghan civilians.

"We unequivocally condemn any attack on innocent civilians. It is an old practice of Pakistan to blame its neighbours for its own internal failures. We have also noted the response of an Afghan spokesperson in this

India condemns Pak airstrikes on Afghanistan, says 'old practice' to blame neighbours for internal failures



regard," he added.

On December 24, Pakistani air strikes inside Afghanistan resulted in the death of 46 people, including several women and children, inviting worldwide criticism and a stern warning from the current regime in the war-torn country.

The airstrikes by Pakistani fighter jets on parts of Barmal district in Pak-

Foreign Minister Amir Khan Muttaqi, two days after the air strikes.

During his speech at an event marking the 45th anniversary of the Soviet invasion, Muttaqi had strongly advised Pakistan to "learn from the fate of the Soviet Union and the United States", emphasising that Afghanistan will never accept invasions. He also called on the people of Pakistan to stop their rulers' wrong policies.

Enayatullah Khwarazmi, the spokesperson for the Afghan Ministry of Defence, had stated that Pakistan must realise such arbitrary actions do not solve any problems.

"The Islamic Emirate considers this brutal act a violation of all international principles and an outright aggression, and strongly condemns it. The Pakistani side must understand that such arbitrary actions are not a solu-

tion to any problem," the spokesperson was quoted as saying by Afghan news outlet Tolo news.

Hamid Karzai, the former President of Afghanistan, while condemning the airstrikes of the Pakistani military forces in the "strongest terms", called it a blatant aggression and violation of Afghan sovereignty.

Karzai said the tension in relations between the two countries was the product of Pakistan's wrong policies of strengthening extremism in the region and trying to weaken Afghanistan.

He warned that civilized relations based on good neighbourliness would be in the interest of both countries.

Hafiz Zia Ahmad, Pakistan's Chargé d'Affaires in Kabul, was also called to the Afghan foreign ministry and issued a strong demarche.

IRAN, SAUDI ARABIA VOW TO BOOST BILATERAL TIES

AGENCIES
TEHRAN, JAN 6

Iranian Justice Minister Amin-Hossein Rahimi held a meeting with Saudi Ambassador to Iran Abdullah bin Saud al-Anzi, during which both sides vowed to expand bilateral ties in various areas, especially in judicial and legal fields.

Rahimi on Sunday expressed satisfaction with the resumption of friendly relations between the two countries since 2023, describing "effective, strong and strategic ties between Tehran and Riyadh as very important and influential." Xinhua news agency reported quoting Iran's official news agency IRNA.

He noted the Iranian government's principled policy of developing friendly ties with all countries, especially neigh-



bouring ones, and called for maintaining and boosting ties between Iran and Saudi Arabia in cultural, economic, and political sectors, said the report.

For his part, al-Anzi called his meeting with the Iranian side "effective," and expressed hope that the expansion of bilateral ties in all areas, particularly in judicial and legal fields, would prepare

the ground for a "unique leap" in ties between the two "brotherly and friendly" countries, the report added.

On Wednesday, Iran summoned al-Anzi to protest the execution of six Iranian nationals convicted on drug smuggling charges in Saudi Arabia's Eastern Province, saying that the executions contradicted judicial cooper-

ation efforts between the two countries.

Iran and Saudi Arabia formally declared in April 2023 the resumption of diplomatic relations with immediate effect.

Saudi Arabia cut diplomatic ties with Iran in early 2016 in response to attacks on Saudi diplomatic missions in Iran. The attacks followed Saudi Arabia's execution of a Shiite cleric.

Earlier in November 2024, General Chief of Staff Fayyad al-Ruwaili of the Saudi armed forces held talks with his Iranian counterpart in Tehran, marking a significant step in defence ties between the two regional powers following their diplomatic rapprochement in 2023.

Al-Ruwaili met with Mohammad Baqeri, chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces, to explore ways to strengthen military cooperation.

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JAN 6

North Korea fired a suspected hypersonic missile into the East Sea on Monday, the South Korean military said, marking its first provocation in the new year ahead of US President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said it detected the launch of a suspected intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) at about 12 p.m. from the Pyongyang area and it flew some 1,100 kilometres before splashing into the waters.

While the missile's flight range fell short of the 3,000 to 5,500 km usually covered by IRBMs, it is suspected to have characteristics similar to North Korea's intermediate-range hypersonic missiles launched in January and April last year, a JCS



official said.

If confirmed to be a hypersonic missile, it would be the farthest range travelled by a North Korean missile of its kind.

The latest launch took place as US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was visiting Seoul for talks on efforts to deter North Korean threats amid politi-

North Korea fires suspected hypersonic missile in its first provocation in new year

Korea-US combined Defence posture, our military will closely monitor various North Korean activities so that it does not misjudge the current security situation," the JCS said in a message to reporters, while denouncing the launch as a "clear provocation."

The latest saber-rattling also came two weeks before Trump takes office on January 20.

The North last fired multiple short-range ballistic missiles into the East Sea on November 5, just ahead of the US presidential election.

In a year-end party meeting, North Korea declared it would carry out the "toughest" counteraction strategy toward the US, claiming military cooperation among South Korea, the US and Japan has expanded into a "military bloc for aggression."

"Under a firm South

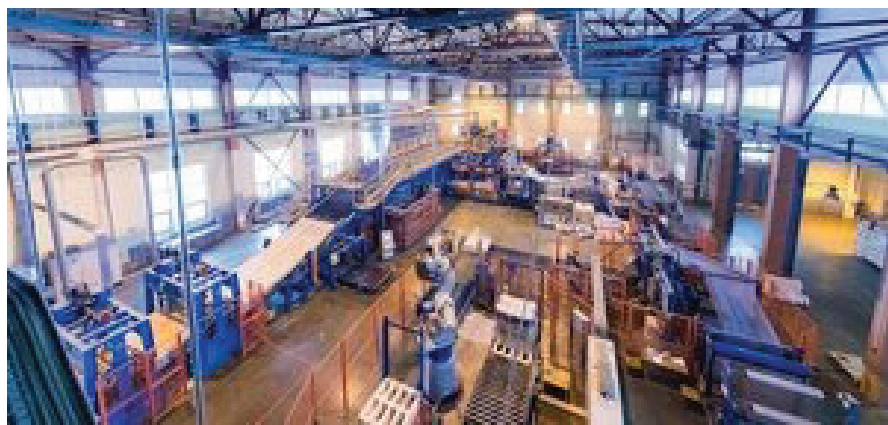
Indian realty sector sees 22 pc growth at \$6.5 bn in 2024, foreign inflows surge

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

Led by the industrial and warehousing segment, the institutional investments in Indian real estate touched \$6.5 billion inflows in 2024, a substantial 22 per cent increase from the previous year's \$5.4 billion, according to a report on Monday.

Overall, at \$4.3 billion, foreign inflows continued to drive annual real estate investments at 66 per cent share, while domestic investments too witnessed a steady rise, surging 27 per cent during the year, according to the report by Colliers India.

Mumbai, with about \$1.6 billion inflows, accounted for 24 per cent of the real estate investments in the country last year. Investment inflows in Bengaluru, Chennai and Delhi NCR also remained steady and accounted for 8-9 per cent share each during the



year. The fourth quarter of 2024 was particularly robust, with investments reaching \$1.9 billion – a 2.3 times increase compared to the same period in 2023.

Notably, domestic investments were significant in Q4 2024 and accounted for 43 per cent of the inflows during the final quarter.

The industrial and warehousing segment accounted for the highest

share in overall real estate investment volumes at 39 per cent last year, surpassing the office segment.

Manufacturing and industrial growth was robust and was reflected in the performance of macro-economic indicators such as Manufacturing Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) and Index of Industrial Production (IIP).

At \$1.1 billion, residential segment too witnessed substantial growth, rising 46 per cent compared to

2023 levels.

"Interestingly, APAC investors drove almost one-third of the foreign inflows in the country's real estate during the year.

Looking ahead, Tier-I cities will continue to attract majority of the capital, amidst government impetus on infrastructure development and 'Make in India' initiative," said Badal Yagnik, Chief Executive Officer, Colliers India. While global inves-

tors' confidence is likely to remain upbeat, 2025 is likely to see increased capital deployment from domestic players across office, residential and industrial assets, Yagnik added.

According to the report, rising investments in the industrial and warehousing segment is a testament to healthy domestic activity, enhancements in logistics efficiency, and India's improving capabilities as a global manufacturing hub.

Foreign investments drove over 80 per cent of the total inflows in the segment during the year.

Rising demand for superior quality Grade A developments and evolving supply-chain models will continue to incentivise investors in consolidating industrial & warehousing assets in the country, said Vimal Nadar, Senior Director and Head of Research, Colliers India.

India's services sector growth surges to 4-month high in Dec: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

India's services sector growth rose to a 4-month high in December as robust demand boosted business activity with strong job creation taking place during the month, according to a survey released on Monday.

The HSBC India Services Purchasing Managers' Index, compiled by S&P Global, increased to 59.3 in December from 58.4 in November, which is the highest level since August.

Strong underlying demand was identified by companies as the primary factor behind output growth in the services sector. In some instances, survey members indicated that recent efforts to expand capacities allowed them to accept more work.

The overall level of positive sentiment remained above its long-run average, with service providers exuding confi-



dence that output would increase over the course of the coming 12 months. Expanded capacities, new customer enquiries and budget allocation towards marketing were some of the positive factors propelling growth.

Although services companies continued to see their business expenses rising in December, the rate of inflation softened from November's 15-month high. Reflecting a further increase in input costs, service providers raised their own fees again in December.

The combination of new business growth, upbeat forecasts and rising capacity pressures supported another round of job creation across the services sector. Firms continued to add workers at one of the strongest paces since the survey started in 2005. But the hiring was a tad lower than November's 19-year high.

There was a solid increase in international orders placed with service providers during December which augurs well for employment and growth in the months ahead.

Sensex projected to rise 18 pc by end of 2025: Morgan Stanley

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JAN 6

Morgan Stanley expects India to be one of the best performing emerging markets in 2025, with a base case projection for Sensex to rise by 18 per cent by December end.

In its latest note, the US-headquartered investment bank sees 18 per cent base case upside for the BSE Sensex by the December end. "India's macro stability is strong due to improving terms of trade and flexible inflation target," said the global brokerage, forecasting earnings of 18-20 per cent earning growth over the next four to five years.

Private capital expendi-

ture cycle, re-leveraging of corporate balance sheets and unfolding of a structural rise in discretionary consumption are among reasons for this. A reliable source of domestic risk capital also contributes to the capital expenditure

Infrastructure spending, restructuring GST rates, direct tax reforms, more free trade agreements, and focus on energy transition are other areas that will contribute to India's macro stability, said Morgan Stanley in its note.

As far as interest rates are concerned, Morgan Stanley expects a shallow cycle of 50 basis points with the rate cuts starting from February. It expects two

consecutive rate cuts of 25 bps each.

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is now committed to durable liquidity. Regulatory tightening may loosen in the weeks ahead, according to the brokerage. Initial issuance in the Indian markets is running at about 1.3 per cent of GDP versus the previous peak of over 3.5 per cent and set to rise further, Morgan Stanley said in the note.

The base case estimate also entails robust domestic growth, no recession in the US and benign oil prices. "We use a modest reduction in interest rates and positive liquidity environment as the base case for monetary policy.

Wonderful to see Indian Railways' transformation in last 10 years: Erik Solheim

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

Erik Solheim, former Minister of Climate and Environment of Norway, said on Monday it has been wonderful to observe the improvement of Indian Railways in the last 10 years under the vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as the government laid the foundation stones of multiple projects, further strengthening the country's railway infrastructure.

Speaking to IANS, Solheim said the Indian Railways is improving operations by the day, connecting millions in newer, far-flung areas, and becoming



a modern, 21st-century transportation system.

"Rail is the safest, most people-centred and environment-friendly way of transporting people, so this is so heartening to see Indian Railways taking a big leap under a dynamic government," Solheim

noted.

He further stated that old stations and platforms are being upgraded and new stations are being constructed at a great speed.

"For example, the Cuttack railway station in Odisha looks like one of

the most modern airports in the world," he mentioned.

High-speed trains such as Vande Bharat, Amrit Bharat, and Namoo Bharat have become benchmarks for Indian Railways.

PM Modi on Monday inaugurated and laid the foundation stones of multiple railway projects through video conferencing.

Among the key projects, PM Modi inaugurated the new Jammu Railway Division, marking a significant step towards enhanced connectivity in the region. He also inaugurated the Charlapalli New Terminal Station in Telangana and laid the founda-

tion stone of the Rayagada Railway Division Building of the East Coast Railway.

"This is a significant achievement. The metro network in India has now crossed over 1,000 kilometres," said PM Modi.

According to Solheim, Vande Bharat trains are providing high-quality transportation between main cities at a speed of up to 180 kilometres per hour.

"It will soon touch the speed of 200 km per hour. In 2026, the new bullet train between Ahmedabad and Mumbai is slated to be operational with stations in Surat and Vadodara and a few other places," the veteran diplomat told IANS.

Infosys may delay annual salary hike over global uncertainties

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

IT major Infosys has reportedly deferred the annual salary hike in the fourth quarter of FY 2024-25. The company last implemented a salary hike in November 2023.

The delay in the salary hike, which is usually implemented at the beginning of the year, indicates that the domestic IT sector is still facing uncertainties.

The reason cited for slowdown is that clients are not increasing their IT spending due to macro-economic situations, including potential tariffs under the new Donald Trump administration that will begin working from January 20.



Not only Infosys but some other large IT companies like HCL Tech, LTI Mindtree and L&T Tech Services also did not increase salaries in the second quarter this year to manage costs and profits.

Regarding Infosys, Motilal Oswal Financial Services had said in its pre-

earnings note that Infosys' margins may decline in the December quarter.

This is owing to employees going on leave and fewer working days. However, this will be compensated by price increases, subcontractor cost optimisation, and 'Project Maximus'.

'Project Maximus' is Infosys' margin improvement plan and its goal is to reduce costs.

In the second quarter (July-September) of the current financial year, the company's profit grew 4.7 per cent year-on-year to Rs 6,506 crore, which was Rs 6,212 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

The company's income in the second quarter was Rs 40,986 crore. This figure was Rs 38,994 crore in the same quarter of the previous financial year.

In the September quarter, Infosys increased its income growth guidance for the year from 3.75 per cent to 4.5 per cent. During this time, the IT giant also announced a dividend of Rs 21 per share.

Meta goes to NCLAT against CCI's Rs 213 crore penalty on WhatsApp

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

Social media platform Meta on Monday moved the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), challenging a recent Competition Commission of India (CCI) order imposing a Rs 213 crore penalty on the firm related to WhatsApp's 2021 privacy policy update.

In November last year, the competition watchdog directed WhatsApp to not share user data collected on its platform with other Meta products or companies for advertising purposes for a period of five years, along with imposing a penalty of Rs 213.14 crore on Meta for allegedly abusing its dominant position. Meta has now informed



the NCLAT that the CCI order has wide ramifications for the industry as a whole and therefore, an urgent hearing in the matter will be required.

The case will now come up for a hearing before the appellate tribunal on January 16.

WhatsApp has more than 500 million monthly active users in the country.

Last year, after the CCI directed WhatsApp not to

share user data collected on its platform with other Meta products or companies for advertising purposes for a period of five years, the social media platform said it disagreed with the CCI's decision and planned to appeal.

According to the CCI order, "The 2021 policy update by WhatsApp on a 'take it-or-leave-it' basis constitutes an imposition of unfair conditions under the Act, as it compels all users to accept expanded data collection terms and sharing of data within Meta Group without any opt-out."

A Meta spokesperson has replied, saying that the 2021 WhatsApp update did not change the privacy of people's personal messages and was offered as a choice for users at the time.

"We also ensured no one would have their accounts deleted or lose functionality of the WhatsApp service because of this update. The update was about introducing optional business features on WhatsApp, and provided further transparency about how we collect and use data," according to the company spokesperson.

Indian IT sector set for revival in 2025 as macro-economic environment gets better

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

For the Indian IT sector, the macro-economic environment is far better placed than it has been in the last two years which should drive a revival in 2025, according to a report on Monday.

The Fed rate cut is no longer a hope but well underway, inflation appears to be under con-

trol, and the US election is behind with the new administration seen as business friendly, said the 'India IT Services 2025' report by BNP Paribas India. "Some of the themes highlighted by the BNPPE Equity Strategy team for 2025 that we think will aid the Indian IT services sector are dollar strength, inventory restocking and retail consumer-friendly themes,"

said Kumar Rakesh, analyst, IT and Auto.

The Fed is cutting rates at a time when markets are already at highs. The report noted that historically this has been bullish for the market.

Also, with the Republican sweep, further fiscal easing is likely. US consumer confidence has been resilient and enterprise capex outlook is improving.

Goldman Sachs sees India among top emerging markets in 2025

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

Goldman Sachs has projected India to be among the best-performing emerging markets in 2025, given the country's robust macroeconomic stability backed by improving terms of trade, effective inflation targeting, and reliable domestic risk capital.

The global investment bank has forecast an earnings growth of 18-20 per cent annually over the next 4-5 years, driven by

an emerging private capex cycle, corporate balance sheet re-leveraging, and a structural rise in discretionary consumption.

These factors have reduced India's beta to emerging markets to approximately 0.4, justifying its premium valuation multiples, the report stated.

Its investment earnings estimates remain ahead of consensus, and they highlight a declining correlation of Indian equities

with global markets. However, global factors such as policy actions in the US and China, as well as geopolitical developments, will continue to influence Indian markets, the report added.

Goldman expects macro stability to be further strengthened through fiscal consolidation, increased private investment, and a positive real growth-real rates gap. They assume robust domestic growth, no US recession,

benign oil prices, modest rate cuts, and a supportive liquidity environment. Sensex earnings are projected to compound at 17.3 per cent annually through FY27, which is 15 per cent above consensus.

In terms of portfolio strategy, Goldman favours cyclical over defensives and SMID caps over large caps, recommending overweight positions in Financials, Consumer Discretionary, Industrials, and Technology.

Goldman Sachs Research stated in a report last month that it expects the Indian economy to be relatively insulated against global shocks over the coming year – including tariffs levied by the new administration of US President-elect Donald Trump. India's GDP will keep growing strongly in the long term – but with a speed bump next year as government spending and credit growth slow, according to the forecast.

Result wasn't what we had hoped for but we'll be back stronger: Jaiswal

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

India opener Yashasvi Jaiswal vowed that the team will make a strong comeback after their 1-3 Border-Gasvaskar Trophy defeat against Australia in Sydney on Sunday. India lost the final Test of the series by six wickets which ended their hopes of qualifying for the third consecutive World Test Championship (WTC) final.

It was also India's first Test series defeat to Australia in a decade. They last lost the Test series in Australia in 2015. India successfully retained the Border-Gasvaskar Trophy in the last four series including two in Australia.



However, this time the result was not in India's favour as their batters struggled to score runs on Australian soil. Jasprit Bumrah was the only saving grace with memorable performances on the tour. He finished as the

leading wicket-taker with 32 scalps and was named Player of the Series.

On the other hand, Jaiswal was the top performer with the bat for India accumulating 391 runs including a century and two fifties at an aver-

age of 43.44. Despite his outstanding effort, Jaiswal was not happy to finish on the losing side and was stressed to continue working hard.

"Learnt a lot in Australia... Unfortunately, the result wasn't what we had hoped for but we'll be back stronger. Your support means everything," Jaiswal wrote in a social media post.

Australia opener Usman Khawaja, who had a dismal run in the series, heaped praise on his Indian counterpart and said "Love your work brother".

Former England captain Michael Vaughan also commented on the post and wrote, "You are a superstar...love watching

you play".

On Sunday, youngsters Jaiswal and Nitish Kumar Reddy received huge backing from legendary batter Sunil Gavaskar following his great tour Down Under.

"If we talk about the macro picture like we saw with Nitish Kumar Reddy and Yashasvi Jaiswal they are hungry. They are hungry to earn a name for India. They are hungry to earn a name for themselves. Such players are needed.

You need such players who will protect their wicket like their life. You need such players. You can play with them on stroke. But the commitment I want to see," Gavaskar said on Star Sports.

Bugatha, Nirmaben to defend Indian Elite crowns in Tata Mumbai Marathon

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JAN 6

Srinu Bugatha and Thakor Nirmaben Bharatjee, the defending men's and women's champions respectively, will headline a star-studded Indian Elite field for the landmark 20th edition of the Tata Mumbai Marathon 2025 to be held on January 19.

Reigning Asian marathon champion Man Singh, Olympian Gopi T, a two-time winner and three-time runner-up, and the experienced Kalidas Hirve, who finished fourth at TMM 2024 edition, are among the leading contenders in the men's race.

Gopi won the 2024 New Delhi Marathon in 2:14.40, pipping second-placed Army-mate Bugatha by

one second.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra's Hirve, who finished third in the 2023 TMM, underlined his current form by winning the recent Vasai-Virar Mayor's Marathon.

The World Athletics Gold Label race will also see Kartik Kumar, the 2023 Asian Games 10,000m silver medallist, making his debut over the classic distance in Mumbai.

Kartik's best marathon time is 2:22:50, which he recorded at the Bengaluru Marathon in October last year. Also in the mix is young Harshad Mahtre, who finished fifth in the last TMM edition.

Challenging Nirmaben, runner-up at the 2024 New Delhi Marathon and placed fourth at the Tata Steel World 25K Kolkata

2024. For the top honours in the women's race will be Sonika Parmar and Reenu, winner and runner-up respectively at the 2024 Coal India Ranchi Marathon.

In the fray is also TMM regular Arati Patil, who finished second in the 2023 edition.

The top three finishers in the Indian Elite men's and women's categories will receive prize money of INR 5 lakh, INR 4 lakh and INR 3 lakh, respectively, from the total prize fund of USD 390,238.

An incentive reward of INR 2 lakh is up for grabs for setting a new TMM mark, which is currently held by Nitendra Singh Rawat in the Men's 2016 edition (2:15:48) and Sudha Singh in the women's 2019 edition (2:34:56).

LIVERPOOL, MAN UTD END IN THRILLING DRAW IN PREMIER LEAGUE

AGENCIES
LONDON, JAN 6

Premier League leader Liverpool and Manchester United concluded their much-anticipated duel in a 2-2 draw.

The game was under threat of not being played as scheduled due to heavy snow in the north of England on Sunday, but fans were pleased that it finally went ahead to offer a pulsating game of football. Manchester United coach Ruben Amorim was the happier of the two coaches after his side showed the passion that had been missing in recent defeats.

The visitor took the lead in the 52nd minute when Lisandro Martinez found space inside the Liverpool area to smash the ball into the roof of the net.

Liverpool fought back and Cody Gakpo leveled when he cut inside and fired in at the far post just seven minutes later. Mohamed Salah put Liv-



erpool ahead from the penalty spot in the 70th minute after Matthijs de Ligt was guilty of handball.

There was no let-up on a rapid surface and Amad Diallo leveled 2-2 in the 80th minute as United again found joy down the Liverpool right. Both teams had chances to win the game, with Liverpool's Conor Bradley going closest, only for goalkeeper Andre Onana to flick away

his shot from a tight angle. Liverpool leads second-placed Arsenal by six points with a game in hand.

There were three penalties and the points were shared as Fulham drew 2-2 at home to an improving Ipswich Town, who looked to be on the verge of its second win in two games, before Raul Jimenez scored his second penalty of the game in injury time.

EFI TO HOST INDIA'S FIRST PARA-DRESSAGE WORLD CHALLENGE IN 2025

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

The Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) will host the Para-Dressage World Challenge 2025 in October for the first time at the Modi Equestrian Academy in Meerut (North Zone) and Surge Stables in Bengaluru (South Zone) in October. With a vision to create India's first-ever representation at the Los Angeles 2028 Paralympics, the EFI also organised the first-ever FEI-backed Para-Dressage Workshop at the Modi Equestrian Academy in Meerut from January 4-5.

The two-day workshop included a visual presentation, introducing participants to the discipline, followed by a demonstration event showcasing the skills and collaboration essential to para-dressage.

Attendees were provided with an in-depth understanding of the discipline, covering its unique requirements, specialised equipment, and the characteristics



of horses suited for para-equestrian events—such as suitable experience, calm temperament, and exceptional trainability to adapt to riders' unique needs.

To enhance the experience, the workshop featured specially trained para-dressage horses, allowing participants to gain firsthand insight.

Para-dressage holds immense significance as the only equestrian category included in the Paralympics, and the EFI aims to build a strong pathway for India to make its mark

with talent identification and building experience by hosting multiple para-dressage events across the country.

EFI secretary-general Col. Jaiveer Singh, said, "This workshop was a critical step in advancing inclusivity within Indian equestrian sports, paving the way for India to not only compete but excel on the global stage. By establishing a structured, sustainable ecosystem for para-athletes, we envision regular Indian representation at international events, culminating in the

Paralympics.

"With the introduction of para-dressage, we are unlocking a unique opportunity for athletes to make history and bring unparalleled pride to India.

This initiative is not just about participation—it's about creating champions and elevating India's presence in the world of para-sports."

As para-dressage is officially included in the EFI disciplines effective 2025. The workshop is focused on preparing India for global para-dressage events, including the

prestigious Para Dressage World Challenge 2025.

Representatives from 18 equestrian clubs across India participated in the workshop conducted by world-renowned para-dressage coach Clive Milkins. With over 30 years of experience and a track record of coaching Paralympians, including eight-time Paralympic gold medallist Sophie Christiansen, Milkins brought expertise and insights to the participating members, with a particular focus on showcasing and nurturing local Indian talent to raise awareness within the country.

While India achieved a record haul of 29 medals at the Paris Paralympics, the EFI aims to capitalise on the opportunity that para-dressage presents as the only equestrian event at the Paralympics and the second-largest globally after the Olympics.

Having been part of the Games since 1996, para-dressage offers a unique platform for creating history.

Australia, England, India in talks with ICC for two-tier Test cricket system: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

Australia, who recently won the Border-Gavaskar Trophy on home soil by 3-1, along with India, England and the International Cricket Council (ICC) are reportedly in talks to have a two-tier Test cricket system, with an eye on having the big three nations playing each other more often.

According to a report in 'The Sydney Morning Herald', ICC Chairman Jay Shah, Cricket Australia chair Mike Baird, England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) chief Richard Thompson are set to meet later this month, with



a two-tier structure for Test cricket firmly on the agenda of their discussion.

"Their discussions have been given further impetus by enormous crowds and broadcast audiences for Australia's five matches against India

over the past two months, the fourth-best attended series ever in this country and reportedly the most-watched Test series ever played.

"Any plan for a move to two divisions in Test cricket would kick in after the

end of the current Future Tours Program in 2027, a year which will also feature a 150th anniversary Test match between Australia and England at the MCG," said the report.

It further said if the two-tier Test structure becomes a reality, then Australia, England and India will be free from having to play Test cricket against many nations, and the three nations would be able to play against each other twice in every three years, instead of every four years, which is currently the case.

Interestingly, the concept of a two-tier system in Test cricket was proposed in an ICC Board meeting in

2016, where seven nations would compete in the first division, while the remaining five countries would compete in the second division.

But it was shelved in 2016, as at that time, the BCCI, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and Zimbabwe Cricket (ZC) opposed it.

The report also mentions that if the two-tier system is approved, it would lead to a change in cricketing world, with the World Test Championship running for just one more cycle, despite providing greater context to longer format games since its inception in 2019.

Smriti to lead India as Harmanpreet rested from women's ODIs against Ireland

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JAN 6

India have rested captain Harmanpreet Kaur and fast bowler Renuka Singh Thakur for the upcoming three-match women's ODI series against Ireland, set to begin on January 10 at the Niranjan Shah Stadium in Rajkot.

In Harmanpreet's absence, left-handed opener Smriti Mandhana will be India's captain, while senior all-rounder Deepti Sharma will serve as the vice-captain. Smriti had a productive 2024 with the bat - making 736

runs in 21 T20I innings and amassing 747 runs in 13 ODIs.

The three-match series, starting on January 10, followed by matches on January 12 and 15, is India's first international assignment of this year. For the first time since 2006, India will be playing Ireland in a bilateral women's ODI series. With Harmanpreet and Renuka rested, India have included batter Raghvi Bist, who made her T20I debut against the West Indies last month in Navi Mumbai and pacer Sayali Satghare, who was in the squad when the hosts'

beat New Zealand 2-1 in Ahmedabad last year.

Interestingly, India have not included opener Shafali Verma and pace-bowling all-rounder Arundhati Reddy for the ODI series against Ireland, with the duo currently playing in the Senior Women's 50-over Challenger Trophy in Chennai.

The upcoming ODI series against Ireland continues India's quest to fine-tune their combinations and zero in on their players who will be a part of their 2025 Women's ODI World Cup campaign, which they will host later this year.

India's mindset to 'intimidate' Australia's rookie players didn't pay off: Johnson

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

Former Australia fast-bowler Mitchell Johnson believes that India 'two vs 11' mindset to intimidate the Australian rookie players like Sam Konstas and Beau Webster during the recent Sydney Test didn't pay off.

In the match, India suffered a six-wicket defeat at Sydney, as Australia won the Border-Gavaskar Trophy 3-1 after a decade. "The Indian side appeared

to embrace the mindset that it was "two against 11" out in the middle, aiming to make the Aussie batters feel isolated and under pressure. The focus was on not just testing the technical skills of their opponents but also challenging their mental toughness.

"In Test cricket, it's crucial to create that environment, one where the batters are distracted from their primary objective. This psychological edge can often prove to be just as important as any

physical skill in the game. Trying to intimidate the Aussie rookies didn't really pay off with both Konstas and Beau Webster proving their worth," wrote Johnson in his column for The Nightly on Monday.

At the same time, Johnson reckoned Konstas taking on Jasprit Bumrah in a verbal volley on day one was not a praiseworthy act. "I appreciate what Konstas was trying to do by supporting his teammate, but it was simply the wrong time for that kind



of engagement. At that late stage of the day, there could only be one winner. "I wonder if Khawaja

had a chat with Konstas or if any of the other senior players offered him some advice after the day's play

on how to navigate such situations.

This highlights a crucial aspect of introducing new players to the team: they need the guidance of experienced teammates to understand how to handle various scenarios within the game's dynamics."

He signed off by saying Webster, who had a debut to remember with scores of 57 and 39 not out, apart from taking a wicket and grabbing two sharp catches, can be a regular fixture in the Australian Test team

for the foreseeable future.

"No one deserved to hit the winning runs for Australia on Sunday more than Webster. His dream debut in the baggy green was more than a decade in the making and his strong performance not just with bat and ball but also in the field has put not just all-rounder Cameron Green on notice but he top six batters as well.

"Webster's debut at the SCG was a moment filled with joy and personal significance for him, evident

in the big smile he wore. It wasn't just the cherished cap he received but also the way he approached the game that stood out.

"His demeanour during media interactions suggested he felt comfortable in his role and then the way he played, treating it as another day at the office rather than a pressure-filled debut.

At 31, Webster brings a wealth of experience, combining youthful energy with the wisdom of seasoned player."

DLSA Ganderbal concludes 04-day orientation/ training program

JNEWS SERVICE

GANDERBAL, JANUARY 6

A four days long orientation cum training program for members of the Legal Services Unit for Children and the Persons with Mental Illness Intellectual Disabilities, organised by the District Legal Services Authority Ganderbal concluded today, here.

The event was held under the supervision of Abdul Nasir, Chairman, DLSA Ganderbal, and under the guidance Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary, DLSA Ganderbal.

The training, held at Conference Hall, District Court Complex, Ganderbal, aimed for the implementation of NALSA Schemes, 2024 for children's and persons with mental illness and intellectual disability.

The program sensitised participants with the necessary knowledge and

skills to provide effective legal services to children's and persons with mental illness and intellectual disability.

The training program for LSUC members was held on January 01 & 02, 2025 while the training program for LSUM members was held on January 03 & 04, 2025, at the Conference Hall, District Court Complex, Ganderbal.

During the 4-days long orientation training program, Rafia Hassan, Additional District and Sessions Judge (AD&S), Ganderbal, delivered a comprehensive presentation on Actions and Interventions under the NALSA (Legal Services to Persons with Mental Illness and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities) Scheme, 2024.

She emphasized the importance of providing legal services to persons with mental illness and intellectual disabilities at

various stages, institutions and locations, including, Beggar's Homes, Women's Protection Homes, Child Care Institutions, Prisons, through home visits.

She also highlighted the significance of providing legal assistance in availing benefits of social welfare schemes especially to the children's and persons with mental illness.

During the inaugural session, Sheikh Babar Hussain outlined the objectives behind conducting of the training program and emphasised the importance of providing effective legal services to vulnerable members of society especially children's and mentally sick persons.

The program aimed to sensitise the participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to implement "NALSA (Child-Friendly Legal Services for Children) Scheme, 2024" and "NALSA (Legal Services



to Persons with Mental Illness and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities) Scheme, 2024".

Principal Magistrate JJB Ganderbal, delivered a

comprehensive presentation on the legal and policy frameworks in the context of children in conflict with law. She highlighted the actions and interventions

under the scheme, with a focus on legal services to children in conflict with the law.

She elaborated on the various stages where legal services are provided to children, including, at Police Station, Juvenile Justice Board (JJB), Children's Homes (CCIs), Children's Courts, Prisons etc.

Besides, Chairperson, Tehsil Legal Services Committee (TLSC), Ganderbal, provided an in-depth analysis of the Legal and Policy Frameworks in the Context of Persons with Mental Illness and Intellectual Disabilities under NALSA (Legal Services to Persons with Mental Illness and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities) Scheme, 2024.

Ajaz Ahmad Mir, Retired District Judge, Advisor/Mentor of the both units virtually conducted an interactive session with the participants. The session

included introductions, ice-breaking activities, and a discussion to understand the importance of training with respect to the provision of legal services to children, persons with mental illness and intellectual disabilities.

He also provided a comprehensive overview of the NALSA (Child-Friendly Legal Services for Children) Scheme, 2024, and NALSA (Legal Services to Persons with Mental Illness and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities) Scheme, 2024, highlighting its objective, key features, actions and interventions.

Subsequently, Khurshid Ahmad, Public Prosecutor, CJM Court, Ganderbal; Afshana, Counselor from District Hospital Ganderbal; Advocate Shaguta Nabi, Center Administrator, One Stop Center (OSC) Ganderbal; Gulam Rasool Rather, Advocate; Tanveer

Ashraf, Assistant Legal Aid Defense Counsel (LADC), Ganderbal and Sajad Ahmad Rather, Member, Child Welfare Committee (CWC), Anantnag also elaborated on the subject.

The training program was called off with featured expert sessions, interactive discussions, and case studies, providing participants with a holistic understanding of the legal framework and best practices to execute "NALSA (Child-Friendly Legal Services for Children) Scheme, 2024" and "NALSA (Legal Services to Persons with Mental Illness and Persons with Intellectual Disabilities) Scheme, 2024 in District Ganderbal.

All the members of both units took a pledge that they will burn the midnight oil for the effective implementation of these schemes on the ground so that the deserving persons will be benefitted.

Satish Sharma calls on Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnav

JNEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 06

Minister for FCS &CA, Transport, Youth Services and Sports, Information & Technology, Science and Technology, ARI and Trainings, Satish Sharma, today called on Union Minister for Railway Information Broadcasting and Electronic and Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnav and discussed various critical matters pertaining to Railway, Information Technology and allied sectors.

Satish Sharma thanked the Union Minister for his support in all round development of J&K. He also discussed various development issues including Railway Line from Jammu to Poonch via Akhnoor, Chhamb, Sunderbani and



Nowshera onwards, extension of Railway line to Uri and Kupwara from Baramulla onwards, IT Corporate parks in Jammu and Srinagar to generate job avenues for thousands of IT trained professionals.

The Minister also urged for establishment of Data centres at District and Tehsil Headquarters, establishment of State Emergen-

cy Operation Centre, State Wide Area Network 2.0 to cover remaining PoPs left under SWAN 1.0 for better internet connectivity between all districts, augmentation of CSCs and setting up of electronic manufacturing units by MNC key players in J&K, creating facilities in JK on the lines of CDOT, Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)

for all the departments of J&K, besides Content Delivery Network (CDN)

Satish Sharma also urged for introduction of new programmes to supplement the developmental initiatives being undertaken by the Government. He called for broadening the ambit of developmental projects so that the benefits could reach to the maximum populace. He said that this would also ensure that the people get the necessary and requisite facilities and they are brought at par with the metropolitan cities of the country. The Union Minister said that the central Government is committed to expedite the pace of development in J&K and assured to consider the issues/demands raised by Satish Sharma.

Javid Dar, Nasir Aslam review snow clearance, restoration of essential services at Kupwara

JNEWS SERVICE

KUPWARA, JANUARY 6

Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development, and Panchayati Raj, Javid Ahmad Dar and Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wami, today impressed upon the officers of district administration Kupwara to work with utmost dedication and coordination to tackle any situation facing the people of this far flung and frontier district during the snowfall period.

They said this while jointly chairing a meeting of district and sectoral officers at Kupwara held to review progress on snow clearance and restoration of essential services after recent spell of snowfall in the district.

Among others, MLA Lolab, Qaiser Jamsheed Lone, MLA Langate, Khurshid Ahmad Sheikh and Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan were present in the meeting.

On the occasion, Javid Dar enjoined upon the officers of line departments to work in tandem to ease the sufferings of the people in this harsh winter season. He impressed upon the officers to be friendly and humane with the people who have a lot of expectations with the administration and the government in resolving their issues.

Advisor to CM impressed upon the offi-



cers to ensure stronger coordination at all levels to effectively tackle any situation during the snowfall season.

On the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner apprised the dignitaries about the progress on snow clearance and status of power and water supply in the district post snowfall. She said that some of the areas of district Kupwara including Lolab, Kralpora and higher reaches of Keran, Jumangud, Machill and Chowkibal have received snowfall. Adequate men and machinery of line departments is available on ground to tackle any situation.

The Deputy Commissioner informed that 150 km road length out of 243.5 km falling under R&B department stands cleared from the snow. Besides, 65 Km out of 183 km have been cleared by PMGSY. Out of 150 km road length falling under BRO, 50 km stands cleared. Besides, 124 km have also been cleared by MED department.

Javid Ahmad Dar directed the officers to intensify the efforts and ensure clearance of all roads falling under their jurisdiction.

Regarding Power supply, it was informed that all 107 11KV feeders are functional in the district. Besides, out of 254 lift/gravity PHE schemes, 3 schemes were affected out of which 2 have been restored and 1 is non-functional.

The Minister was informed that low voltage power supply impacts the proper functioning of water supply schemes in Lolab sub division which are majorly lift based schemes.

Javid Dar directed the concerned PHE Engineer for projecting the issue to his office so that alternative for Gensets shall be explored to ensure uninterrupted water supply to the people.

The Minister directed the concerned officers for connecting left out habitations under Jal Jeevan Mission so that every household gets the piped drink-

ing water supply.

The Minister and the Advisor also reviewed the functioning of Control Rooms. They were informed that Control Rooms at District Level, Sub Division Level and Tehsil level have been established by the District Administration to address the distressed calls and provide immediate support to the people in coordination with the line departments.

Reviewing Health sector, the Deputy Commissioner and CMO put forward the demand for posting of Gynecologist and Anesthetist to the Sub District Hospital Sogam, SDH Kralpora, SDH Tangdar and SDH Kupwara before the Minister and Advisor who assured the same.

The Minister also reviewed the status of ration and essential commodities.

MLA Lolab, Qaiser Jamsheed Lone and MLA Langate, Khurshid Ahmad Sheikh also spoke and put forth issues of their constituencies.

Tourism Directorate Jammu hosts New Year Golf Tournament

JNEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, JANUARY 6

The Directorate of Tourism Jammu, in collaboration with Jammu Tawi Golf Course (JTGC), hosted the much-anticipated Golfers' Day Out and New Year 2025 Golf Tournament at the picturesque Jammu Tawi Golf Course, Sidhra. The event aimed to promote golf as a key tourism product and foster a vibrant golfing culture in the region.

Held under the visionary leadership of Commissioner Secretary to the Government, Tourism Department, J&K Yasha Mudgal, the tournament witnessed an enthusiastic participation from 96 golfers divided into 24 four-ball teams, making it a day-long celebration of skill, precision and sportsmanship.

The tournament was inaugurated by Principal Secretary to the Government, Agriculture, Horticulture, Floriculture, Park & Garden Shailendra Kumar, who teed off the first ball alongside Director Tourism Jammu Vikas Gupta; Secretary JTGC Manav Gupta and Joint Director Tourism, Suna-



ina Sharma Mehta.

Shailendra Kumar emphasized the importance of cultivating a golfing culture, particularly among the youth, and highlighted the tournament's significance in establishing Jammu as a premier destination for golfers. He stressed the need to sustain efforts in fostering sports and tourism, underscoring the potential of golf to enhance the region's profile. Director, Tourism Jammu Vikas Gupta lauded the success of the event, noting that it underscores Jammu's growing prominence as a hub for sports tourism. He reiterated the Department's commitment to supporting initiatives that showcase Jammu as a premier destination for such events, emphasizing the

need for regular tournaments to attract both players and enthusiasts.

Secretary Jammu Tawi Golf Course Manav Gupta expressed his determination to position JTGC as a top destination for golfers. He pointed to the overwhelming response from participants as a testament to the growing interest in golf within the region. Such events, he noted, not only highlight the region's sporting potential but also contribute significantly to its tourism appeal.

Joint Director Tourism Jammu Sunaina Sharma Mehta underscored that women's involvement in golf adds a profound layer of inclusivity and dynamism to the sport. She articulated that such initiatives are instrumental in

elevating Jammu's stature as a distinguished golfing destination, amplifying its tourism allure, and exemplifying the Department of Tourism's resolute commitment to fostering golf as a transformative pillar of sports tourism in the region. Adding a unique touch to the event was the "Golfing Day Out Ladies Putting Competition," designed to encourage women's participation in golf. The competition witnessed enthusiastic participation from women golfers, with Widhana Khan emerging as the winner. The tournament concluded with a grand closing ceremony, where trophies and mementos were presented to the winners and top performers by the distinguished guests.

Religious fervor marks Guru Purab celebration in Poonch

JNEWS SERVICE

POONCH, JANUARY 6

Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Poonch, Vikas Kundal on Monday visited Gurdwara Singh Sabha here in main bazar to extend heartfelt greetings to the Sikh community on the auspicious occasion of Guru Purab, celebrating the Prakash Purab of Shri Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner engaged with members of the local Sikh community, offering prayers and sharing warm wishes with the devotees. His presence



was met with enthusiasm, and the community members expressed their

appreciation for the support and recognition.

The management of

the Gurudwara expressed satisfaction with the arrangements made by the District Administration for the occasion and conveyed their gratitude to the Deputy Commissioner for his visit and support.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized the significance of the event, stating, "This occasion serves as a reminder of our shared values and beliefs. I hope the auspicious day contributes towards strengthening brotherhood, unity, harmony, peace, progress and prosperity in our society."