

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:

- High and continuous fever above 102°F
- Severe joint and muscle pain
- Severe headache
- Stomach pain
- Redness on the skin
- Small red spots on the skin
- Diarrhea
- Steady low pulse or no heart at all
- Redness in the eyes

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

JINDRAH IMAGES

DAILY | JAMMU | VOL NO: 12 | ISSUE NO: 7 | PAGES: 12 | PRICE: Rs 2/- | RNI NO: JKENG/2013/49471 | POSTAL REGD. NO. L-29/JK-497/25-27 | dailyjindrahimages.com/Epaper.php | jindrahimages123@gmail.com

USBRL: CoRS conduct inspection of Katra-Reasi section

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 7

Ahead of its full-operational commencement, the Commissioner of Railway Safety (Northern Circle) Dinesh Chand Deshwal on Tuesday conducted statutory inspection of the Katra-Reasi section of the ambitious Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project.

According to the news agency, the visit was aimed at assessing the progress, safety standards, and operational preparedness.

Moreover, the Railways also announced train timing from Katra to Srinagar, which will take about 2 hours and 30 minutes.

The railway officials said

the CRS conducted a statutory inspection of Katra-Reasi section and also visited Anji Khad bridge, India's first cable-stayed rail bridge, in Reasi district soon after reaching Katra this morning.

Deshwal will be visiting the iconic arch bridge over Chenab at Kauri – the world's highest railway bridge – before the speed trial of Katra-Banihal by CRS Special on Wednesday afternoon, the officials said.

"We are conducting inspections of this (Katra-Reasi rail link) section. Structures like this require close scrutiny and the entire team is working on close inspection after which the team takes call for formal launch of trains operations on this section," said Commissioner of Railway Safety (Northern

Circle) Dinesh Chand Deshwal. Commending the teams of Railways, he said the work is challenging but teams of railway engineers and support inked history by executing such a project with fine finish. He said the government will soon take a call on operationalizing this track.

"This is a new chapter in Railways history and technology used here is very advanced but the inspections are statutory required under SOP before commencing commercial operations of the trains and after verifying its reports, the government starts the formal operations of trains in the line," the officer said.

Deshwal's visit comes a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the

Jammu Railway division from New Delhi, paving the way for efficient management of train services in the northernmost region of India.

Earlier, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw announced the completion of the Reasi-Katra section last month, an important development, which will connect Kashmir with the rest of the country after nearly three decades of stupendous work.

Moreover, Northern Railway announced train timings for this route, which will likely be inaugurated after January 20.

Indian Railways will soon start the Vande Bharat Express train from Srinagar to Katra. The route will be around 100 km and take about 2 hours

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Bye-polls for Budgam and Nagrota to be announced Later, Says CEC

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 7

The Election Commission of India on Tuesday announced that bye-elections for the Budgam and Nagrota constituencies in Jammu & Kashmir will be held later due to snowy conditions.

Addressing a news conference, as per news agency, Chief Election

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Jammu police launch verification drive of spa centres

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 7

In a major crackdown, Jammu Police conducted surprise raids at around 20 spa centres across the city on Tuesday.

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Rules of procedure & conduct of business in J&K Legislative Assembly

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 7

J&K legislative assembly's committee on framing rules Tuesday decided to carry out modifications and adaptations in the rules applicable to the legislature of erstwhile state for

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Terrorists, their supporters deserve equal punishment: LG



JI NEWS SERVICE
UDHAMPUR, JAN 7

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Tuesday said that both those who pull the trigger and those who provide the guns are terrorists and deserve equal punishment.

Addressing the passing out parade of 61 probationer Deputy Superintendents of Police (DySPs) at the Police Academy here LG Sinha, according to the news agency, urged them to perform their duties with honesty, dedication, and high professionalism.

He lauded the Jammu and Kashmir Police for their significant achievements in combating terrorism and restoring peace in the region. "J&K Police have dealt a severe blow to terrorism and its ecosystem. Their responsibility does not end with the killing of a terror-

ist. Behind every terrorist act, there is an entire ecosystem at work. We must target not just the terrorists but also those who radicalize them, supply weapons, provide financial support, and identify targets. It's the

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CM Omar calls on Finance Minister, seeks liberal funding for J&K



JI NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JAN 7

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah on Tuesday called on Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman here to seek liberal funding for Jammu and Kashmir, sources told the news agency.

They said that the Chief Minister pushed for enhancing financial support to the UT for minimizing liabilities of the last financial year.

"The CM is believed to have sought additional financial support from Centre for minimizing liabilities of

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PM Modi to inaugurate crucial Z-Morh Tunnel in Ganderbal on January 26

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 7

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to inaugurate the Z-Morh tunnel in Ganderbal district on January 26, a project expected to prove a game changer in regional connectivity and will improve border security, and enhance civilian and military logistics in the region.

As per the reports received by news agency the tunnel, built at a cost of Rs 2,400 crore, is strategically vital for maintaining uninterrupted connectivity to Sonamarg, a region that often remains cut off during harsh winters due to heavy snowfall. This development is being seen as a major milestone in

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In 2024, 1.80 lakh people died in road accidents: Gadkari

JI NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JAN 7

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Tuesday revealed that in 2024, around 1.80 lakh people died in road accidents across the country.

Speaking after meeting with the transport ministers of several states, Gadkari, according to the news agency, said, "We discussed road safety and agreed upon it being a priority for every State and the Union Territory."



While referring to the deaths in accidents, the Union Minister said.

"In the year 2024, 1.80 lakh deaths have occurred in road safety. 32,000 people have died because of not wearing helmets. The second serious thing is that 60% of accidents have occurred in people between the ages of 18 to 34. Nearly 10,000 people have died due to a lack of proper arrangement at the exit-entry point in front of our schools and colleges."

"Accidents caused by people

without driving licenses have caused around 3,000 deaths. One of the important agendas of our meeting was driving training centers. There are 22 lakh drivers in our country. We have also made a new policy on that," he added.

He said, "Rules have been made for the auto rickshaws and minibuses for our schools so that there is a large-scale increase in accidents. After identifying all this, the reasons were discussed and then everyone decided

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J&K govt has greater responsibilities than clearing snow from roads: Mehbooba

JI NEWS SERVICE
BIJBEHARA (ANANTNAG), JAN 7

People's Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday said the Omar Abdullah-led government has a major responsibility to provide relief to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who have been "enduring a challenging phase" since 2019.

Speaking on the 9th death anniversary of her father and former Chief Minister Mufti Muhammad Sayeed at Daro Shikoh Bagh in Bijbehara, Mehbooba, as per the news agency, said that the Chief Minister of J&K has significant



responsibilities, as the people have elected him, yet he is merely focused on clearing snow from roads.

She said that tasks like road construction, snow clear-

ance and other minor works were carried out even in the absence of a popular government. "However, the core responsibility of the government is to provide relief to the

people of J&K, which is being overlooked," she remarked.

Mufti criticised the J&K government, saying, "Despite having a popular government in place, actions like attaching properties under UAPA, unnecessary verifications, termination of employees and arrests of those who raise their voices continue. What is the purpose of having an elected government if the chief minister remains silent on such issues?"

The chief minister, she said, must speak up. People have elected the government to represent them, not to

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Barring Pahalgam, Kashmir records above normal night temp

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 7

The night temperature has settled above normal across Kashmir barring the famous tourist destination, Pahalgam where the mercury settled at minus 7.8 degree Celsius, which was the coldest place across the Valley. According to the news agency, the minimum temperature in Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, has settled at 0.9 degree while in Qazigund, it has settled at 0.4 degree. Kupwara in north



Kashmir has recorded a low minimum temperature of minus 1.4 degree Celsius while Kokernag recorded a

minimum temperature of minus 0.5 degree.

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DC Bandipora inaugurates Blood donation camp at Kishanganga Power Station

J1 NEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, JANUARY 07

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri, on Monday inaugurated a Voluntary Blood Donation Camp at the NHPC office, organized by Kishanganga Power Station in collaboration with the District Hospital Bandipora.

The blood donation camp witnessed participation from employees of Kishanganga Power Station, healthcare professionals, volunteers, and members of the local community.

Speaking at the event, DC commended the collaborative efforts of Kishanganga Power Station and District Hospital Bandipora, emphasizing that such initiatives besides saving lives inspire others to contribute to societal



well-being. He stated that blood donation is one of the highest forms of community service. He further

stated that each drop of blood has the potential to save lives, and this initiative reflects the spirit

of selflessness and unity.

The camp was supervised by a team of expert medical professionals from District Hospital Bandipora, including Medical Superintendent, who ensured strict adherence to safety and hygiene protocols.

On the occasion, the head of Kishanganga Power Station said that blood is a precious resource and such efforts ensure that we are prepared for medical emergencies. He assured that similar initiatives will continue to be organized in the future, with a vision to create a healthier and more compassionate society.

DC Bandipora convenes meeting to streamline PDS Beneficiary Verification

J1 NEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, JANUARY 7

To streamline the verification process of beneficiaries enrolled in the Public Distribution System (PDS) database, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri on Monday convened a meeting with the concerned officers, here.

The meeting aimed to ensure the accurate identification and verification of beneficiaries under different categories, including Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAY), Priority Households (PHH), and Non-Priority Households (NPHH). The DC emphasized the importance of a thorough and timely verification process to ensure that eligible beneficiaries receive the benefits they are entitled to, while also



preventing any misuse of the system.

During the meeting, the DC issued clear instructions to all concerned officials to adhere to the

guidelines laid down in the Government Order issued last year regarding the same. He directed them to form Tehsil and Village Level Committees

to expedite the verification process and ensure its completion within the stipulated time frame.

Qadri also stressed the need for close monitoring of the verification process by Sub-Divisional Magistrates (SDMs) to ensure transparency and accountability. He directed the concerned to ensure that the PDS system functions efficiently and reaches the most vulnerable sections of society.

The meeting was attended by SDM Sumbal, SDM Gurez, ACR, ACD, CPO, AD FCS&CA, Tehsildars, Block Development Officers, and other relevant officials.

Mission YUVA: Baseline survey to identify aspiring entrepreneurs begins in Bandipora

J1 NEWS SERVICE
BANDIPORA, JANUARY 7

A vibrant launch ceremony of Mission YUVA was held today at the Mini Secretariat, Bandipora, marking a significant step towards making Jammu and Kashmir a hub of enterprise creation and employment generation.

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Bandipora, Manzoor Ahmad Qadri stressed the importance of Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) strategies to channelize the mission effectively.

Highlighting the survey component of Mission YUVA, the DC underlined its basic objective of identifying potential entrepreneurs and urged the enumerators to approach the task with dedication.

He urged Assistant Labour Commissioner (ALC) Bandipora to accelerate the process while ensuring data accuracy.

Speaking at the event, the DC urged senior officials, including ADC, ALC, and AD Employment, to closely monitor the process and ensure assignments are carried out as per job profiles without any changes or swaps.

Speaking on the occasion, Nodal Officer, Entrepreneurship Development Institute (EDI) highlighted the importance of productive interaction between enumerators and aspiring entrepreneurs. She emphasized the need to focus on the target audience to serve them effectively.

She outlined the objectives of Mission YUVA, including enterprise cre-

ation, identification of potential entrepreneurs, and understanding their needs. She stated that Mission YUVA, being an umbrella project, is built on the foundation of 4C's including Culture, Capital, Capacity and Connectivity, which will guide its execution and success.

During the event, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Bandipora, Zaffar Huson Shawl reminded the enumerators that their work should be commendable, as it directly impacts the program's success and emphasized corrective measures should be taken promptly to reduce delays, and additional deployments have been arranged considering the region's challenging terrain and topography.

Joint Director Employment and Nodal Officer for

Bandipora District stressed the need for dedication and persistence from the enumerators and supervisors. She acknowledged the challenges faced at the grassroots level but urged the teams to tackle them with determination to ensure the program's success.

The event concluded with a renewed commitment from all stakeholders to make Mission YUVA a transformative initiative for the district, fostering an entrepreneurial spirit and creating sustainable employment opportunities.

Among others, the event was attended by Assistant Commissioner Development, Chief Planning Officer, Assistant Labour Commissioner, BDOs, Supervisors, Enumerators and other concerned officials.

Winter mitigation measures: Distt Admin Shopian felicitates department heads for exceptional services

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, JANUARY 7



Dr Nasir Ahmad Lone in a function held at Mini Secretariat Shopian.

The District Administration Shopian today felicitated various essential services departments of the district for their exceptional services during the ongoing winter.

The officers of the the MED Shopian, R&B Zainapora & Shopian, MC Shopian and KPDCL Shopian among other departments were felicitated with appreciation certificates by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar and ADDC,

pal services including sanitation, traffic management and others.

KPDCL Shopian was praised for phenomenal service in restoring the electricity by brave men of the department who braved the harshest of temperatures for the public good. The feeders which were out and dead due to heavy snow were restored by the field warriors of the KPDCL in no time, said DC on the occasion.

Similarly, DC also appreciated all officials and officers of revenue, police, Jal Shakti and others.

DM takes stock of development activities and security situation in RS Pura

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 7

District Magistrate Sachin Kumar Vaishya conducted a comprehensive tour of R.S Pura and took stock of development activities and the security scenario in the border Subdivision.

Senior Superintendent of Police Joginder Singh, Additional District Development Commissioner, Sher Singh also accompanied him. During the visit, the officers assessed developmental works, law and order situation and border-related matters. They inspected the Parisha and Palash shelters of the Social Welfare Department to evaluate the facilities and services provided to the inmates.

Awareness program under Mission YUVA (Udyam Jagriti 2.0 – Baseline Survey) held at Kupwara

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KUPWARA, JANUARY 7

The District Administration Kupwara today organized an awareness program as part of Mission YUVA (Udyam Jagriti 2.0 – Baseline Survey), which saw an enthusiastic participation from district officers, supervisors, and investigators.

Addressing the programme, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan appreciated the efforts of the officers including supervisors and investigators for showing good progress in undertaking the Baseline Survey under Mission YUVA. She enjoined upon them to pace up the survey and adhere to the collection of quality data to ensure accuracy of the database which is the key to the success of the Mission YUVA programme.

Earlier, Assistant Director Employment Kupwara emphasized the significance of fostering an entrepreneurial mindset among the region's unemployed youth. He stressed the pivotal role Mission YUVA plays in empowering young people by offering them the necessary tools, knowledge, and financial support to estab-



lish their own enterprises.

He further highlighted how the initiative is a vital step towards transforming the economic landscape of the district by providing youth with avenues to become job creators rather than job seekers.

The Employment Officer engaged the participants with insightful PowerPoint presentation and provided a compre-

hensive overview of the mission's goals, objectives, and the various opportunities it offers to the youth. The presentation served to clarify the process and advantages of participating in the scheme, encouraging the attendees to spread the word and ensure maximum outreach among eligible candidates.

The program conclud-

ed with an interactive session, where participants had the opportunity to ask questions and gain further clarity on the steps to avail the benefits of Mission YUVA. This initiative reflects the district's commitment to enhancing employment opportunities and creating a sustainable ecosystem of entrepreneurship for the youth of Kupwara.

It was informed that a survey of 39000 households has already been completed under Mission YUVA in district Kupwara covering around 2 lakh individuals in the district.

Later, the DC said that Baseline survey is being conducted under Mission YUVA in all 385 panchayats of district Kupwara. To execute the survey, 60 supervisors and more than 1200 investigators have been deputed who have been provided proper training.

The objective of the Mission YUVA is to understand the aspirations and demands of the youth and connect them with self employment schemes of the Government for their better future. She appealed to the people of Kupwara district to participate in the Baseline Survey so that quality data is obtained for betterment and welfare of the unemployed youth.

DLSAs Srinagar & Budgam collaborate to address concerns of Old, terminally ill prisoners

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 7

The District Legal Services Authorities (DLSA) of Srinagar and Budgam convened a significant meeting to address the pressing issues faced by old and terminally ill prisoners.

The meeting, chaired by Nusrat Ali Hakak, Secretary, DLSA Srinagar/Budgam, was conducted in the presence of the Assistant Legal Aid Defence Counsel, DLSA Srinagar. Other members of both districts actively participated in the session through virtual platforms.

The primary focus of the meeting was to identify prisoners in need of immediate legal and humanitarian assistance due to their advanced age or critical health conditions.

After a thorough review and discussion, five such prisoners were identified. These cases were deliberated upon in detail, with participants exploring avenues to ensure their legal rights are upheld and necessary interven-



tions are made to provide them with adequate care.

During the discussions, emphasis was laid on the need for expediting legal remedies for such prisoners, ensuring access to medical care, and advocating for their compassionate release wherever applicable under the law.

The Secretary, DLSA Srinagar/Budgam, stressed the importance of coordination between various stakeholders, including legal aid counsels, prison authorities, and healthcare providers,

to address these issues holistically.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to continue such collaborative efforts to uphold the principles of justice and humanity. Both DLSAs reaffirmed their dedication to supporting vulnerable sections of society, particularly those who are often overlooked. Steps were outlined to follow up on the identified cases and monitor their progress to ensure effective outcomes.

DC Kulgam reviews progress of works under Jal Jeevan Mission

JJ NEWS SERVICE
KULGAM, JANUARY 07

In order to evaluate the progress of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in the district, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today chaired a meeting with concerned officers of the Jal Shakti Department at mini-secretariat, here.

During the meeting, the DC reviewed both the physical and financial progress of the works being executed under the JJM in the district.

The Executive Engineer gave a detailed brief of all works to the chair. It was also informed that under the JJM, the district has a total of 143 schemes encompassing 222 works, with several works already completed.

Emphasizing the impor-



ance of JJM as a flagship program aimed at covering all households, officers were instructed to work in coordination to ensure the smooth execution of JJM works in their respective areas by the DC.

Various issues and bottlenecks impeding the speedy completion of few projects were comprehensively discussed during the meeting.

The DC instructed the concerned to ensure

timely completion and target achievement under Jal Jeevan Mission.

He instructed for strict measures like penalties and blacklisting of contractors/firms failing to meet project conditions and deadlines.

The meeting was attended by ADDC, Bashir Ahmad Wani, ADC, Viqar Ahmad Giri, Superintendent Engineer, Executive Engineers, AEEs and other officers.

Mission YUVA: DE&CC Baramulla hosts capacity building seminar at Sheeri

JJ NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, JANUARY 07

The District Employment and Counseling Centre (DE&CC), Baramulla, today organized a one-day capacity-building seminar at Narwah in Sheeri, as part of the IEC (Information, Education & Communication) campaign for Mission YUVA (Yuva Udyamita Vikas Abhiyan).

The seminar was presided over by the Additional Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Raina and was attended by the Assistant Labour Commissioner, Assistant Director Employ-

ment, and witnessed significant participation from enthusiastic youth and local stakeholders.

The seminar, part of Project YUVA, focused on empowering young individuals with the knowledge and skills necessary to embark on entrepreneurial ventures and seize employment opportunities. The initiative aligns with the government's vision to promote self-reliance and job creation in the region.

Speaking during the workshop, the ADC emphasized that through initiatives like Project YUVA, aim is to trans-

form the aspirations of our youth into tangible achievements and underscored that the district administration remains committed to creating a conducive environment for employment and entrepreneurship. Dr. Zahoor Ahmad further stated that the district administration has deployed 1,500 invigilators to carry out a comprehensive baseline survey aimed at identifying unemployed youth and empower them by facilitating access to sustainable livelihood opportunities.

In his address, the AD, DE&CC Baramulla elaborated on the various

schemes and programs designed to support youth in achieving financial independence, including, financial assistance programs, skill development workshops and business mentorship initiatives.

Throughout the day, a series of interactive sessions were conducted by experts in financial literacy and covered topics such as effective business strategies, and leveraging government schemes for self-employment. The participants also had the opportunity to engage directly with resource persons to seek advice and share their ideas.

Power Shutdown

JJ NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 7

According to the Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPDCL, in order to carry out Augmentation/ thickening of conductor (0.1+0.1) to 0.2 Panther conductor from Pampore Grid to Khadermoh in Phase-I, the shutdown of 33KV Pampore-Pulwama line shall be observed due to which Receiving Stations at Nawa, Kakapora, LIS Marvel Stage I, II, III & IV shall remain off while power supply to the Kakapora, Nawa, Gadoora, Parigam, Narbal, Ukhoo and Marvel areas will be affected from 10:00 AM to 04:30 PM on 15, 18 and 21 January, 2025.

ADDC Rajouri reviews progress of central schemes, CAPEX budget

JJ NEWS SERVICE
RAJOURI, JANUARY 07

Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa today chaired a meeting in the Conference Hall of the DC Office to review the progress achieved under the CAPEX budget, including Untied, DDC, BDC, and PRI works, besides Centrally Sponsored Schemes.

The ADDC conducted a blockwise review of the physical and financial progress of ongoing projects and directed the departments to prioritize the initiation of allotted works within 05 day and ensure the timely completion of those



already underway. Pending works were instructed to be tendered at the earliest to avoid unnecessary delays.

The meeting witnessed the participation of key officers, including Assistant Commissioner Panchayats (ACP) Sheraz Chouhan,

Chief Planning Officer (CPO) Maqsood Ahmed, District Statistics and Evaluation Officer (DSEO) Sandeep Sharma, District Panchayat Officer (DPO) Ch. Mohd Nawaz as well as BDOs and AEEs from various blocks.

DC Kathua reviews Republic Day-2025 preparations

JJ NEWS SERVICE
KATHUA, JANUARY 7

Deputy Commissioner Kathua, Dr. Rakesh Minhas today chaired a meeting of line departments to review arrangements for the Republic Day-2025 celebrations at the District Headquarters.

It was decided that the main function will be held at Kathua Sports Stadium, where the National Flag will be unfurled by the chief guest, followed by a parade comprising contingents from J&K Police, CRPF, PTS, Home Guards, NCC cadets and school children. The celebrations will commence with Shehnai Vadan to be played by the Information Department in the early hours of the day.

The meeting included detailed discussions on key arrangements such as drinking water, power



supply, sanitation, barricading, security, traffic regulation, seating arrangements, fire safety, medical teams, and illumination of government buildings and landmarks.

Dr. Minhas directed all departmental heads to ensure that necessary arrangements are in place well in advance for the smooth and enthusiastic celebrations of the national event. He emphasized inter-departmental coordination to make the function a grand success.

The Deputy Commissioner also urged district and sectoral officers to ensure the active participation of all officials in the celebrations.

The meeting was attended by SSP Kathua Shobit Saxena, ADDC Kathua Surinder Mohan, ASP Kathua, ADC Kathua, CPO, XEN PWD and other senior officers from Civil Administration and Police.

DC Kupwara finalizes arrangements for Lolab Winter Festival



JJ NEWS SERVICE
KUPWARA, JANUARY 7

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today convened a meeting of concerned officers to finalize the arrangements for conduct of the Lolab Winter Festival.

On the occasion, the DC directed the concerned officers to make fool proof arrangements for vibrant and smooth conduct of the Lolab Winter Festival in the serene Lolab valley.

To ensure well organized facilities and participation of local populace in the Lolab Snow Festival venue, a Committee consisting of CEO LBDDA, SDM Lolab and Tehsildar Sogam was designated who shall personally monitor the arrangements in coordination with different departments and stakeholders.

Police department will ensure security arrangements and participation of the Police band. DFO Kamraj will decorate the venue and make arrangements for the Bonfire.

Besides, installation of stalls displaying information related to various government schemes and achievements will be done by the Forest department, Industries, YS&S, CEO LBDDA, Handicrafts/ Handloom, NRLM and Agriculture & allied departments. Besides, GM DIC and District Officer KVIB shall ensure ATV, Snow biking, Zip Lines and Ice skating facilities at the venue.

Several other arrangements which were finalized include publicity of the festival, sanitation and cleanliness of the venue, decoration of sports, Igloo competition, transport, road clearance, seating/heating arrangements, fire tender etc and the concerned officers were directed to ensure the same at the venue well before the beginning of the event.

The meeting was attended by CEO LBDDA, SDM Lolab, ASP Kupwara, ACD, ACP, CPO, DFO Kamraj, XEN R&B Lolab, besides, officers from Police and Army were present in the meeting.

J&K Pavilion emerges as most celebrated attraction at IIMTF 2024

JJ NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, JANUARY 6

The Jammu and Kashmir pavilion, with its stunning display of regional craftsmanship, authentic products and emerging entrepreneurial talent, emerged as one of the most popular and celebrated attractions in the 23rd India International Mega Trade Fair (IIMTF), held at the Science City Grounds in Kolkata from December 20, 2024, to January 6, 2025.

The pavilion, being sponsored by the Jammu and Kashmir Trade Promotion Organisation (JKTPO), featured 21 dedicated stalls including contributions from women entrepreneurs, one of whom, an award recipient, showcased live Pashmina weaving at her stall.

This vibrant platform allowed artisans and businesses from Jammu and Kashmir to display their unique products. The exhibition offered a diverse range of high-quality items including Pashmina Shawls, Sozni embroidered textiles, GI-tagged Kashmiri saffron, dry fruits, hand-embroidered Phiran, and organic food products such as Honey, Anardana, and Rajmash from Jammu. These traditional, meticulously crafted products attracted significant attention from the visitors.

The pavilion offered



visitors the chance to purchase one-of-a-kind items, while fostering direct interactions between the artisans and guests. This engagement allowed them to discover the intricate techniques and stories behind each creation, which in turn helped many artisans generate valuable business leads. The immersive experience not only added value to the products but also deepened the appreciation for Jammu and Kashmir's rich artistic heritage.

The event proved to be a tremendous success, achieving sales of around Rs 1.3 crore and generating more than 1,900 business leads for future orders. This exceptional response highlights the rising demand for Kashmiri products and underscores the growing recognition of region's craftsmanship both in domestic and international markets.

IIMTF 2024 featured over 1,000 stalls repre-

sending exhibitors from 20 Indian states and 15 countries worldwide and Jammu & Kashmir Pavilion was one of the major attractions for the visitors. JKTPO had successfully participated in prominent events such as the IITF 2024 in Delhi, PITEX in Amritsar, CII Fair in Chandigarh, MSME Expo in New Delhi etc. Besides, JKTPO organised J&K Textile Sourcing Fair 2024, J&K Trade Show 2024 (Summer Edition) and Basmati Fest 2024 to effectively showcase Jammu and Kashmir's economic potential.

In the coming months, the JKTPO will enhance its outreach by participating in major events like MITEX Mumbai, Surajkund Mela and Bharat Tex 2025. Additionally, it will host the 2nd Agro and Food Fest on January 22, 2025 and the JK Trade Show 2025 (Winter Edition) on January 31, 2025.

Red Cross Bhawans established in snow bound areas for care of expecting mothers

JJ NEWS SERVICE
DODA, JANUARY 7

In light of the ongoing winter season, the District Administration Doda, under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Sh. Harvinder Singh, has established Red Cross Bhawans to provide emergency healthcare to expecting mothers residing in snowbound and far-flung areas.

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Dr. Om Kumar stated that these Red Cross Bhawans have been set up in collaboration with the Health Department at key locations, including Girls Hostel GHSS Doda, Trauma Hospital Khellani, SDH Baderwah, CHC Thathri, and SDH Gandoh. These facilities have been dedicated to provide specialized care to pregnant women of the respective areas to ensure safe deliveries.

The CMO further informed that accommodation along with meals will be provided to the pregnant woman and her attendant during their stay at these facilities, ensuring

DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION'S INITIATIVE

DEPTT. OF HEALTH & FW DODA

RED CROSS BHAWAN
For Pregnant Ladies-

Dedicated to providing care & support to pregnant women from remote & inaccessible areas during winters, ensuring safer deliveries & better healthcare access.

ESTABLISHED AT

- Girls Hostel, GHSS Girls Doda
- SDH Gandoh
- CHC Thathri
- Trauma Hospital Khellani
- SDH Baderwah

24x7 Helpline Service
01996-233542

YOUR HEALTH IS OUR PRIORITY. STAY SAFE!

comfort and proper care prior to the delivery.

Dr. Om Kumar appealed to families having expecting mothers and living in snowbound and remote areas to utilize these services by visiting the nearest Red Cross Bhawan. He emphasized that the initiative aims to prioritize the health and safety of both mothers and newborns during this challenging winter period.

For further assistance or inquiries, the general public can contact the District Control Room of the Health Department at 01996-233542.

This proactive measure underscores the commitment of the District Administration and Health Department to safeguarding maternal and child health, especially in challenging weather conditions.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-AUCTION NOTICE

The Senior Divisional Commercial Manager/FS, Northern Railway, Firozpur for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Auction from eligible and registered bidders for the following works over Firozpur Division.

Catalogue No.	Auction Start	Name of work
EAZR-SLR25-08	27/01/2025 at 11:00 Hrs.	Allotment of contract for leasing of parcel space in Train No./SLR compartment: 11906-F1, 12550-F1, 14662-R1, 14662-F1, 20498-F1, 14654-F2, 14504-R1, 14662-F2, 19326-F1, 14610-F1 & 11906-R1.

For other details and registration, please visit Railway website www.ireps.gov.in. 67/2025

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No:- 285, 286-2024-25-ADEN-LDH & 287, 288-2024-25-ADEN-JRC Date: 03.01.2025

Sr.DEN-IFZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E- Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www.ireps.gov.in with closing date- 27.01.2025 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against these tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. In place of Earnest money deposit, "Bid Security Declaration" is to be submitted on prescribed format as available in document section on the portal.

Tender Type	Tendering Section	Bidding System
Open	Works	Two Bid System
Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Starting Date	Bid Closing Date/Time
02.01.2025	13.01.2025	27.01.2025/ 15:00 Hrs

S. No.	Tender No.	Details of Tender
1.	285-2024-25-ADEN-LDH-FZR	Providing and erecting Metal beam crash barrier & RCC Boundary wall along the track to prevent CRO on SNL-JRC section in the jurisdiction of SSE/W/LDH.
	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money
	20,62,09,318.72/-	11,81,100,00/-
	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
	90 Days	06 Months
Similar Nature of work:- "Any civil work other than track work".		
2.	286-2024-25-ADEN-LDH-FZR	Providing and erecting Metal beam crash barrier & RCC Boundary wall along the track to prevent CRO on SNL-JRC section in the jurisdiction of SSE/W/PGW.
	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money
	21,94,81,565.86/-	12,47,400,00/-
	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
	90 Days	06 Months
Similar Nature of work:- "Any civil work other than track work".		
3.	287-2024-25-ADEN-JRC-FZR	Providing and erecting Metal beam crash barrier & RCC Boundary wall along the track to prevent CRO on SNL-JRC section in the jurisdiction of SSE/W/JRC.
	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money
	18,12,03,682.70/-	10,56,000,00/-
	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
	90 Days	06 Months
Similar Nature of work:- "Any civil work other than track work".		
4.	288-2024-25-ADEN-JRC-FZR	Providing and erecting Metal beam crash barrier & RCC Boundary wall along the track to prevent CRO on SNL-JRC section in the jurisdiction of SSE/W/MEX.
	Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money
	19,89,47,319.19/-	11,44,700,00/-
	Validity of Offer	Period of Completion
	90 Days	06 Months
Similar Nature of work:- "Any civil work other than track work".		

Note. 1. Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against tender.

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 57/25

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

USBRL: CoRS conduct...

and 30 minutes. According to the timing schedule, the Vande Bharat Express train will depart from Katra at 8.10 am and arrive in Srinagar at 11.20 am.

Mail Express: Train timings

Mail Express will run twice every day from Katra: Departure at 9.50 am and arrival in Srinagar at 1.10 pm, and departure at 3 pm and arrival in Srinagar at 6.20 pm.

Train timings from Srinagar to Katra

Mail Express will depart from Srinagar at 8.55 AM and arrive in Katra at 12.05 PM. The second run will be at 3.10 PM and arrive in Katra at 6.30 PM.

Vande Bharat will depart from Srinagar at 12.45 pm and arrive in Katra at 3.55 pm. The Vande Bharat train will leave Delhi at 7 PM and arrive in Srinagar at 8 AM.

The Katra-Srinagar section of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) is the most challenging part of this project. This rail link is considered a remarkable feat of engineering and has few comparisons around the world.

Katra-Srinagar stations and fare

Seven stations connect Katra and Srinagar include Reasi, Sawalkot, Sangaldan, Ramban, Banihal, Qazigunj and Bijbehara.

Fare

The fare from Katra to Srinagar is not set yet. However, the fare for the Vande Bharat train is expected to be between Rs 1500 and Rs 1600 for the AC chair car, and the fare for the executive chair will likely be around Rs 2000 to Rs 2500.

Katra-Srinagar Vande Bharat facilities

The railways have shared that the train route between Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra and Srinagar is designed to handle the tough weather and high altitudes in Jammu and Kashmir. Passengers will have many facilities. For instance, during winter, the coaches will have water lines and heating to keep passengers warm in the cold. KNO

Terrorists, their...

responsibility of the prosecution to ensure that terrorist supporters are dealt with strictly as per the law, and the entire terror network is dismantled," LG said, adding, "One more column of prosecution be added to the achievements and it should be ensured that the investigation of every crime is taken to its logical conclusion. Investigation and successful prosecution are important weaponries of effective policing."

The Lieutenant Governor also lauded the J&K Police for its civil action programmes.

He said, "Jammu and Kashmir Police's hard work has given people the freedom to breathe without fear. The police force has eliminated separatism and terrorism over the past three decades, working in close coordination with other security agencies. Their efforts will be recorded in golden words in the history of the region."

The LG also commended the professionalism and dedication of the J&K Police, calling them one of the most experienced and skilled forces in the country.

LG Sinha reiterated his vision of an "Atank-Mukt Aur Bhaya-Mukt Jammu and Kashmir, (terror and fear free)" emphasizing the collective aspiration of all citizens for a terror-free and fear-free state.

NARCO-TERRORISM, DISINFORMATION CAMPAIGNS BIG THREATS

LG Sinha highlighted the growing threat of narco-terrorism, which he said is being sponsored from across the Line of Control. "Narco-terrorism, social media weaponization, disinformation campaigns have also emerged as big threats to internal security and harmony in the society. I call upon young police officers to work with new ideas, new tools, and lead the fight against Narco-terrorism, drug trafficking, cyber-crime and counter radicalization," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Highlighting the diverse educational qualifications of the 61 newly inducted DySPs, which include 15 B.Tech and 2 M.Tech graduates, LG Sinha encouraged them to leverage their knowledge and train their subordinates effectively to face emerging challenges. "From today, the nation is entrusting you with the important responsibility of maintaining internal security, combating terrorism, ensuring rule of law, and a safe and secure environment for the people. I wish you victory in every mission," he said.

WARNS ABOUT FIFTH-GENERATION WARFARE, CYBER THREATS

LG warned of the growing challenges posed by fifth-generation warfare, particularly misinformation campaigns and cyber threats. "The police must adopt modern technical tools to counter these dangers and safeguard society," he said.

LG Sinha called upon the J&K Police to use the innovative tools to enhance its capabilities in countering disinformation and dealing with cross-border cyber threats.

"Modern technology like Artificial Intelligence tools have changed the security landscape. Challenges of disinformation and deep fakes remain major concerns," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor called for better use of technological tools to maintain law and order and remain constantly vigilant for effective monitoring and responding to challenges in real time, while also anticipating and analysing changes in the criminals' Modus Operandi to remain a step ahead. "We need to shift our tactics from the reactive nature of policing to proactive nature of policing," he said.

Director, Udhampur Police Academy Garib Dass briefed about the program and various activities conducted during the training course.

The Lieutenant Governor took the ceremonial salute and inspected the parade. He also felicitated the new recruits who excelled during their training.

An oath was administered to the passing out DySPs for performing their duties with dedication and honesty.

DGP, Nalin Prabhat; Principal Secretary, Home Chandraker Bharti, senior officials of Police, Security Forces and civil administration and family members of the passing out DySPs were present.

Lal Chand, Chairman, District Development Council,

JAKFAS Launches Digital Calendar 2025

JJ NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, JAN 7

Jammu and Kashmir Finance and Accounts Society (JAKFAS) today launched the Digital Calendar 2025 unveiled by the Sh. Fayaz Ahmad Lone, Director General Accounts and Treasuries, J&K in the presence of Sh. Mahesh Das, Director General Codes; Shri Mohammad Sultan Malik, Director General Budget; and Ms. Neeraj Gupta Bakshi, Director General, Local Fund Audit & Pensions J&K (Joined Virtually), alongside the President JAKFAS, Ms. Rashim Deepika. The event was attended by Director Finance(s), Joint Direc-

tors(FA/CAOs); Deputy Directors and other members of the JAKFAS with many officers participating virtually.

Themed around "Digital J&K," the Calendar 2025 highlights the transformative digital initiatives under-taken by the Finance Department, Government of Jammu & Kashmir in particular, marking a milestone in integrating technology with governance. Tools such as e-Kuber, e-Gras, BEAMS, the Janbha-gidari Portal, and the PROOF App are prominently featured alongside other initiatives, showcasing the Government's commitment to transparency, efficiency, and citizen-centric

service delivery.

In a special message featured in the calendar, the Honorable Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Mr. Omar Abdullah has commended JAKFAS for their visionary effort in highlighting the essence of Digital J&K through this initiative and urged all to embrace technology as a powerful tool to create a brighter, more efficient, and progressive Jammu and Kashmir.

Shri Santosh D. Vaidya, Principal Secretary to the Government, Finance Department, stated in his message that the launch of the JAKFAS Digital Calendar, dedicated to Digital J&K, is a testament to their commitment to pro-

moting progressive governance. He applauded the JAKFAS for this creative initiative and urged everyone to support and leverage these reforms for a modern, inclusive, and efficient Jammu and Kashmir.

In his message, Shri Fayaz Ahmad Lone, DGAT, applauded the JAKFAS for recognizing the power of digital transformation. He described the Digital Calendar as a brilliant step in celebrating these advancements and inspiring everyone to contribute to this remarkable journey.

Ms. Rashim Deepika, President JAKFAS, added in his message that, "The Digital Calendar is more than a tool for organiz-

ing schedules; it symbolizes our forward-thinking approach, sustainability, and a shared vision of modernizing how we manage time and resources. By going digital, we not only contribute to environmental conservation but also foster a culture of efficiency and accessibility among our members."

The JAKFAS Digital Calendar 2025 underscores the Union Territory's journey toward excellence in e-governance. It celebrates the administration's commitment to innovation, reform, and participatory governance, setting a benchmark for public administration across the country. This marks a significant step

forward in leveraging technology to streamline planning, organization, and service delivery for the year ahead.

The event was also attended by Executive Members of JAKFAS, including Secretary General Body, Anil Dogra; Vice President (Kashmir) Mr. Rafiq Shah; Vice President (Jammu) Rahul Mahajan; General Sec-retary Mohd Akram Thakar; Publicity Secretary Tariq Malik; Finance Secretary, Dr. Anand Thakur Sen; Cultural Secretary; Sonam Singh; Sports Secretary, Simarjeet Singh and Media In-charge Hitesh Choudhary, many of whom joined vir-

tually.

Udhampur; Balwant Singh Mankotia and Sunil Bhardwaj, Members of Legislative Assembly and prominent citizens in large numbers were also present on the occasion. KNO

CM Omar calls...

Rs 10000-12000 crore accumulated in 2023-24," they said.

Omar, according to the sources, held pre-Budget consultations with the Union Finance-Minister and sought much-needed support from the Centre for the region."

"The Finance Minister assured all possible support to J&K Chief Minister and assured him that his concerns will be addressed," sources said, adding that the J & K Chief Minister's meeting the Union Ministers is an ongoing process of administrative work.

Pertinently, Omar had met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on November 15, 2024 and today's meeting was his second within a span of one and a half month.

After meeting the Finance Minister Omar Abdullah had shared on Instagram- "Called on Union Minister of Finance and Corporate Affairs, smt.@nsitharaman ji. Our discussion centred around crucial economic matters concerning Jammu and Kashmir. I passionately advocated for much-needed support from the Union Finance Ministry for the region."

He had expressed optimism that collaborative efforts with the Central Government would enhance financial stability and promote sustainable development in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Chief Minister had sought support of the Union Finance Minister to avail the multi-lateral funding for development of new tourism destinations in Jammu & Kashmir, aimed to decongest the existing locations and to create well-planned and world-class infrastructure at these new identified locations.

The CM had thanked the Ministry of Finance for approving the Competitiveness Improvement of Agriculture & Allied Sectors Project (JKCIP) for Jammu & Kashmir to rejuvenate the agriculture sector which entails financing of 100 million USD through International Fund for Agriculture Development (IFAD) over the next 7 years.

In this regard CM had requested the Ministry of Finance to treat J&K at par with North Eastern States for availing incentives in respect of Externally Aided Project (EAP) loans and making J&K eligible for special lending arrangement under the EAP loans.

He had also requested the Finance Minister to consider Jammu & Kashmir for funding through the "Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment" scheme under which a 50-year interest free loan would be provided to states for capital expenditure.

The CM had also informed the Finance Minister about the difficult fiscal situation being faced by J&K and requested the Ministry to provide additional central assistance of Rs 6000 crore to bridge the resource gap in the UT budget for FY 2024-25. KNO

PM Modi to...

improving infrastructure and ensuring all-weather accessibility in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The Z-Morh tunnel is a game-changer for both the military and civilians. It will facilitate faster deployment of troops, seamless supply of military equipment, and uninterrupted transport of essential goods to border areas. Improved connectivity will also enhance travel speed between Jammu and Kashmir and other regions, easing movement for local residents," says a senior official associated with the project.

"With the completion of the Z-Morh tunnel, connectivity to Sonamarg will now remain intact even during severe weather conditions," said Harpal Singh, General Manager of the National Highways Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd (NHIDCL). Singh credited the success of the project to local workers and engineers, with 90% of the workforce hailing from Kashmir, Doda, and Banihal.

The tunnel is expected to provide a major boost to tourism in Sonamarg, which has traditionally remained inaccessible for six months of the year due to snowfall. "This project will enable safe travel through avalanche-prone areas and significantly reduce travel time from Gagangir to Sonamarg to just 30 minutes," said Riyaz Ahmad, a local resident.

Ahmad highlighted that the tunnel's completion will enhance winter tourism, offering a lifeline to businesses and livelihoods in the region that have been adversely affected during the off-season.

Construction of the Z-Morh tunnel began in 2020 but faced delays, including a setback due to a militant attack in September. Despite these challenges, the project is now ready for inauguration. Officials have confirmed that the Prime Minister will e-inaugurate the

tunnel on Republic Day, and that it will be the government's push for infrastructure development in Jammu and Kashmir. KNO

In 2024, 1.80 lakh...

together that we would try to reduce it."

ANNOUNCES CASHLESS TREATMENT

Gadkari announced a new scheme to provide cashless treatment to road accident victims. "Once the police are informed within 24 hours of the accident, the scheme will immediately provide for the victim's cost of treatment for 7 days, or a maximum of Rs 1.5 lakh. In case of death in a hit-and-run case, the immediate family of the deceased person will receive Rs 2 lakh," he said, adding, "We piloted this cashless project in some states. We noticed some weaknesses in the scheme. We are improving them and this will definitely be beneficial."

Gadkari also spoke about scrapping of old vehicles. "Our automobile sector will grow profoundly because of scrapping. This is because aluminum, copper, steel and plastic are recycled," he said.

"Maruti Suzuki's scrapping centre is exporting some of these parts to Japan. Tire powder is being added to bitumen. So this will become a circular economy. The scrapping policy will create more jobs in the country. Union and state governments will cumulatively earn additional GST worth Rs 18,000 crore through it," Gadkari said.

He said India's automobile industry became the third largest in the world around four months back, leaving Japan behind. "When our government took charge in 2014, the size of our automobile industry was Rs 7 lakh crore. Today, that has increased to Rs 22 lakh crore," he added. KNO

J&K govt has greater...

remain silent, she added.

The PDP chief added, "Even graveyards are silent, but that doesn't mean there is peace. Similarly, they claim there is peace in J&K, but if anyone raises a voice, they are arrested."

Mehbooba also slammed the National Conference (NC), saying they initially opposed the installation of digital meters and promised free electricity units to the people. Now, they have shifted their stance, saying free electricity will be considered only after the full installation of digital meters, she said.

Mufti questioned why Kashmiris are being "targeted through various means" and called for raising these issues. She said the PDP has always spoken up and will continue to speak up for the people.

The former CM also expressed concern over property reservations, alleging that the rights of ordinary Kashmiris are being taken away. She urged the government to address these issues at the earliest.

Mehbooba said while there is tourism in J&K, business in Jammu has suffered. She urged the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to reopen the Jammu-Sialkot route to revive business in the region.

She also criticised projects that she said threatened to snatch the livelihoods of Kashmiris. Most people now depend solely on orchards for their survival, she said.

Remembering her late father, Mehbooba said Mufti Sayeed believed in a secular India and was a staunch supporter of Gandhi's vision of the nation. "He worked for the welfare of the people of J&K and gave them a healing touch, which is desperately needed again today," she said.

Mufti assured that her party would take every necessary step to "pull the people out of the current situation".

All party leaders and thousands of PDP workers gathered to pay tribute to the party founder, Mufti Muhammad Sayeed, who passed away in 2015. KNO

Bye-polls for...

Commissioner Rajiv Kumar said the schedule for the bye-polls in Budgam and Nagrota will not be announced today due to the adverse weather conditions in the region. "There are two constituencies in J&K which are also due for elections: Budgam and Nagrota. Because of snow conditions, we will do it later. We still have time till April; before that, we will complete the election," he said.

Omar Abdullah vacated the Budgam seat on October 21, while the Nagrota seat became vacant on October 31 following the demise of Devinder Singh Rana. According to section 151A of the Representation of Peoples Act-1951, a bye-election for filling any vacancy must be held within six months from the date of the occurrence of the vacancy.

So election of these seats has to be completed before April 20. While the BJP is likely to field Devinder Singh Rana's daughter, Devyani Rana, as its candidate for the Nagrota seat, there is widespread curiosity about who the NC's candidate for the Budgam seat will be. The NC has not provided any hints about its candidate, evoking interest among political observers and voters alike.

In the 2024 J&K polls, Omar Abdullah won the Budgam seat by defeating Muntazir Mehdi, son of separatist leader Agha Hassan, by a margin of more than 18,000 votes. Devinder Singh Rana won the Nagrota seat by defeating Joginder Singh of the National Conference by 30,472 votes. KNO

Jammu police...

According to the information received, the police conducted simultaneous raids at 20 spa centers operating the Jammu city and verified its documents.

"The teams checked various documents of the centers included operational permissions, rent deeds, documents of employees, ESCI credentials of working staff, hygiene and other laid down norms to ascertain legality of these centers," police officials told the news agency.

The raids were conducted in areas including Channi Himmat, Greater Kalish, Sanik Colony.

The police seized a large quantity of objectionable and obscene materials during the operation. During these raids an atmosphere of chaos was created on the spot.

Superintendent of Police, Jammu South, Ajay Sharma said that police received frequent complaints from aware citizens about unethical activities being carried out in spa centres across the city. Acting on these complaints, simultaneous raids conducted at 20 locations in Jammu south.

He said moreover, an ex employee of one such center leveled serious allegations against his owner and FIR has been registered at police station Channi Himmit. KNO

Rules of procedure...

conducting business in the Union Territory's law-making House.

Sources told news agency that the committee headed by Speaker Abdul Rahim today met and held threadbare discussions on framing the rules of procedure and conduct of business in the House.

After examining legal provisions governing framing of business rules, the panel decided to carry out necessary adaptations and modifications in the old rules for conducting routine business in the House.

A member of the committee, wishing anonymity, said that existing rules would continue but necessary modifications and adaptations would be carried out due to reorganization of J&K. "The Reorganization Act authorizes the Speaker to make any necessary modifications and adaptations to these rules and standing orders to ensure their effective application," he said.

Another member of the committee, who also wished not to be named, said that references to J&K Constitution, Governor, Legislative Council and Joint Selection Committee (JSC) would be deleted from the old Rules for their effective applicability to the UT Assembly.

"In the old rules, there are references to the legislative council but the Council doesn't exist anymore. So you need to delete it from the rules," he added.

He said the committee would examine the draft proposal regarding the necessary changes to be made in the rules in its next meeting.

"The Assembly staff would put the draft proposal before the committee. We are hopeful that we will carry out modifications before commencement of the budget session," he said.

The budget session of the J & K legislative assembly is likely to start from the first or second week of February. KNO

Barring Pahalgam...

Gulmarg, a famous ski-resort, has recorded a minimum temperature of minus 6.6 degree Celsius.

The weatherman has however, predicted dry weather conditions for the next three days, saying that the weather would remain generally dry till January 10.

Director Meteorological department (MeT), Dr Mukhtar Ahmad, said that there is a possibility of light snow at isolated to scattered places on January 11 and 12.

Furthermore, he added that the weather would remain generally dry from January 13 to 15.

In its advisory, the local MeT has said that in view of fresh snowfall, sub-freezing temperature & icy conditions over roads plains and higher reaches, the tourists, travelers and transporters are advised to plan accordingly & follow administration and traffic advisory. KNO

Vi introduces annual recharge portfolio with "SuperHero" offer

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 7

Leading telecom operator Vi has introduced an innovative annual recharge proposition named "SuperHero," offering unlimited high-speed data between 12 AM and 12 PM every day for an entire year. This industry-first initiative caters to the growing demand for uninterrupted and affordable internet connectivity.

Vi's SuperHero plans include three value-packed annual recharge options designed to provide up to 25% savings compared to monthly plans. These packs deliver enhanced value with features such as half-day unlimited data access, a daily quota of 2GB high-speed data for the

remaining 12 hours, and Weekend Data Rollover, which allows unused weekday data to be utilized over the weekend.

To further enhance convenience, Vi has introduced the Data Delight feature, enabling users to avail an additional 1GB of emergency data twice a month without any conditions. These plans also include a one-year subscription to leading OTT platforms like Disney+ Hotstar Mobile or Amazon Prime Lite, depending on the selected pack.

Costing as low as Rs 10 per day, these plans are an attractive option for customers seeking cost-effective, hassle-free solutions to meet their connectivity and entertainment needs. The SuperHero packs

not only ensure seamless data access but also offer unlimited voice calls and 100 SMS per day for a year.

The three annual recharge options available are priced at Rs 3599, Rs 3699, and Rs 3799. While the Rs 3599 plan focuses solely on connectivity benefits, the Rs 3699 pack includes a Disney+ Hotstar Mobile subscription worth Rs 499, and the Rs 3799 plan offers an Amazon Prime Lite subscription valued at Rs 799.

Vi's SuperHero plans are tailored to meet the diverse requirements of customers while delivering substantial savings and unmatched convenience, making them a game-changer in the prepaid recharge segment.

Udyam Jagriti 2.0: Baseline survey campaign launched in District Ganderbal

JI NEWS SERVICE
GANDERBAL, JANUARY 07

As part of the Udyam Jagriti 2.0 campaign, a Baseline Survey event was held at Duderhama, Ganderbal, under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shyambir.

The event aimed to ensure the successful implementation of the campaign by equipping the supervisors and enumerators with the necessary guidance and motivation to carry out the survey with dedication and precision. Addressing the gathering, the DC highlighted the importance of the Baseline

Survey in identifying key areas for intervention and urged the supervisors and enumerators to work diligently to achieve the objectives of the campaign. He emphasized the role of accurate data collection in shaping developmental initiatives under Udyam Jagriti 2.0. Assistant Director Employment & Counseling Centre, provided a comprehensive overview of the Baseline Survey and its integration with Mission YUVA, emphasizing its significance in empowering the youth and boosting local entrepreneurship.

During the event, master trainers and supervisors briefed the

participants on the technical aspects of the survey process and addressed challenges that might arise during implementation. Open discussions allowed participants to share insights and solutions for effective execution. The event witnessed active participation from local residents, social workers, and other stakeholders, showcasing collective enthusiasm for the campaign's success. The District Administration remains committed to ensuring the smooth execution of Udyam Jagriti 2.0 and encourages active cooperation from all sections of society to achieve its objectives.

DC Shopian for efficient verification of beneficiaries under PDS



JI NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, JANUARY 7

A meeting on efficient verification of beneficiaries of Public Distribution System (PDS) was today held at Mini Secretariat Shopian under the chairpersonship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar.

The verification process for availing the benefits under the National Food Security Act shall be undertaken across the district by multiple teams of officers and officials.

Village level teams of frontline workers of different departments including Revenue, FCS&CA and RDD have been constituted to verify the antecedents of ration card holders in the district, the officer of the concerned department intimidated.

A total 61000 ration

card holders are to be verified in the district for ascertaining their economic status afresh and their eligibility thereof under the scheme.

Tehsil and block level teams have been constituted and deputed to oversee the verification process of village level committees as per norms.

The DC tasked the officers associated with the process to monitor time bound verification of the teams and to ensure that the whole exercise is done with impartiality and integrity.

Shahid called for conducting massive door to door visits by the teams to take on spot appraisal of the verification process.

The meeting was attended by ACD, AD FCS&CA, Tehsildars, BDOs, TSOs and other officers.

DC Poonch delivers relief material to fire victim

JI NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, JANUARY 07

Deputy Commissioner Poonch Vikas Kundal today provided essential relief material to Shabir Hussain, a resident of Village Gursai whose home was damaged in a fire on December 25, 2024.

The relief package including tents, kitchen sets, blankets etc was provided under the Red Cross initiative as an immediate relief to the



victim and his family in this difficult time.

The Deputy Commissioner reaffirmed the administra-

tion's commitment to assist those affected by such tragedies and ensuring their swift recovery.

ADC Jammu reviews performance of banks at DLRC meeting

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 7

A District Level Review Committee (DLRC) meeting was convened today under the chairpersonship of Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Anusya Jamwal to evaluate the performance of banks in the district, with special focus on clearance of credit linked self employment schemes cases and the achievement against set targets.

The meeting was attended by RBI Manager-LDO Amit Kumar; Lead District Manager Romesh Chander; Chief Planning Officer Uttam Singh along with representatives from different banks and district officers.

The meeting prioritised discussions on sectors such as education, entrepreneurship and agriculture. A comprehensive review of



departmental performances was conducted, focusing on schemes including the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, Prime Minister's Employment Generation Programme and PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi).

ADC Anusya Jamwal emphasised the imperative for all banking institutions to enhance their efforts to elevate the district's financial performance. She highlighted Jammu's status as an economic hub, underscoring the necessity for superior banking operations to support this standing.

The ADC called for regular monthly monitoring to evaluate progress, urging the adoption of standardised procedures to ensure efficiency. She stressed the importance of timely loan disbursements to sustain the momentum of government schemes, thereby fostering economic growth and development.

The ADC also evaluated the activities of the Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI), emphasising the institute's role in promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship within the district.

Mission YUVA: IEC awareness programme on Baseline Survey held at Kulgam

JI NEWS SERVICE
KULGAM, JANUARY 7

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan Tuesday presided over the Udyam Jagriti (2.0) IEC Awareness programme regarding Baseline Survey under Mission YUVA at Mini-Secretariat Kulgam.

The DC emphasised upon all the officers and officials involved in Baseline Survey to carry out the assigned task with utmost diligence & professionalism.

Assuring enumerators of all the possible support from District Administration, DC informed the audience that dedicated committees including Monitoring Committee and Control room have been set up to provide all the possible technical expertise and help as and when required by the field investigators/enumerators.

Further, while directing for adhering to the timelines regarding accomplishment of the task, the DC laid emphasis on high quality and accurate data capturing so that prospective beneficiaries can be identified to facilitate their livelihood/employment generation under Mission YUVA.

ADDC and DSEO Kulgam in their address requested people of Kulgam to cooperate and provide correct information and details to the visiting enumerators/investigators. The enumerators were also instructed to disseminate the information among target groups about the robust support mechanism envisaged under Mission YUVA.

DDC reviews progress under PMAY Urban in Poonch District



JI NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, JANUARY 7

A meeting was convened today to review the physical and financial progress under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana Urban (PMAY-U) in Poonch District.

The meeting was chaired by District Development Commissioner (DDC) Poonch, Vikas Kundal, at his office Chamber.

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Municipal Council Poonch presented an overview of the ongoing works, beneficiary registration under PMAY-U, highlighting both achievements and challenges that require immediate attention.

During the meeting, the DDC assessed the town-wise registration status under the PMAY-U scheme and directed the authorities to organize special camps in both municipalities of the district. He emphasized the need to expedite the registration process for PMAY-U Phase 2.0 beneficiaries on a fast-track basis, ensuring dual

verification to maintain integrity and include only eligible beneficiaries.

The DDC instructed the Executive Officer to take prompt action to recover funds from beneficiaries who have received advance mobilization but have failed to commence construction and are identified as defaulters. He also directed the Executive Officers to ensure the timely completion of all pending houses within the designated timeframe.

The DDC urged the concerned departments to strictly adhere to scheme guidelines and maintain a transparent and accountable process for the benefit of the local population. The meeting concluded with the DDC reiterating the importance of equitable scheme distribution, timely project execution, and improved monitoring mechanisms to achieve developmental goals.

The meeting was attended by DGM JK Housing Board, Executive Engineer Jal Shakti, Executive Engineer JPDCL, CEO MC Poonch/ Surankote, Tehsildar Haveli/ Surankote.

Chief Minister condoles sudden demise of son of Tahir Ajaz

JI NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 07

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the sudden demise of Imad Tahir, son of Tahir Ajaz, JKAS, Additional Secretary in the Chief Minister's Secretariat, at his Srinagar residence. Imad was a student of Class 10.

In his condolence message to the bereaved family, the Chief Minister conveyed his heartfelt sympathy, stating that words could not fully express his sorrow at such

a tragic loss.

He extended his deepest condolences to Tahir Aijaz and his family, offering prayers for the eternal peace of the departed soul and strength to the family to bear this irreparable loss.

"The news of Imad's untimely passing has left me at a loss for words. I can only pray that the family finds the strength and forbearance to cope with this devastating tragedy. My thoughts and prayers are with them during this difficult time,"

said Chief Minister Omar Abdullah.

The Chief Minister further assured the bereaved family of his support and solidarity in this challenging period.

Also, all staff members of the Chief Minister's Secretariat extended their heartfelt condolences to Tahir Aijaz and his family on the untimely passing of their young son. They prayed for the eternal blessings of the departed soul and strength for the family in this time of sorrow.

Satish Sharma calls on Union Minister; discusses issues regarding road, transport infra in J&K

JI NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 7

Minister for FCS&CA, Transport, Youth Services & Sports, I&T, S&T, ARI & Trainings, Satish Sharma, today called on Union Minister for Road, Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari in New Delhi and discussed the development scenario in J&K related to road infrastructure and transportation.

Satish Sharma expressed gratitude for all the sup-

port being extended by the Union government towards development of the region. He apprised the Union Minister of status of the road network in J&K. He stated that J&K being a mountainous region requires good road connectivity to develop the far-flung areas.

The Minister also submitted a memorandum mentioning the construction and repair of several roads, highways and bridges throughout J&K. He urged for a dedicated cor-

ridor for Jammu Airport to Padamshri Padma Sachdev College for Women, Grade elevator for K C Theatre BC Road to Mandal, one elevated corridor from Jewel Chowk Jammu to Canal Road crossing to be connected with Akhnoor flyover.

Similarly, Satish Sharma also demanded one elevated corridor from Akhara Maisuma Chowk to Dalgate Srinagar, an elevated corridor from Qamarwari to Srinagar city, one elevated

corridor for Downtown Srinagar just parallel above the existing route/roads from Soura-Nowhatta-Bohri Kadal-old city-Habba Kadal area besides elevated corridor/4-laning on Boulevard road from Dalgate to Nishat area, second bridge over Jhelum with viaduct connecting existing Abdullah bridge Rajbagh and Lal Mandi Road, Srinagar.

The Minister requested for under passes for the pedestrians and Mono-Rail under Urban Transporta-

tion, development of Integrated Transport Hubs to improve multimodal connectivity in Jammu and Srinagar cities.

Satish Sharma also urged for four laning/upgradation of road connectivity in border areas especially Akhnoor-Chhamb and Kupwara-Uri (Border Transportation) besides enhanced allocations under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) for remote and border villages.

DC Shopian visits Mughal Road



JI NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, JANUARY 7

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar today visited Mughal Road to assess the snow clearance operations, currently underway across the arterial road.

The DC was informed by an Officer from the Mechanical Engineering department that snow clearance is currently underway, with 31.50 km of the road already cleared up to Aliabad Sarai.

However, the officer further apprised that snow clearance operation

may take little more time than anticipated, due to road blockage caused by rock falls at the 31.50 km mark. To proceed with the snow clearance, the rock debris needs to be cleared first, after which the team will continue snow clearance uphill towards Peer Ki Gali.

The DC instructed the concerned to initiate the clearance of rock debris immediately today itself so as to complete the snow clearance on the road by tomorrow.

ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone; ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz, ACR and other officers were also present.

EDITORIAL

A wake-up call in winters!

In the harsh winters of Jammu and Kashmir, the bitter cold drives many households to seek warmth through traditional means, often with unintended and tragic consequences. Despite repeated warnings from health authorities, nine lives, including those of young children, have been lost in just six days due to asphyxiation caused by improper use of charcoal or gas heaters. These incidents underline the urgent need for public awareness and preventive measures to avert such heartbreaking outcomes. On the first day of 2025, three youths from Jammu—Mukesh Singh, Ashutosh Singh, and Sunny Choudhary—were found dead under mysterious circumstances in a guest house in Bhaderwah, Doda district. A charcoal heater discovered in their room suggests asphyxiation as the likely cause. Similarly, in Kulgam, a mother and her son fell victim to carbon monoxide poisoning, with the son succumbing to the fumes while the mother remains in critical condition. The most devastating incident occurred in Pandrathan, Srinagar, where a family of five, including three young children, perished after using an electric blower in an inadequately ventilated room. These tragedies highlight the silent killer that is carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Often referred to as the “invisible enemy,” CO is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless gas that can quickly become fatal. Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS) has reported a concerning rise in CO poisoning cases and issued an advisory emphasizing the importance of preventive measures. Yet, the recurrence of such incidents reveals a gap in awareness and adherence to safety practices. Households relying on gas heaters, charcoal stoves, or fireplaces, as well as individuals using generators or vehicles in poorly ventilated spaces, are particularly vulnerable. Poorly ventilated workplaces and confined spaces also pose significant risks. Early detection is crucial. Symptoms of CO poisoning include headaches, dizziness, nausea, fatigue, confusion, and, in severe cases, chest pain. If any of these signs appear, immediate action can save lives. The safety tips can significantly reduce the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning including installation of Carbon Monoxide Detectors to ensure detectors are placed near sleeping areas and are in working condition with fresh batteries, avoiding indoor use of charcoal or gas heaters as these can quickly create dangerous CO levels in confined spaces, ensuring proper ventilation to maintain airflow in rooms with fuel-burning appliances, inspection of Chimneys and Vents to regularly check for blockages to allow proper gas expulsion and avoiding running vehicles in Closed Garages to keep the garage door open or refrain from running the vehicle inside. Preventing these tragedies requires collective efforts. Health departments, local authorities, and community leaders must collaborate to raise awareness about the dangers of carbon monoxide and the importance of safety measures. Educational campaigns, distribution of carbon monoxide detectors, and strict enforcement of safety regulations are necessary steps to protect lives. The recent spate of deaths is a stark reminder of the devastating consequences of ignoring safety protocols. As winter deepens in Jammu and Kashmir, let us prioritize the well-being of our families and communities by taking proactive steps to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. These simple yet effective measures can make the difference between life and death.

Turning Canada's crisis into India's opportunity

DINESH SOOD

For years, Canada has been a top destination for Indians, especially Punjabis, seeking quality education and better employment opportunities. However, as Canada grapples with various socio-economic challenges, the situation has created a ripple effect with unforeseen opportunities for India. While the crisis in Canada poses significant concerns, it also presents a moment for introspection and action for India's young workforce. India stands at a unique vantage point, with its burgeoning youth population and a growing demand for skilled workers across key sectors like IT, hospitality, transportation, beauty and wellness, and retail.

The current global workforce shortages highlight India's potential to bridge these gaps while empowering its workforce to meet domestic and international demands. With over 65 per cent of its population under 35, India boasts one of the world's youngest and most vibrant workforces.

This demographic advantage positions the country as a potential global talent hub. However, the critical challenge lies in transforming this potential into a skilled, job-ready workforce. While India's youth are ambitious and eager, many lack access to industry-relevant skills and training. Bridging this skills gap is crucial for ensuring employability and driving

economic growth. Canada's challenges serve as a wake-up call for India to accelerate its focus on skill development, especially in sectors that align with global demand.

Global Demand Beyond Canada

While Canada's crisis has brought attention to the workforce, opportunities extend far beyond North America. Countries in Europe, as well as South Asian nations like Taiwan and Vietnam, are also facing workforce gaps and require skilled, hardworking individuals.

With its demographic advantage and growing focus on skill development, India is well-positioned to fill these gaps. By aligning training programs with the specific needs of these markets, India can cement its reputation as a global supplier of talent. Bridging the Skills Gap with Policy Support India has already made strides in skill development through initiatives like Skill India, Digital India, and the National Skill Development Mission. However, these efforts must be scaled and aligned with global standards to capitalise on emerging opportunities, and the private sector truly should be able to design certification programmes that meet international benchmarks. Hands-on training, internships, and industry-specific curricula ensure that Indian workers are both employable and competitive globally. Equitable access to skill development programmes is



critical. Government subsidies, partnerships with educational institutions, and digital learning platforms can make high-quality training accessible even in rural areas. Technology can be a game-changer in India's skill development journey. Online learning platforms, virtual reality simulations, and AI-driven personalised training modules can revolutionise how skills are imparted.

These tools make training accessible to even the country's remotest corners, enabling millions to participate in the economic mainstream. Skill development should focus on employment and fostering entrepreneurship. For instance, a trained beauty and wellness professional could start a salon, or a logistics expert could launch a delivery service. With mentorship and financial support, such ventures can create jobs and spur regional economic growth.

Key Sectors with Growing Opportunities

1. Information Technology (IT):

India's IT sector is already a global leader, but the rapid advancements in artificial intelligence, cloud computing, and cyber security require a highly skilled workforce. As digital transformation reshapes industries worldwide, there is a pressing need for talent proficient in emerging technologies. Training programmes should focus on data analytics, AI applications, and cyber security protocols to meet global standards.

2. Hospitality and Tourism:

With increasing international and domestic travel, the hospitality and tourism sectors demand professionals with strong soft skills, cultural competence, and customer service excellence. Vocational training in these areas, coupled with language enhancement programs, can help Indian youth secure lucrative positions both at home and abroad.

3. Transportation and Logistics:

The transportation industry is a vital economic pillar, requiring

skilled personnel for logistics management, safety protocols, and infrastructure operations. By offering targeted training in these areas, India can create a workforce ready to address the growing demand in this sector.

4. Beauty and Wellness:

Often overlooked, the beauty and wellness industry has witnessed exponential growth globally. This sector offers immense opportunities, from cosmetology to spa therapies and holistic wellness. By blending traditional Indian practices with modern techniques, India can produce skilled professionals catering to diverse cultural needs worldwide.

5. Retail:

The rise of e-commerce and the evolution of traditional retail have created a demand for skilled workers in inventory management, customer relations, and digital marketing. Training programmes focused on these areas can help India's youth tap into this dynamic sector.

A Collaborative Effort Capitalising on these opportunities requires a coordinated effort between the government, private sector, and educational institutions. Policies should focus on creating industry partnerships, providing financial incentives for skill development, and ensuring that training programs are aligned with market demands.

At the same time, private enterprises must invest in upskilling ini-

tiatives and collaborate with training institutes to design job-ready curricula. International partnerships can also be vital in providing Indian workers with exposure to global best practices.

Seizing the Moment India's youth stand at the cusp of a transformative moment. By equipping them with the right skills, the nation can address unemployment, meet global workforce demands, and drive economic growth. The current challenges faced by countries like Canada remind us of the interconnectedness of global economies and the opportunities that lie within crises. This is an opportunity for India to fill workforce shortages in other nations and elevate its standing as a global talent powerhouse. By focusing on skill development today, India can ensure a brighter, more prosperous tomorrow for its young generation and the nation.

As the world navigates economic uncertainties, it is not the crises that define us but how we respond to them. This is a moment for India to turn challenges into opportunities and empower its youth to shine within the country and on the global stage.

(The writer is co-founder and MD of Orane International, a training partner of the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) and a network Member of India International Skills Centres, an initiative of Gol. The views expressed are personal)

The Transformative Power of Yoga

RAVI VALLURI

Hatha Yoga lays emphasis on the overall well-being of the body while nurturing the mind and spirit of the seeker. The bedrock of this yogic technique is strongly based on the traditional eight limbs of yoga as expounded by Patanjali in his Yoga Sutras. These are 10 quotes on yoga by Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar which help one to appreciate the depth of yoga.

1. “Like a flower bud, human life has the potential to blossom fully. Blossoming of human potential to fullness is yoga.” Yoga is a discipline that is both gentle and powerful for

uniting body, breath and mind in awareness. It integrates elements from all the different paths of yoga where you get a glimpse of Raj Yoga, Ashtanga or Hatha Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga as well Gnana Yoga making the yogic experience wholesome.

2. “Yoga brings knowledge, passion and action together.” Yoga is not just doing some body-twisting postures - it is experiencing the union of the body, mind and breath.

3. “Yoga is a study of life, study of your body, breath, mind, intellect, memory and ego; study of your inner faculties.” The practice of yoga has been known for centuries to produce benefits in the

areas of health, mental clarity and spiritual connection.

4. “Withdraw your senses from the object to its source, then the union happens, then the yoga happens.” One must learn the correct way of doing asanas and pranayama.

5. “Peace is our very nature, and yoga leads you to inner peace.” Yoga teaches one how to pay attention to what one experiences inside and what is the state of mind. Declutter the mental chatter.

6. “The purpose of yoga is to stop suffering even before it arises.” Yoga is a holistic way of energising and integrating mind, body and spirit.

7. “Yoga is not just weight-loss programme; it is a science to make one feel lighter. It helps to lose the mental stuff of anger, jealousy, hatred, greed, etc.” During the Sri Sri Yoga basic programme that is taught in 10 to 12 hours at the Art of Living Retreat, certified teachers help to experience the real depth of yoga that brings benefits not just at the physical level but at the mental, emotional and spiritual level too.

8. “One of the rules of yoga is to cultivate the practice of being happy.” Everybody ultimately wants to be happy. But what is real happiness? The wise say that shifting gears from the pursuit of

happiness to being happy makes happiness a journey rather than the destination, which is the key.

9. “The wisdom of yoga transforms one from arrogance to self-confidence; meekness to humility; from dependence to a realisation of interdependence.” One may wonder if yoga is a self-help programme. Taught at various levels, yoga programmes connect one with ancient wisdom and nourish one's inner beauty as a human being.

10. “The wisdom of yoga transforms one from craving freedom to recognition of the ‘unboundedness’, from limited ownership to oneness with the whole.” Does it seem incredulous?

But yes, this is indeed the real potential of yoga. Simple yogic postures, rejuvenating breathing techniques, and blissful meditations integrated with the invaluable ancient wisdom of yoga put one on the path of genuine life transformation. As a yoga explorer with over a decade and a half of experience, I can state that all fellow explorers can dive deeper and experience what it takes to be a real yogi (or yogini).

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

Cooperative entrepreneurship: A pathway to inclusive growth and social justice

BINOD ANAND

Cooperatives operate as dual-purpose entities-economic organisations and member-centric institutions-with the aim of maximising member benefits while maintaining operational efficiency. Their governance structures emphasise democratic decision-making and resilience, making them particularly relevant in regions like Eastern India, where socio-economic disparities hinder development. By aligning member incentives with enterprise goals, cooperatives drive regional economic growth and nurture local entrepreneurship.

Worker cooperatives and employee-owned businesses exemplify how collective ownership transforms workplaces. Through reinvesting prof-

its locally and prioritising social objectives over profit maximisation, cooperatives contribute to community development and social impact. Eastern India can draw inspiration from dairy cooperatives like Amul and the Amreli Model, which have uplifted rural communities by ensuring fair pricing, market access, and technological support.

The historical evolution of cooperatives highlights their relevance in modern economies. Grounded in principles of democratic governance, voluntary participation, and equitable resource distribution, cooperatives ensure equal decision-making power for all members, irrespective of socio-economic status.

This inclusivity can significantly impact Eastern India by bridging developmental gaps and fostering socio-economic resilience.

Research underscores how cooperative structures promote innovation through shared ownership and long-term perspectives. Their resilience during economic downturns, supported by collective decision-making, creates an environment conducive to entrepreneurial activities. Innovations in worker cooperatives worldwide, such as those studied by Virginie Pérotin, offer replicable models for Eastern India to boost creativity and efficiency in community-driven enterprises.

Cooperatives integrate economic, social, and environmental objectives, aligning closely with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By addressing socio-economic disparities and promoting equitable wealth distribution, cooperatives serve as engines of inclusive



growth.

Policy recommendations advocate for robust frameworks to amplify their impact on sustainable development. In Eastern India, cooperatives can tackle regional challenges like agricultural inefficiencies and lack of industrialisation, fostering local enterprises and generating jobs. A recent government

decision to extend PM Fasal Bima Yojana benefits to Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) marks significant progress in financial inclusion and risk mitigation for marginalised groups. This initiative ensures access to crop insurance, protecting vulnerable farmers from losses due to unpredictable weather patterns. In

Eastern India, where agriculture forms the backbone of rural livelihoods, this extension can stabilise incomes and encourage cooperative farming ventures.

Historical evidence shows that regions with robust cooperative farming models have achieved significant socio-economic upliftment. Cooperatives

enable collective bargaining for better input prices and market access, while providing small and marginal farmers with resources to modernise agricultural practices.

Eastern India can build on these successes by developing region-specific cooperative frameworks to address local agricultural challenges and enhance farming resilience.

Amul Dairy Cooperative in Gujarat serves as an exemplary model, organising millions of dairy farmers to ensure fair prices and market access while uplifting rural communities. Another noteworthy example is the Lijjat Papad Cooperative, run by economically disadvantaged women, showcasing how small-scale production can evolve into a globally recognised enterprise.

Cooperatives are crucial for fostering social

justice in Eastern India by addressing systemic inequalities and promoting inclusive growth. They enhance financial inclusion by offering microfinance options, enabling marginalised groups to access entrepreneurial capital. By eliminating middlemen, cooperatives ensure fair pricing for products and services, advancing economic equity. Their governance structures also help members develop leadership skills, strengthening their role in community affairs. Women-centric cooperatives, in particular, provide financial independence, leadership opportunities, and platforms to address gender-specific challenges.

(The writer was the member of the MSP committee formed by the central government; views are personal)

HMPV: Centre urges States to review surveillance on respiratory illnesses

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 7

Amid the rise in Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) cases in India, the Centre on Tuesday asked the States to review surveillance on respiratory illnesses in the country.

The country has reported so far seven cases of HMPV from Karnataka (2), Gujarat (1), and Tamil Nadu (2). All the cases were detected in young children ranging from 3 months old to 13 years old.

"States must strengthen and review the influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI) surveillance," said Union Health Secretary Punya Salila Srivastava, while chairing a meeting with States/UTs in a virtual mode.

She reiterated that an increase in respiratory illnesses is usually seen during the winter months.



"The country is well prepared for any potential surge in respiratory illness cases," the Health Secretary said.

"There is no cause of concern for the public from HMPV which has been present globally since 2001," Srivastava added.

The meeting was conducted to review the pres-

ent situation of respiratory illnesses in India and the status regarding the HMPV cases following media reports of a surge in HMPV cases in China, and the public health measures for their management.

It was attended by Dr Rajiv Bahl, Secretary (DHR); Dr (Prof) Atul Goel, DGHS; Health Secretaries and officials of States,

experts from NCDC, IDSP, ICMR, NIV, and State Surveillance Units of IDSP.

"There is no unusual rise in ILI/SARI cases anywhere in the country", said Srivastava, citing data from the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP). This was also corroborated by the ICMR sentinel surveillance data.

Srivastava also advised the States to enhance awareness among the population regarding the prevention of transmission of the virus with simple measures such as washing hands often with soap and water; avoid touching their eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands; avoid close contact with people who are exhibiting symptoms of the disease; cover mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, etc.

HMPV is one of the many respiratory viruses that can cause infections in people of all ages, particularly during the winter and early spring months. The virus infection is usually a mild and self-limiting condition and most of the cases recover on their own. It was informed that adequate diagnostic facilities are available with the ICMR-VRDL laboratories.

India prepared to respond promptly to any emerging health challenges: J.P. Nadda on HMPV

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

India's surveillance network remains vigilant and the country is ready to respond promptly to any emerging health challenges, Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda said on Monday, as the number of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) cases in the country reached five in a single day.

Five children tested positive for the virus in Karnataka (2), Gujarat (1), and Tamil Nadu (2). The affected children are recovering well, while one has been discharged, the health authorities said.

In a video message, Nadda said that the HMPV virus is not a new virus.

"It was first identified in 2001 and has been circulating in the entire world since many years. It spreads through the air by the way of respiration. This can affect persons of all age groups. The virus spreads more during the winter and the early



spring months," said the Union Minister.

The Health Ministry, the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR), and the National Centre for Disease Control are keeping a close watch on the situation in China, as well as in neighbouring countries, Nadda assured.

"The WHO has taken cognisance of the situation and will share its report shortly with us. The country data for respiratory viruses available with ICMR and the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme has also been reviewed," he said, adding that the country is ready

to respond promptly to any health challenges.

"There is no reason to worry. We are closely monitoring the situation," he added.

According to former ICMR scientist Dr Raman Gangakhedkar, HMPV is definitely not deadly, and there is, to date, no evidence of mortality or a severe transmission rate.

"We can say HMPV is definitely not deadly. Most infections are mild, and only in children who are less than five and those who are over 65. It can cause common cold-like symptoms for 4 to 5 days," Gangakhedkar told IANS.

Nothing to panic about HMPV, don't jump at detection of every pathogen: Soumya Swaminathan

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

There is nothing to worry about the Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV), said the World Health Organisation's former Chief Scientist, Dr Soumya Swaminathan on Monday, even as two more cases have been detected in the country, taking the tally to 5.

She noted that the virus is not new and causes only mild infections.

"#HMPVirus is nothing to panic about. It's a known virus that causes respiratory infections, mostly mild," Swaminathan said in a post on social media platform X.

Warning people to not jump at the detection of every pathogen, she listed out precautionary measures like washing hands.

"Rather than jump at detection of every pathogen, we should all take

normal precautions when we have a cold: wear a mask, wash hands, avoid crowds, consult a doctor in case of severe symptoms," the noted scientist said.

She noted that as per ICMR, HMPV accounts for about 3 per cent of respiratory pathogens detected in the laboratory network, testing influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI) cases.

Influenza A & B, SARS-CoV-2 and RSV are other circulating viruses, she said, adding "no deaths reported in India so far".

The expert's assurance comes even as five children tested positive for the virus in Karnataka (2), Gujarat (1), and Tamil Nadu (2) on Monday.

All the affected children are recovering well, while one has been discharged, the health authorities said.

HMPV virus: Karnataka to take precautions to prevent infection spread, says Siddaramaiah

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, JAN 6

In the wake of the detection of two cases of the Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) virus in Karnataka, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday said that the government will take appropriate precautionary measures to prevent the spread of the infection.

Speaking to the media at Vidhana Soudha, the Chief Minister said: "The HMPV virus has been reported in China, and information has emerged that the virus has been detected in Karnataka as well. Therefore, instructions have been issued to the Health Department to take precautionary measures to prevent the spread of this virus."

The Health Minister has already held a meeting, and the Health and Medical Education Departments will take the neces-

sary steps to control the spread of the virus, he stated.

Asked about the possibility of resuming screening at airports as a preventive measure, Siddaramaiah responded: "The Health Minister is holding discussions regarding this, and decisions will be made about the precautionary measures to be implemented in the state."

Meanwhile, Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao speaking to media after the emergency meeting regarding the HMPV virus, said: "The public is panicked over the issue. The China outbreak information is everywhere. The HMPV virus is found in two persons in the state, this also created fear among people."

"I am telling you clearly, the HMPV virus is naturally present in the country. Influenza-like illnesses (ILI) like cough, cold and



respiratory infections. HMPV is one among them. This is not a new virus in the country," he clarified.

The minister noted that it can't be branded as dangerous and fatal as it has been present for many years in the country and the world. "It came to be detected for the first time in the Netherlands. The Central government and Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), those who carry out surveillance... when such ILI cases come up, one per cent of the population

will get HMPV. The data is available in this regard," he said.

"The fatalities are minimal. When the HMPV virus gets into the body, it will be there for some time and after treatment, it will vanish. In two cases, one kid is already discharged and another kid is also doing fine and will be discharged in a day or two," Rao maintained.

"Thinking that something big is happening and all will have to wear masks or no one should come out is wrong. There

is no proposal to impose a lockdown. I request media not to create panic," he appealed.

"If there are more symptoms, take care and avoid crowded places. But the public can remain calm. There is no harm to life with the HMPV infection. There is no information about the new China strain. The Central government is monitoring the developments," Rao said, adding that this was what was discussed in the emergency meeting.

"If it is a mutated virus, the cases should go up in the country. The trend is not seen anywhere in India. There is no outbreak or a large number of cases reported. The infection is found more among children and aged," he stated.

"The tests are conducted normally. We will move forward only when the Central government gives guidance in this regard for

testing," he said. "Be normal and take precautions. Any further development... we are connected to the government of India and ICMR. We will let the public know if there is any development," Rao said.

There are many positive cases of HMPV in Puducherry and Gujarat. There is no necessity for studying. If there is a situation in future, we will deal with it, he said.

"Last year, more than 2 lakh cases of ILI were reported in our state but there was no case of mortality. HMPV case is not notifiable, it comes under the umbrella of ILI," he stressed.

"In case of any emergency or spike in cases, we have all infrastructure. It is like Covid-19 and our system is in place. But there is no situation existing in the state as such," Rao reiterated.

100-day TB elimination campaign: 1.48 lakh new cases identified in a month, says Nadda

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 6

About 1.48 lakh new tuberculosis (TB) cases have been identified in the first 30 days of the 100-day TB elimination campaign, Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda said on Monday.

The 100-day TB elimination campaign was launched in December 2024 to intensify progress towards ending the disease. The campaign focusing on 347 high-burden districts in 33 states, aimed to improve case detection, reduce diagnostic delays,

and boost treatment outcomes.

"More than 2 crore people screened; 1.48 lakh new TB cases identified in the first 30 days of the campaign," said Nadda, while chairing the Joint Strategy Meeting with 21 Line Ministries for TB Mukta Bharat Abhiyan at Vigyan Bhawan here.

Nadda stated that "Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave the clarion call to eliminate TB from the country by 2025, much before the 2030 deadline of the Sustainable Development Goals 2030."



He highlighted the strides made by India in the direction of eliminat-

ing TB, as reflected in the recent WHO report.

"The reduction in TB

cases in India has been 17.7 per cent which is almost double that of the global

reduction. The treatment coverage has increased from 53 per cent to 85 per cent while there has been a 21.4 per cent decline in the death rate due to TB from 28 lakhs to 22 lakhs," the Health Minister said, citing the WHO report.

Nadda stated that the campaign exemplifies a united approach to TB elimination, leveraging the strengths of diverse stakeholders.

The Union Health Minister urged for collaborative efforts under a whole-of-government approach to fulfil the target of eliminat-

ing TB by 2025.

"Sustained partnerships, active participation, and a nationwide commitment are essential to achieving the ambitious goal of a TB-Free India," he added.

Minister of State for Health and Family Welfare Anupriya Patel stressed the importance of field activities to engage and mobilise the masses through innovative activities.

Various Ministries, including Women and Child Development, informed their contribution to the campaign; and

assured their efforts to strengthen the fight support to eliminate TB.

"Since the launch of the campaign, more than 14 lakh Anganwadi workers are contributing to ensure nutrition in the rural areas through the Poshan Maah and Poshan Pakhwara activities that can ensure nutrition to the affected patients," WCD Minister Annapurna Devi said.

"Their active role in eliminating the stigma related to TB prevalent in rural areas will motivate people to come forward for TB screenings."

23 students hospitalised due to food poisoning in Telangana

AGENCIES
KARIMNAGAR, JAN 7

Twenty-three students of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule Gurukul School in Sharmanagar, Karimnagar town, fell ill due to suspected food poisoning on Monday night.

Of these, 13 students were hospitalized, while 10 received medication and were discharged.

The incident occurred

after the students consumed a meal of cabbage curry served at the school. By midnight, several students began vomiting, prompting the staff to suspect food poisoning and take immediate action.

Additional Collector Prapul Desai visited the school on Tuesday to inspect the premises and review the situation. He emphasised the importance of maintaining

hygiene and instructed the school authorities to ensure cleanliness to prevent such incidents in the future.

The 13 students currently receiving treatment at the Karimnagar Government Hospital are reported to be in stable condition. Hospital Superintendent Veera Reddy assured parents and staff that none of the students were in critical condition, bringing relief to all concerned.

Two children test positive for HMPV in Chennai, recovering

AGENCIES
CHENNAI, JAN 6

Two children in Chennai have tested positive for Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) and are recovering, officials said on Monday.

Doctors stated that both cases are linked to common respiratory symptoms such as fever, cold, and cough.

Tamil Nadu Health Department officials told IANS that proactive measures are being taken to prevent the further spread

of the virus. They also said that the affected children are recovering well.

The first case was reported at a private hospital in the Chetpet area, where a child was admitted with respiratory symptoms, including fever, cold, and cough.

Following diagnostic tests, the child was confirmed to be infected with HMPV.

Another child receiving treatment at a private paediatric hospital in Guindy also tested positive for the virus.

Both children exhibited similar symptoms, which initially appeared to be typical seasonal illnesses but were later identified as HMPV after detailed medical evaluations.

Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV), first identified in 2001, is a respiratory virus primarily affecting young children, older adults, and individuals with weakened immune systems. It belongs to the same family as the Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV) and causes symptoms ranging from mild

cold-like signs to severe respiratory illnesses, such as pneumonia and bronchitis.

Common symptoms of HMPV include fever, cough, nasal congestion, shortness of breath, wheezing, and fatigue.

Severe cases may require hospitalisation, particularly for vulnerable groups like infants and older adults.

State Health Department officials are holding discussions to implement safety measures and preventive actions across

Tamil Nadu. Both the HMPV virus and SARS-CoV-2 virus share similarities, as they cause respiratory diseases in people of all ages.

Young children, older adults, and those with weakened immune systems are at higher risk of severe illness. Both viruses spread through respiratory secretions from coughing and sneezing, close personal contact, touching contaminated objects or surfaces and then touching the mouth, nose, or eyes.

India will soon be a nation of 1 billion voters: CEC Rajiv Kumar

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 7

Chief Election Commissioner of India (CEC) Rajiv Kumar announced on Tuesday that India is poised to become a nation with one billion registered voters, the largest voter base in the world.

Speaking at an Election Commission of India (ECI) press conference held at the Plenary Hall of Vigyan Bhawan in the national capital, CEC Rajiv Kumar stated, "2024 has been a significant year globally, with nearly two-thirds of the democratic world going to polls."



He highlighted India's electoral milestones in 2024, saying, "We conducted elections in eight states and Union Territories, as well as the general elections, setting multiple records."

These include maximum voter turnout, violence-free elections, record seizures, and enhanced participation by the public, especially women."

Expressing optimism about the future of democracy, Kumar added, "I hope democracy continues to strengthen in this manner."

The CEC revealed that India is nearing a historic milestone, stating, "Our electoral rolls released yesterday, and in four more states today, show that we are crossing 99 crore registered voters. Soon, we will be a nation

of one billion voters, the maximum in the world."

Highlighting the increasing participation of women, CEC Kumar noted, "The number of women registered as voters will also surpass 48 crore in this SSR (Special Summary Revision). This is a very strong indicator of women's empowerment."

Kumar, along with Election Commissioners Gyanesh Kumar and Dr Sukhbir Singh Sandhu, also announced the dates for the Delhi Legislative Assembly elections.

Delhi will go to polls on February 5, with the

results to be declared on February 8.

The date of the Issue of the Gazette Notification is January 10, the last date for making nominations is January 17, the date for scrutiny of nominations is January 18, and the last date for withdrawal of candidatures is January 20.

Speaking about Delhi's significance, the CEC said, "Delhi symbolises diversity, with people from various states and cultures residing here. This diversity increases the responsibility of Delhiites. I hope 'Dilli Dil Se Vote Karegi (Delhi will vote from the heart)."

By-election to Ayodhya's Milkpur on Feb 5, fresh BJP-SP poll battle in the works

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 7

The Election Commission of India (ECI) on Tuesday announced February 5 as the date for the much-anticipated by-election to Ayodhya's Milkpur Assembly seat.

The seat had fallen vacant after the resignation of Samajwadi Party (SP) Awadhesh Prasad who got elected as Member of Parliament (MP) in the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, creating a lot of heartburn in the BJP circles. His son Ajit Prasad has been nominated from the seat by the Akhilesh Yadav-led party.

The date for the Milkpur by-election were announced along with Delhi election dates.

The poll panel on Tuesday declared February 5 as the date of voting for the 70-member Delhi Legislative Assembly. The date of the issue of Gazette Notification is January 10, the last date for making nominations is January 17, the date for scrutiny of nominations is January 18, and the last date for withdrawal of candidatures is January 20. The results will be declared on February 8. With Milkpur constituency going to polls in a month from now, it will see a fresh round of intensified and heated poll battle between the ruling BJP and rival SP.

Just months ago, the nine constituencies of Uttar Pradesh which went to bypolls hogged the

national headlines owing to the repeated war of words between the Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and SP supremo Akhilesh Yadav.

The BJP-SP fracas in the run-up to the by-elections to nine seats in the state stemmed from Akhilesh's party staging a strong comeback in the 2024 LS polls and the loss of the Ayodhya seat for the BJP.

Under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's stewardship, the BJP managed to settle scores in the subsequent by-elections by bagging seven out of nine seats while the SP managed to hold ground on just two seats, barely managing to secure its strongholds - Karhal and Sisamau.

Raebareli jail inmates' clay art to steal spotlight at Maha Kumbh 2025

AGENCIES
RAEBARELI, JAN 7

As the world prepares for the grand religious spectacle of the Maha Kumbh Mela in Prayagraj, starting January 13, an exciting new addition to this sacred gathering comes from an unexpected place - the Raebareli District Jail. Products created by inmates in the jail's vocational training centres will be displayed and sold at the Uttar Pradesh Prison's joint stall at the Mela.

The products, under the 'One District, One Product' initiative, focus on the region's unique clay art and showcase the talents of the prisoners. Jail Superintendent Aman Kumar Singh

on Tuesday shared that not only are the products a testament to the skill and creativity of the inmates, but the initiative also fosters a positive atmosphere in the prison. "We have identified several talented prisoners, including some who sing very well. We plan to encourage these talents, forming a music band within the jail to uplift their spirits and eliminate negative energies. This effort will continue long term, and we hope to reward the winners with prizes," said Singh.

The clay artworks, now headed for the Maha Kumbh Mela, offer a glimpse into the prisoners' rehabilitation journey. It

also strengthens their sense of connection with society, making them feel part of the larger community and aiding in their personal transformation.

The Maha Kumbh Mela, which attracts millions of devotees each time it is held every 12 years, is the largest religious gathering in the world.

This year's event, running from January 13 to February 26, will see pilgrims from across the globe gather at the sacred Triveni Sangam of the Ganga, Yamuna, and Saraswati rivers for their spiritual quest, where the Raebareli Jail's unique contributions will surely captivate many visitors.

BJP, Cong cadres clash in Hyderabad over Ramesh Bidhuri's remarks on Priyanka Gandhi

AGENCIES
HYDERABAD, JAN 7

High tension prevailed in Nampally area here after BJP and Congress cadres clashed during a protest by the latter against BJP leader Ramesh Bidhuri's unsavoury remark about Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi in the national Capital recently during a poll rally.

Protesting against the BJP leader's "smooth roads like Priyanka Gandhi's cheeks" remark, Youth Congress workers tried to lay siege to the BJP office.

The situation turned tense after BJP workers present there launched a



counter-attack.

The protestors pelted stones on the BJP office while the BJP cadres attacked them with sticks. A few workers were injured in the clash.

Police personnel rushed to the spot and dispersed the clashing groups.

Later, BJP Yuva Morcha

workers tried to lay siege to Congress headquarters Gandhi Bhavan, triggering more tension. They reached the Congress office in two groups to stage a protest. They removed barricades to advance towards Gandhi Bhavan and tore off flexis of Congress leaders erect-

ed at the entrance. Several BJP leaders joined the Yuva Morcha in the protest.

Protesting against the attack on the party office and raising slogans, the BJP workers sat on the road, throwing traffic out of gear.

Police swung into action, resorted to baton charge and arrested scores of protestors. They were whisked away in police vehicles.

As the offices of both parties are located not far from each other, the police had a tough time in controlling the cadres from both sides.

Police sealed the routes

leading to the BJP office.

Meanwhile, Union Minister for Coal and Mines and state BJP president G. Kishan Reddy has condemned the attack on the BJP office. He warned that if the Congress party does not desist from such actions, this would have serious consequences.

Kishan Reddy alleged that the Congress cadres attacked the BJP office in the presence of police. He said that there is no room for violence in a democracy.

Alleging that the police acted with bias, he asked the Hyderabad Police Commissioner how would he justify the police action.

Formula-E case: ED summons K.T. Rama Rao on Jan 16 after he misses date with it

AGENCIES
HYDERABAD, JAN 7

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued a fresh notice to Bharat Rashtira Samithi (BRS) working president K.T. Rama Rao on Tuesday, directing him to appear before it on January 16 for questioning in connection with the Formula-E race case.

The Central agency issued the notice after the former minister did not appear before the ED earlier in the day on Tuesday (January 7) and sought more time to do so.

The ED had accepted the request of the BRS leader.

The ED's fresh notice came hours after the Telangana High Court pronounced its order, dismissing K.T. Rama Rao's petition to quash the First Information Report (FIR) registered last month



by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB).

Special Chief Secretary Arvind Kumar and former Chief Engineer of Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) B.L.N. Reddy, who were also booked along with K.T. Rama Rao, have been summoned by the ED on January 8 and 9 respectively. They were earlier asked to appear on January 2 and 3.

Both sought 2-3 weeks' time to appear and submit

their documents.

The ED is conducting the probe under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), based on an FIR filed by the ACB.

The Central agency is looking into possible violations of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA).

The ACB on December 29 booked a case against K.T. Rama Rao and two others for alleged irregularities in organising the Formula E-car race in

2023 when the BRS was in power.

The FIR was registered under Sections 13(1)(A) and 13(2) of the Prevention of Corruption Act, along with Sections 409 and 120(B) of the Indian Penal Code.

The FIR, registered on a complaint by Municipal Administration and Urban Development Principal Secretary, Dana Kishore alleges irregularities in payments exceeding Rs.54.88 crore made by the HMDA to Formula-E Operations Limited (FEO) and associated entities without adhering to established financial procedures.

According to the FIR, the payments were made to FEO between September and October 2023, despite the FEO terminating its agreement with the Telangana government during the same period.

This amount also incurred a tax liability of

Rs. 8.06 crore, which was borne by the HMDA.

A tripartite agreement signed in October 2022 between the Telangana government, FEO, and event sponsor Ace Nxt Gen Pvt. Ltd. had limited the State government's financial responsibility.

The FIR alleged that disputes between FEO and Ace Nxt Gen Pvt. Ltd. led to the government assuming financial liability without regulatory approvals, causing losses to the exchequer.

A day after the ACB registered the FIR, the ED also registered an Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act against K.T. Rama Rao, Arvind Kumar and Reddy.

The ED is also investigating whether financial commitments exceeding Rs. 600 crore for upcoming seasons violated legal and financial protocols.

Bengal CPI(M) district committees cite lack of Hindi speakers to connect with masses

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, JAN 7

Lack of adequate Hindi speakers has become a major headache for CPI(M) to reach out to the masses in those pockets where the Hindi-speaking population constitute a substantial percentage of voters there.

This has been revealed in various reports of the party after surveys.

The Hindi-speaking voters are high in Kolkata areas like Burrabazar, Posta and Jorashanko. They are in substantial numbers in Barrackpore and Titagarh in North 24 Parganas district, and Asansol in West Burdwan district.

Ahead of the crucial central committee meeting of the party in April, different organisational reports highlighted the minus points at the district



the protest movement a more organised and sustained shape at the local levels.

Party insiders further said that in the district-level organisational reports, it has also been pointed out that there is growing complacency among the party comrades to sustain a movement on any issue.

Sources in the party said that since several area committees have virtually become inactive at the grassroots level, the party comrades are often getting discouraged from carrying forward the movement on any burning issue on a sustained basis.

Now it is to be seen how the central leadership of the party reacts to such observations from insiders at the crucial two-day central committee meeting of the party scheduled at New Town from January 17 to January 19.

Sandeshkhali gang-rape case: Woman pleads Calcutta HC, says police slow in probe

AGENCIES
KOLKATA, JAN 7

A woman from West Bengal's Sandeshkhali approached the Calcutta High Court, on Tuesday, accusing the local police of lackadaisical investigation into the complaint of gang-rape filed by her against three individuals, including a local Trinamool Congress leader. According to her, the crime took place in May last year, and she and her family members approached the local police to act on the matter.

She had complained that

the local police refused to register an FIR in the matter then. But, a few days later the police were forced to register the case under pressure from local people.

The victim woman now has alleged that for all these months the cops have not moved an inch forward in the course of the investigation. At the same time, she and her family members are under pressure from the accused and their associates to withdraw the complaint at the local police station. Among the three accused named one is Trinamool Congress' block

president in Sandeshkhali Dilip Mondal. Calcutta High Court has admitted the petition of the victim woman and the matter is expected to come up for hearing on Wednesday.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee made a yearend trip to Sandeshkhali on December 30, after avoiding such an initiative during the entire period of crisis there earlier this year following allegations of sexual harassment of local women and land grabbing of people by local Trinamool Congress leader Sheikh Shahjahan.

'Govt conspiracy': Akhilesh Yadav slams BJP over Sambhal violence

AGENCIES
LUCKNOW, JAN 7

Samajwadi Party (SP) President Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on the UP's ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), alleging that the Sambhal violence is a government conspiracy.

Addressing journalists here, Akhilesh Yadav accused the BJP of inciting violence in Sambhal, where innocent people were allegedly tortured. "When the SP delegation attempted to visit Sambhal, it was stopped by the authorities. What was the government trying



to hide?" he questioned, adding that the incident was a deliberate attempt to disrupt communal harmony.

He further criticised the BJP for its lack of concern for human life, stating: "Life holds no value for

them. This is a heartless party, devoid of sympathy. Justice and public grievances have no place in this government."

Leader of the Opposition in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly, Mata Prasad Pandey, also presented

a report on the Sambhal violence, alleging that tensions were deliberately escalated over a mosque survey.

He accused the BJP of orchestrating the incident, stating that the survey team included BJP members and that police used disproportionate force. "Instead of using tear gas, they opened fire, attempting to disrupt the communal harmony of the state," he said.

Pandey questioned the need for the survey, pointing to the Places of Worship Act which prohibits such actions. "This entire incident was part of a gov-

ernment conspiracy," he claimed.

The violence in Sambhal had erupted on November 24 when a team of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) visited the Shahi Jama Masjid to examine the Mughal-era Mosque.

The SP chief also targeted the BJP on issues of corruption and injustice, particularly against the PDA (Backward, Dalit, and Minority communities).

"Even BJP members are accusing each other of corruption. There is internal conflict within their politics in Delhi and Lucknow," he claimed.

NEPAL-TIBET EARTHQUAKE CLAIMS 95 LIVES, 130 INJURED

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 7

At least 95 people were killed and 130 injured after a powerful 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck the Nepal-Tibet border region on Tuesday morning, according to media reports.

The National Centre for Seismology (NCS) confirmed that the earthquake occurred at 6:35 a.m. (IST), with its epicentre at latitude 28.86°N and longitude 87.51°E, at a depth of 10 km. The location was identified as Xizang (Tibet Autonomous Region), near Nepal's border.

Xinhua news agency reported that the fatalities were concentrated in the city of Xizang, with many injuries and structural damage also recorded.

In Tonglai Village,



Changsuo Township of Dingri in Xigaze (Shigatse), several houses have reportedly collapsed.

The earthquake also sent tremors across northern India, affecting areas such as Bihar, West Bengal, Sikkim, and Delhi-NCR, causing panic as residents

rushed out of their homes. Fortunately, no casualties or property damage have been reported in India so far.

Two aftershocks followed the initial quake -- a 4.7-magnitude tremor was recorded at 7:02 a.m. (IST), with its epicen-

tre at latitude 28.60°N and longitude 87.68°E, at a depth of 10 km and another 4.9-magnitude quake struck at 7:07 a.m. (IST), with its epicentre at latitude 28.68°N and longitude 87.54°E, at a depth of 30 km.

The United States Geo-

logical Survey (USGS) pinpointed the earthquake's location 93 km northeast of Lobuche, near the Nepal-Tibet border. Lobuche lies near the Khumbu Glacier, approximately 150 km east of Kathmandu and 8.5 km southwest of Everest Base Camp.

Nepal, situated in a highly seismically active zone where the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates converge, is no stranger to earthquakes. This tectonic activity, which forms the Himalayan region, often results in seismic events of varying magnitudes.

Authorities in Nepal and affected Indian regions remain vigilant, closely monitoring the situation. The earthquake has renewed concerns in an area historically vulnerable to devastating seismic activity.

US-Canada together would be 'great nation,' says Trump as Trudeau announces resignation

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, JAN 7

US President-elect Donald Trump reignited his proposal to make Canada the "51st state of the United States" hours after Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced his resignation.

In a dramatic turn of events, Trudeau announced the end of his 11-year leadership tenure and nine years as the country's Prime Minister on Monday. Trudeau, 53, decided to step down as he was under pressure from his ruling Liberal Party, stemming from his growing unpopularity. However, he confirmed he would remain in office until the party elects a new leader ahead of the upcoming general elections.

Amid this political upheaval in Canada, Trump, 78, who has had a fraught relationship with Trudeau since his first term as President (2017-2021),



renewed his offer just hours after Trudeau's announcement.

Taking to Truth Social, Trump said, "Many people in Canada love being the 51st State. The United States can no longer suffer the massive Trade Deficits and Subsidies that Canada needs to stay afloat. Justin Trudeau knew this and resigned."

"If Canada merged with the US, there would be no tariffs, taxes would go way down, and they would be totally secure from the threat of Russian and Chinese ships that are constantly surrounding them. Together, what a great

Nation it would be!" Trump further added.

Trump has been vocal about this idea since meeting Trudeau in November 2024 at Mar-a-Lago after his electoral victory.

During the meeting, Trump reportedly mocked Trudeau as the "Governor of the Great State of Canada" and has since repeated the sentiment in multiple social media posts.

The Canadian government has yet to issue a formal response to Trump's remarks. However, the US President-elect's statements have sparked discussions about strained US-Canada relations.

Yemen's Houthis say targeting US aircraft carrier in Red Sea, Israeli sites

AGENCIES
SANA'A, JAN 7

Yemen's Houthi group said in a statement that it targeted the USS Harry S. Truman aircraft carrier in the northern Red Sea with two winged missiles and four drones, as well as sites in Israel. The group "carried out a qualitative military operation... while the American enemy was preparing to launch a major air attack on Yemen," which had "failed" thanks to its operation, Houthi military spokesperson Yahya Sarea said in the statement aired by the Houthi-run al-Masirah TV. According to Sarea, Houthis also carried out two attacks in the afternoon and another in the evening on Israeli sites, targeting with drones two military targets in Israel's



Tel Aviv city, and a "vital target" in Israel's Ashkelon city, Xinhua news agency reported.

"We will continue our operations in support of the Palestinian resistance, and these operations will not stop until the aggression on Gaza stops and the siege is lifted," he added.

Neither the US army nor the Israel Defense Forces have yet to comment on the Houthi claims.

The Houthi statement came simultaneously with

the arrival of UN Special Envoy for Yemen Hans Grundberg in the Houthi-held capital Sanaa, which marks his first visit in more than a year and a half as part of efforts to push forward the stalled peace process.

In a brief statement posted on X, Grundberg emphasised that his visit aims to "urge for concrete and essential actions" by the Houthi group to advance the peace process, Xinhua news agency reported.

South Korea: Main opposition party to file complaint against acting President Choi

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JAN 7

South Korea's special committee of the main Opposition Democratic Party (DP) said on Tuesday that it will file a complaint against acting President Choi Sang-mok for alleged dereliction of duty.

Choi has been criticised by opposition lawmakers for not ordering the Presidential Security Service (PSS) to cooperate with attempts by investigators to detain impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol.

During a press conference at the National Assembly, the committee slammed Choi for eventually allowing the PSS to block the Corruption Investigation Office for High-ranking Officials



(CIO) from executing a warrant to detain Yoon.

"According to reports, acting President Choi remained mum even when the CIO requested cooperation regarding the arrest of President Yoon," the committee said.

Choi also did not take any action against Park Chong-jun, chief of the PSS, despite his involve-

ment in blocking the CIO's attempt to detain Yoon, according to the committee.

The committee then criticised Choi for not requesting the recommendation for a special prosecutor though the Assembly passed a bill mandating a permanent special counsel to investigate insurrection charges against Yoon.

"Acting President Choi

has also indefinitely delayed the appointments of Ma Eun-hyuk, a candidate for Constitutional Court justice recommended by the National Assembly, and Ma Yong-ju, a Supreme Court judge candidate," it said.

The committee urged Choi to take a "firm stance" in addressing Yoon's insurrection case, including the arrest of Yoon, Yonhap news agency reported.

Earlier on January 3, Acting President Choi Sang-mok met with the top US envoy to South Korea and the chief of the US Forces Korea, underscoring the strong South Korea-US alliance despite the ongoing political turmoil in the country.

Choi's meeting with Ambassador Philip Gold-

berg and General Xavier Brunson came less than a week after he had assumed the interim leadership role.

"Despite the challenging situation, we unwaveringly upheld diplomatic and security policies based on the strong alliance between South Korea and the United States," Choi had said during the meeting, according to his ministry. Choi also served as deputy prime minister for economic affairs and finance minister.

"We asked for proactive mutual efforts to maintain our diplomatic achievements, including cooperation between South Korea and the United States, as well as ties among Seoul, Washington, and Tokyo," Choi had added.

North Korea claims successful test of new intermediate-range hypersonic missile

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JAN 7

North Korea said on Tuesday that it has successfully test-fired a new intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM) tipped with a hypersonic warhead, claiming that the weapons system will reliably deter any rivals in the Pacific region. But the South Korean military said the North's claimed success of a hypersonic missile launch could be "deception," raising questions about its flight distance and other specifications.

North Korea said the missile flew some 1,500 kilometres at 12 times the speed of sound the previous day during the testing overseen by leader Kim Jong-un via a monitoring system, Yonhap news agency reported quoting the Korean Central News Agency (KCNA).

The South's Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) said on Monday that the North's suspected hypersonic missile, fired from the Pyongyang area, flew about 1,100 km before falling into the

East Sea.

The North Korean leader said the development of such a missile was aimed at bolstering the country's nuclear war deterrent by "making the weapon system to which no one can respond the linchpin of strategic deterrence."

"The hypersonic missile system will reliably contain any rivals in the Pacific region that can affect the security of our state," Kim was quoted as saying by the KCNA.

"The system can deal a serious military strike to a rival while effectively breaking any dense defensive barrier," he added.

The North's latest missile launch, the first provocation in about two months, came about two weeks before US President-elect Donald Trump assumes office on January 20.

It also came amid political turmoil in South Korea sparked by President Yoon Suk Yeol's botched martial law imposition last month and his subsequent impeachment by



the National Assembly.

"North Korea probably intended to flex its muscle against the United States. As it said the latest launch was a test-firing, the weapons system does not appear to be completed, pointing to demand (to further develop) in terms of military technology," an official at South Korea's unification ministry told reporters.

A hypersonic missile is usually hard to intercept with existing missile defence shields. It travels at a speed of at least Mach 5 -- five times the speed of sound -- and is designed to be manoeuvrable on unpredictable flight paths and fly at low altitudes.

The KCNA said the hypersonic glide vehicle atop the new IRBM reached its first peak at a height of 99.8 km and the second at 42.5 km while making a 1,500-km-long flight as scheduled before hitting a designated target point at sea.

But the South Korean military dismissed the North's claim as a "deception," saying there was no second peak.

"The flight range analysed by South Korea, the US and Japan was around 1,100 km and (the missile) did not reach a second peak," JCS spokesperson Col. Lee Sung-un told a regular press briefing, noting the North has a

track record of "exaggerating."

North Korea also claimed a new compound of carbon fibre was used in manufacturing the engine body of the hypersonic missile, and an unspecified "comprehensive and effective" method was introduced for the flight and guidance control system.

Experts said the North appeared to fire the upgraded version this week of a hypersonic missile that it launched in April last year. Pyongyang then claimed the IRBM loaded with a hypersonic glide vehicle flew 1,000 km.

The South's JCS then said the missile flew 600 km, calling the North's claims partially "exaggerated," although it said Pyongyang appears to have made some technological progress in its hypersonic weapons program.

"As the North has claimed it has acquired technology that is 'by no means easy,' there could be a technical improve-

ment of its own. But it is also hard to exclude the possibility of technical cooperation from Russia," Hong Min, a senior research fellow at the Korea Institute for National Unification, said.

North Korea and Russia have been deepening military cooperation under a mutual defence treaty signed in June, with the North accused of sending more than 11,000 troops to Russia to support its war against Ukraine.

Hypersonic missiles, nuclear-powered submarines, spy satellites, and solid-fuel intercontinental ballistic missiles are among the sophisticated weapons Kim vowed to develop during a key party congress in 2021.

At a year-end party meeting, the North's leader said his country would carry out the "toughest" counteraction strategy toward the US and claimed that military cooperation among South Korea, the US and Japan has expanded into a "military bloc for aggression."

Jeju Air to cut 188 international flights from Busan after deadly crash

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JAN 7

Jeju Air, the embattled low-cost carrier facing intense scrutiny over a recent aircraft crash that claimed 179 lives, said on Tuesday it plans to cut 188 international flights departing from Busan in the first quarter, with a total operational reduction plan to be finalised this week.

Following the tragic December 29 crash, Jeju Air announced plans to cut flight operations by 10-15 per cent by March to enhance operational safety, reports Yonhap news agency.

According to the company, flights from Busan, South Korea's southeastern port city, to Clark of the Philippines have been canceled from January 22 to March 30, resulting in a reduction of 78 flights.

Additionally, flights from Busan to Kaohsiung, Taiwan, have been canceled from February 3 to March 29, resulting in

110 reduced flights.

The airline's overall reduction plan for the January-March period, including measures to cut flights on routes departing from Incheon, the country's main gateway with the highest volume of operations, is expected to be finalised this week.

The total reduction is expected to amount to approximately 1,900 flights in the quarter, according to industry watchers.

Meanwhile, the government said it will continue to offer full support to the families of the 179 victims of the deadly Jeju Air crash, as funeral proceedings were expected to conclude in the near future.

The bodies of all victims have been handed over to their families as of Monday. The Jeju Air Boeing 737-800 flight, carrying 181 passengers and crew, crashed at Muan International Airport, leaving only two survivors.

Palestine's GDP shrinks 28 pc, unemployment up to 51 pc in 2024

AGENCIES
RAMALLAH, JAN 7

Palestine's gross domestic product (GDP) contracted by 28 per cent and its unemployment rate increased to 51 per cent in 2024, the Ramallah-based Ministry of Economy said in a statement.

"The Palestinian economy is

facing an unprecedented shock due to the Israeli war on Gaza and the deduction of tax funds, which has significantly impacted the GDP," it said.

Israel collects taxes on behalf of the Palestinian Authority for imports into Palestinian territories and transfers the funds on a monthly basis, Xinhua news

agency reported.

Trade exchanges between Palestine and the outside world fell 11 per cent year-on-year in 2024, the ministry added.

Amidst repeated Israeli military incursions, the systematic destruction of infrastructure, restrictions on the movement of people and goods, and the

closure of all crossings with Gaza, among others, Gaza has witnessed the collapse of all economic activities, whereas the West Bank has also seen a sharp decline in economic activities, it noted. Israel has been conducting a large-scale offensive against Hamas in Gaza to retaliate against a Hamas

rampage through the southern Israeli border on October 7, 2023, during which about 1,200 people were killed and about 250 taken hostages.

The Palestinian death toll from ongoing Israeli attacks in Gaza has risen to 45,854, the Gaza-based health authorities said in a statement on Monday.

Meanwhile, more than 820 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli gunfire and bombings across the West Bank since October 2023, according to the Palestinian Ministry of Health.

Earlier the UN agency for Palestine refugees warned that its operation could be crippled as an impending Israeli ban on it

is expected to take effect by the end of January. In a brief statement, the UN Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) on Saturday said, "Time is running out for a possible ban on the agency that would prevent it from providing services to millions of Palestinian refugees."

LPG connections to households jump over 2-fold to 32.83 crore in last 10 years

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 7

The number of LPG connections for household kitchens in the country has more than doubled to 32.83 crore, as of November 1, 2024, from 14.52 crore in 2014, according to the year-end review of the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas released on Tuesday.

As many as 10.33 crore LPG connections have been released under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY) for poor families who get the cooking gas at a subsidised price. Since the inception of the Scheme, about 222 crore LPG refills have been delivered to the PMUY households as about 13 lakh refills are being taken daily, according to the official statement.

A targeted subsidy of Rs. 300 per cylinder is being given to all Ujjwala beneficiaries.

"The Government's



efforts have led to an uptick in LPG consumption by Ujjwala families. The per capita consumption in the number of 14.2 kg domestic LPG cylinders has gone up from 3.01 in 2019-20 to 3.95 in 2023-24. In the current year, which is still under progress, the per capita consumption has reached 4.34 (pro-rata basis refills till October 2024)," the statement explained.

As of November 2024,

around 30.43 crore LPG consumers are enrolled under the government's PAHAL scheme that directly transfers LPG subsidies to the bank accounts of beneficiaries who earn an income of less than Rs 10 lakh per annum. To date, more than 1.14 crore customers have given up their LPG subsidy under the 'GiveltUp' campaign, the statement said.

Since 2014, the number of LPG distributors has

increased from 13,896 to 25,532 as on November 1, 2024, enhancing the availability of cooking gas for consumers. More than 90 per cent of new distributors are catering to rural areas, the statement added.

The year-end review also highlighted that the length of operational Natural Gas Pipeline in the country has also increased from 15,340 km in 2014 to 24,945 km in 2024 making

the environment-friendly fuel available to more consumers.

The development of about 10,805 km Natural Gas Pipeline is under execution. With the completion of these pipelines, the national gas grid would be completed and would connect all major demand and supply centres in India. This would ensure easy availability of natural gas across all regions, the statement said.

As many as 307 Geographical Areas have been earmarked for the development of city gas distribution (CGD) infrastructure for piped cooking gas and fuelling vehicles. The potential coverage of about 100 per cent of the country's area and 100 per cent of the population is being targeted. As on September 30, the total number of piped gas connections and CNG Stations in the country was 1.36 crore and 7,259, respectively, the review added.

Adani stocks up on positive developments, market cap jumps to nearly Rs 12.8 lakh crore

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JAN 7

Adani Group shares saw a bullish trend on Tuesday, as buying was seen in almost all of the group's stocks, led by Adani Green Energy and Adani Power.

At 1.19 p.m., Adani Green Energy gained 2.47 per cent, Adani Power gained 2.33 per cent, and Adani Energy Solutions gained 1.96 per cent.

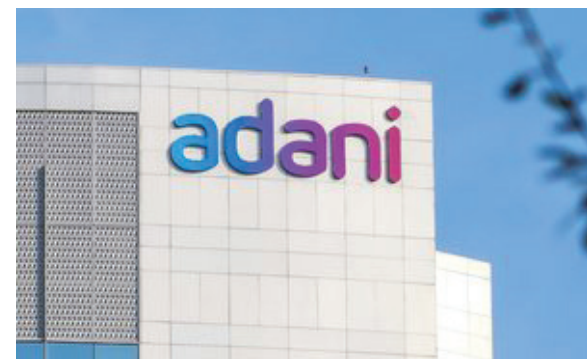
Apart from this, Adani Group's flagship company Adani Enterprises stock was up 1.72 per cent.

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone (APSEZ) stock is trading with a gain of 1.36 per cent and Adani Total Gas stock is up by about 0.3 per cent.

The stock of the group's cement companies Ambuja and ACC was up by about 1.50 per cent.

During this period, the market cap of the group has increased by about Rs 16,000 crore to nearly Rs 12.80 lakh crore.

In the recent past, there have been many posi-



tive developments about Adani Group's companies that boost investors' confidence.

Recently, Adani Petrochemicals, a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises, announced a joint venture with Indorama Resources named 'Valor Petrochem'. Adani Petrochemicals will have a 50 per cent stake in this joint venture.

Through this joint venture, the Adani Group plans to take advantage of Indorama's expertise in the petrochemicals sector.

Adani Petrochemicals was established in 2021. It aims to set up refineries and petrochemical com-

plexes in the country.

Indorama Ventures, the parent company of Indorama Resources, is a leading global petrochemical company with operations in over 35 countries. Thailand-based Indorama is one of the world's largest producers of integrated polyester products and fibres and a major chemical sector player.

Meanwhile, Sensex and Nifty were trading in the green with a rise of nearly 0.4 per cent.

On the National Stock Exchange (NSE), 1,724 stocks were trading in green, while 487 stocks were in red.

SVPI Airport, managed by Adani, sees double-digit growth in passenger, cargo numbers in Q3

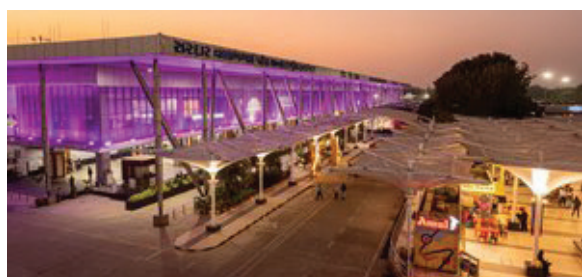
AGENCIES
AHMEDABAD, JAN 7

Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel International (SVPI) Airport, managed by Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL), on Tuesday reported double-digit growth in the number of passengers during the third quarter (Q3) FY25.

Over 3.5 million passengers took flights to and from the airport - over 18 per cent more than the previous year's number of 3 million (Q3 FY24).

Aircraft traffic movements (ATMs) also saw a rise of 15 per cent with SVPI Airport managing over 27,000 ATMs during the October-December quarter.

On December 22, SVPI Airport saw 44,253 passenger movements with 324 ATMs, which is the highest for the current



financial year, followed by December 13 and December 12, where the airport served 43,881 with 318 ATMs and 43,408 passengers with 325 ATMs, respectively, according to SVPI Airport, a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Ltd.

Ahmedabad airport saw infrastructure, innovation, and destination additions including the Terminal-2 extended check-in hall, inter-terminal electric shuttle service, Wi-Fi coupon dispensers for travellers with non-Indian SIM cards, new flights to

Da Nang, Guwahati, Dimaipur Thiruvananthapuram, Kolhapur, and Kuwait, and additional frequencies to Kochi and Kolkata.

In December, Ahmedabad Airport was the only airport in India recognised for its exceptional commitment to energy conservation by winning a prestigious Certificate of Merit at the National Energy Conservation Awards (NECA) 2024, organised by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency, Ministry of Power, according to the company.

Empowered 2.4 million Indians with AI skills: Microsoft

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 7

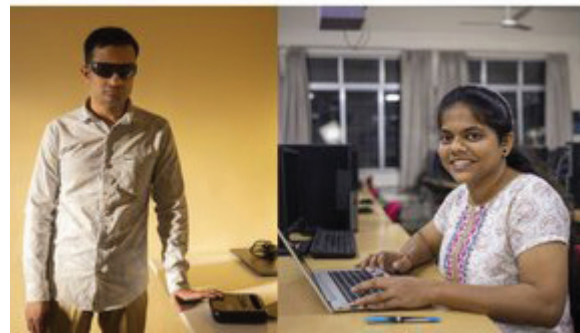
Microsoft on Tuesday said it has empowered 2.4 million Indians, including civil servants, college students and people with disabilities, with artificial intelligence (AI) skills.

Last year, Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella launched an India-specific initiative to equip two million individuals with AI skills by 2025.

"Our aim is to not only enhance employability but also bridge the digital divide and create a more inclusive future for every Indian," Puneet Chandok, President of Microsoft India and South India, said in a statement.

Those involved in the programme said as the use of AI tools spreads across the workforce, those who don't learn how to use them risk falling behind.

"Once upon a time, humans discovered fire and were afraid of it. But then we learned to chan-



nelise it and put it to good use. Similarly, AI needs to be used wisely for the benefit of humanity, rather than letting us be devoured by it," said Neha Jain, Special Secretary, IT and Electronics, UP government.

On Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Nadella, saying he was glad to know about the tech giant's ambitious expansion and investment plans in the country.

Nadella thanked the Prime Minister for his leadership, saying the tech company is excited to build on "our commitment to making India AI-

first and work together on our continued expansion in the country to ensure every Indian benefits from this AI platform shift".

Microsoft's AI tools, such as Copilot, TechSaksham and Seeing AI, have profoundly transformed people's lives through AI skilling initiatives in the country.

For example, Raghavendra Pratap Singh, 33 who is a review officer in the Uttar Pradesh government and analyses new policies then helps disseminate them to the local officers responsible for carrying them out, has found these AI tools handy.

A few months ago, Singh attended a one-day digital skills course run by Microsoft together with the state IT agency.

There, he learned tools like Microsoft Copilot and Copilot for Word, PowerPoint and Excel as well as OpenAI's ChatGPT.

Since then, he has started using AI tools to summarise documents and draft letters.

"A letter that might have taken one hour to draft now takes 40 to 45 minutes," he said.

"AI makes it a better letter," he said. In the past, he might sometimes miss a minor point. "Now AI is getting the exact pointers," he added.

He also uses AI to translate court orders in English to Hindi so he can understand them better and communicate them to other officers.

The digital skills course facilitated by Microsoft and the Uttar Pradesh Development Systems Corporation (UPDESCO), and

run by a social enterprise called AISECT, covers AI, digital productivity and cybersecurity - in a single day.

Similarly, Jui Shrikant Bidaye, 21, from Pune dreamt of becoming a professional kabaddi player.

After graduating high school in rural Devgad in Maharashtra, she headed more than 321 kms away to study for bachelors' in Information Technology at NBN Sinhgad School of Engineering, part of the University of Pune.

The university's training and placement officer suggested she participate in 'TechSaksham', an initiative by Microsoft and SAP that introduces students to AI tools.

She is spending the six-month internship working on creating a secure file storage application, using AI tools to help, and hopes the internship will translate into a permanent job offer when she graduates college in June this year.

Mumbai witnesses historic high on office leasing, residential sales in 2024

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JAN 7

Be it office leasing or residential demand, Mumbai witnessed historic high among all metros last year, driven by sustained demand for premium housing and transformative infrastructure developments, a report showed on Tuesday.

The financial capital recorded a historic high in office transaction volumes in 2024, reaching 10.4 mil-

lion square feet, marking a 40 per cent annual increase from 7.4 million square feet in 2023, according to the report by Knight Frank India.

In the second half of 2024, Mumbai saw office space transactions totalling around 4.6 million square feet, reflecting a 9 per cent growth. India-facing business accounted for most transactions in Mumbai, contributing around 77 per cent to the overall share in 2024. In

2024, Mumbai saw the addition of 5.8 million square feet of new office supply, reflecting an 89 per cent year-on-year growth compared to 2023.

According to Viral Desai from Knight Frank India, occupier sentiment remained strong, fuelled by a growing economic environment, rising physical occupancy, and significant infrastructure advancements.

"The introduction of



key metro lines, such as the BKC metro, has notably enhanced accessibility, making Mumbai's office

market increasingly attractive to occupiers. The city's office leasing market is set to continue its upward

momentum in 2025, driven by varied occupier demand, infrastructure-led development, and developer confidence in the city's long-term prospects," Desai mentioned.

The city also remained the largest residential market in the country, recording sale of 96,187 primary residential units in 2024, marking a 13-year high with an 11 per cent growth. In H2 2024 alone, 48,928 units were sold, reflecting a 6 per cent YoY

increase.

In 2024, the average residential prices rose by 5 per cent YoY over 2023. The sustained demand of buyers supported this price growth and kept the momentum ongoing.

Complemented by transformative infrastructure projects like the Mumbai Coastal Road, Metro Line 3, and the Mumbai Trans Harbour Link (MTHL), the city continues to strengthen its position as the nation's

premier real estate market, said the report.

Gulam Zia from Knight Frank India said that Mumbai's residential market continues its steady growth, driven by sustained demand for premium housing and transformative infrastructure developments and key infrastructure projects like the Mumbai Coastal Road and Metro Lines have greatly improved connectivity, fuelling demand in suburban areas.

Akasa Air appoints Belson Coutinho as COO as competition rises

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JAN 7

Low-cost carrier Akasa Air on Tuesday said it has appointed Belson Coutinho as its Chief Operating Officer (COO).

Coutinho will lead Akasa Air's crucial operational functions, responsible for inflight services, airport services, maintenance and engineering, flight operations and operational excellence, among others.

In November, the airline carried 674,000 domestic

passengers, capturing a market share of 4.7 per cent, as India's domestic aviation sector last year surpassed its 2023 traffic levels.

"Belson's multifaceted role over the years had him successfully collaborate with cross-functional teams across airline operations, developing a good understanding of the functioning of operational departments," said Vinay Dube, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Akasa Air.

"We are confident that

under his leadership, we will continue to enhance our operational efficiency, deliver on our values of service excellence, and make significant strides toward achieving our vision of becoming a world-class airline," he added.

Coutinho has been part of Akasa Air's executive committee since the airline's inception in 2022.

Since its inception, Akasa Air has served over 14 million passengers and connects 22 domestic and five international cities.

AI to bring new urgency to reinvention, become personal brand ambassador: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 7

As artificial intelligence (AI) diffusion accelerates across enterprises and society at a rate that is faster than any prior technology, 69 per cent of executives, including in India, believe it brings new urgency to reinvention and how technology systems and the processes it enables are designed, built and operated, a report showed on Tuesday.

The 'Accenture Technology Vision 2025' also predicted that AI will increasingly act as a technology development partner, a

personal brand ambassador, power robotic bodies in the physical world, and foster a new symbiotic relationship with people to bring out the best in each other.

According to Julie Sweet, Chair and CEO, Accenture, unlocking the benefits of AI will only be possible if leaders seize the opportunity to inject and develop trust in its performance and outcomes in a systematic manner so businesses and people can unlock AI's incredible possibilities.

People's trust in AI is essential to it having as broad and positive an

impact as anticipated.

Most (77 per cent) executives believe the true benefits of AI will only be possible when built on a foundation of trust, and slightly more (81 per cent) agree that trust strategy must evolve in parallel with any technology strategy.

The primary global research included two parallel surveys: more than 4,000 executives across 21 industries and 28 countries, with India among the countries surveyed, representing a sample size of 190 executives.

"Advancements in digitising knowledge, new AI

models, agentic AI systems and architecture enables enterprises to create their own unique cognitive digital brains," said Karthik Narain, group chief executive-Technology and CTO, Accenture.

The autonomy created by these generalised AI systems can help organisations be more dynamic and intention-driven than ever. It will allow leaders to rethink how digital systems are designed, how people work, and reinvent how they create products and interact with customers, he mentioned.

While 80 per cent of executives worry large lan-

guage models (LLMs) and chatbots could give every brand a similar voice, 77 per cent agree brands can solve by proactively building personified AI experiences and injecting distinct brand elements, such as culture, values and voice, into those experiences through its digital brain.

Generalist robots will emerge over the next decade, bringing more AI autonomy into the physical world. It will be possible for introductory general-purpose robots to become specialist robots, learning new tasks very quickly, the report noted.

India to field biggest-ever contingent in India Open; Olympic champs Axelsen, Se Young among other stars

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 7

Host India will field its biggest-ever contingent of 21 entries in the third edition of the India Open, the BWF World Tour Super 750 tournament, scheduled from January 14 to 19 at the KD Jadhav Indoor Hall, Indira Gandhi Stadium.

In the last two Super 750 editions, India had a total of 14 entries each with Asian Games men's doubles gold medallists Chirag Shetty and Satwik Sairaj Rankireddy reaching the men's doubles final and Asian Games bronze medallist HS Prannoy making it to the men's singles last four stages in 2024.

This edition of the BWF World Tour Super 750 event will see host India getting 21 entries - three in men's singles, four in women's singles, two in

men's doubles, eight in women's doubles and four in mixed doubles.

Top stars like Olympic champions Viktor Axelsen, An Se Young, and world No. 1 Shi Yuqi will be leading the star-studded field.

This Super 750 event has been a flag-ship competition organised by the Badminton Association of India. The tournament, which was elevated as a Super 750 in 2023, is part of the BWF World Tour, offering participants a prize pool of USD 9,50,000 and 11,000 points for the champions.

"The 2025 India Open is a clear indication of how Indian players are steadily carving out their place among the best in global badminton. With so many Indian players competing in a Super 750 event, it's a remarkable sign of the growth and rise of Indian badminton on the world

stage. This is just the beginning—2025 promises to be a year where more names will feature alongside the established names, while fresh faces will emerge and shine bringing glory and pride to India," said Sanjay Mishra, general secretary, Badminton Association of India.

Apart from Chirag-Satwik and Prannoy, India will be looking at 2022 men's singles champion



stage.

Lakshya Sen, and two-time Olympic medallist and former world women's singles champion PV Sindhu to challenge for the prestigious title.

The quality of competition can be gauged from the fact that only two players from the top-20 ranked men's singles players will be missing in action in New Delhi, while the women's singles draw will have 14 of the top-20 players competing.

With many top players in doubles categories announcing retirement after the Paris Olympics or changing partners, the paired events are expected to come up with a few surprise results but the focus of Indian fans will expectedly be on the performance of Chirag and Satwik, as the latter is coming back after an injury lay-off and hasn't played much after the Olympics.

The men's doubles line-up is being led by China's Paris Olympics silver medal-winning combination of Liang Weikeng and Wang Chang along with Paris bronze medallists Aaron Chia and Soh Wooi Yik of Malaysia, Danish combination of Kim Astrup and Anders Rasmussen and Indonesia's Fajar Alfian and Muhammad Rian Ardianto will also be in action.

Men's singles - Lakshya Sen, HS Prannoy, Priyanshu Rajawat

Women's singles - PV Sindhu, Malvika Bansod, Anupama Upadhyaya, Aakarshi Kashyap

Men's doubles - Chirag Shetty/Satwik Sairaj Rankireddy, K Sai Pratheek/Pruthvi K Roy

Women's doubles - Treasa Jolly/Gayatri Gopichand, Ashwini Ponnappa/Tanisha Crasto, Rutuparna Panda/Swetaparna Panda, Mansa Rawat/Gayatri Rawat, Ashwini Bhat/Shikha Gautam, Sakshi Gahlawat/Apoorva Gahlawat, Sania Sikkandar/Rashmi Ganesh, Mrunmayee Deshpande/Pre-rana Alvekar

Mixed doubles - Dhruv Kapila/Tanisha Crasto, K Sathish Kumar/Aadya Variyath, Rohan Kapoor/G Ruthvika Shivani, Ashith Surya/Amrutha Pramuthesh.

List of Indian players:

Cummins, Bumrah, Paterson nominated for Men's Player of December

AGENCIES
DUBAI, JAN 7

Australia captain Pat Cummins, Indian pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah, and South Africa's star seamer Dane Paterson have been shortlisted for the ICC Men's Player of December 2024. Australian skipper Cummins was at his brilliant best during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, delivering standout performances with both bat and ball. Cummins led his team to a 3-1 series victory against India, securing Australia's spot in the ICC World Test Championship (WTC) 2025 Final.

The pacer claimed 17 wickets in three Tests at an impressive average of 17.64. His best figures came in Adelaide, where he bowled a magnificent 5/57 to help Australia secure a 10-wicket victory. Cummins was not just effective with the

ball; he contributed vital runs with the bat, including knocks of 49 and 41 in Melbourne, which proved decisive in Australia's win.

Cummins' leadership and all-round contributions were instrumental in Australia clinching the series and earning their place in the WTC Final at Lord's in June 2025.

India's Jasprit Bumrah once again showcased why he is among the world's premier fast bowlers. Despite India losing the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, Bumrah's performances stood out as he claimed 32 wickets across three Tests at a phenomenal average of 14.22.

Bumrah's brilliance was on full display in Brisbane and Melbourne, where he picked up nine wickets in each Test. His fiery spells kept India competitive and earned him the Player of the Series award.

ISL 2024-25: Ambitious FC Goa face struggling Hyderabad FC

AGENCIES
MARGAO (GOA), JAN 7

FC Goa will host Hyderabad FC in the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Margao on Wednesday.

A win with a clean sheet in this game will mark the first time FC Goa record four consecutive shutouts against an opponent in ISL history, while furthering their longest winning run against Hyderabad FC to four games.

Hyderabad FC, on the other hand, are looking to end a dismal streak of three consecutive away losses without scoring.

The Gaurs are third in the table with 25 points from 13 matches, courtesy of seven victories and four draws. Hyderabad FC are at the penultimate place in the table with eight

points from 14 matches. FC Goa have won four out of their last five clashes in the league, contrastingly, Hyderabad FC have been defeated in four of their previous five games.

With FC Goa aiming to set a record for consecutive clean sheets and Hyderabad FC fighting to end their plunge, both teams have a lot to play for in this match.

FC Goa come into this game on the back of a strong scoring streak, having found the net in each of their last 13 ISL games, amassing 27 goals in this run. A goal in this fixture will extend their streak further, nearing their longest stretch of netting in 16 straight games in ISL history (between December 2022-October 2023). Additionally, the Gaurs have been solid defensively, conceding just

eight open-play goals from inside the box this season, a tally bettered only by Mohun Bagan Super Giant (5). The composure in their backline have assisted them upfront, with the defence leading the charge for building up offensive moves

Hyderabad FC have had a challenging season, trailing for 57.4 per cent of their game time, which is the highest in the league. They need to get their offensive act together to take the lead and assume the charge in dictating the flow of the proceedings. They have conceded

16 open-play goals from inside the box, the most by any side in the ongoing campaign. The Gaurs' attack will be keen on outnumbering the visitors inside their 18-yard area to explore more such opportunities.

Not slept for many nights: Aubameyang opens up on traumatic Barcelona robbery

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 7

Pierre Emerick Aubameyang has opened up on the traumatic experience he and his family went through when a few men broke into his house in August 2022.

At the time, the Gabonese striker was playing for FC Barcelona and his house in the town of Castelldefels was broken into while his entire family was at home. The robbers held his kids at gunpoint and stole jewellery, watches and a car.

"My eldest son came running and said to me, 'Dad, some guys are in the house. I said, 'Just hide'. They came in from outside, where my wife was smoking with my cousin and her boyfriend. They took him (the cousin's boyfriend) and came into

the house. My wife was screaming. They had a gun.

"At the same time, my sister-in-law was there with our little one I said to her, too, 'Just go. Try to hide somewhere'. This is when I saw the guys. There were four or five, I think.

"One had the gun and said to me, 'Just go down'. I said, 'No, no, no. Tell me what you want'. We talked and he said, 'Sit down'. I said, 'No'. This is when he started to punch me," said Aubameyang to The Athletic.

Auba revealed the robber broke his jaw and the incident left him and his family scarred. It was shortly after that he left the club and went back to England to play for Chelsea, after having already captained Arsenal in the league before his move to



Catalonia.

"I was always thinking about this. I did so many nights like this: not sleeping at all, just thinking about that. You have some nightmares.

"I'm a guy who, if I'm not sleeping well, I'm not going to give (a football team) what you expect from me, I'm not going to be at my best... Every time the kids are alone, they are scared," he added.

Aubameyang, now playing for Al-Qadsiah FC, had

one of his most stellar stints at Arsenal. He was named the skipper of the side after having led the team to the 2020 FA Cup title and scored 92 goals for the Gunners.

However, his falling out with Mikel Arteta, saw his relationship with the club and fans end on a sour note.

The striker was left out of the squad a number of times due to disciplinary measures, and the final straw was when he was supposed to be at training but was pictured in Barcelona as a tactic to try and push the Gunners to sell him, which was also shown in Arsenal's All or Nothing documentary. Auba spoke on how his contract extension with Gunners in 2021 was a mistake.

"If I'm being honest, at that time I wanted to go. For me, it was time to

find a new challenge. I did my time. It was very nice, but I needed to change. It had been four years, I did great and maybe it was time to leave it like this, proper and clean, so people remember me as a good Arsenal player. I felt I needed to go because if I stayed, something would go wrong.

"He (Arteta) convinced me. He said, 'I think you can leave a legacy'. I think it was the first time I heard this word in English.

He said, 'If you stay, you can be an icon, like the big names at Arsenal'. I started to change my vision.

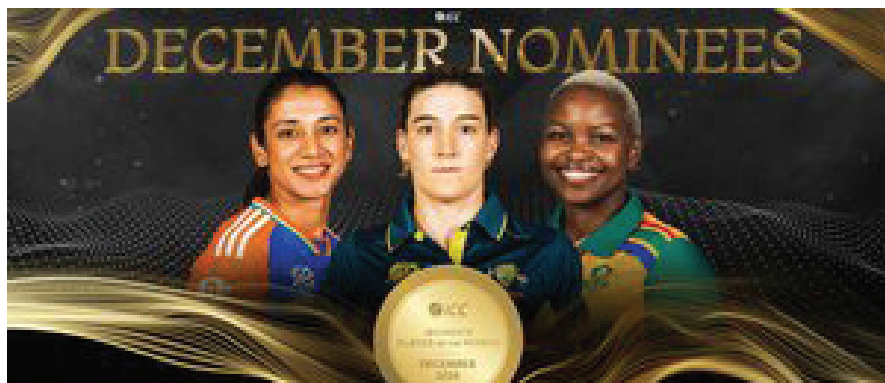
He and the fans convinced me to stay. But at first, I wanted to leave. This is where it got chaotic, because when you go against your heart, maybe this is where I made my mistake," said Aubameyang.

Mandhana, Sutherland, Mlaba nominated for Women's Player of December

AGENCIES
DUBAI, JAN 7

India's Smriti Mandhana, Australia's Annabel Sutherland, and South Africa's Nonkululeko Mlaba have been nominated for the ICC Women's Player of December award.

Smriti Mandhana displayed exceptional form across formats, contributing significantly during India's tours and home series. Despite a shaky start in the ODI series against Australia, Mandhana roared back in the third ODI with a scintillating century (105 off 109 balls). This knock set the stage for her dominant performances in the subsequent home series against the West Indies.



Mandhana's performances in the T20I series against the West Indies were nothing short of remarkable, where she smashed three consecutive half-centuries to lead India to a 2-1 series victory. Her ability to anchor innings while maintaining a brisk strike rate stood

out, cementing her place as one of the best batters in women's cricket.

In ODIs, she scored 270 runs in six matches at an average of 45.00 and a strike rate of 91.52, whereas in T20Is, she scored 193 runs in three matches at an average of 64.33 and a strike rate of 59.50.

Australia's Annabel Sutherland was instrumental in her team's unbeaten ODI streak in December.

The all-rounder showcased her batting prowess with two centuries - a breathtaking 110 against India in Perth and an unbeaten 105 against New Zealand in Wellington. Her

ability to balance aggression and composure with the bat added depth to the Australian lineup.

Sutherland's contributions with the ball were equally impactful. Her match-winning 4/39 in the second ODI against India highlighted her knack for delivering under pressure.

Across five ODIs in December, she claimed nine wickets, maintaining an impressive economy rate of 3.85.

Her performance saw her score 269 runs at an average of 67.25 and a strike rate of 113.98 also nine wickets at an average of 16.22 and an economy rate of 3.85.

Her all-round heroics made her a double Player of the Series award-winner

in December.

South Africa's Nonkululeko Mlaba etched her name into the history books with a record-breaking performance in the historic one-off Test against England in Bloemfontein. She became the first South African woman to claim a 10-wicket haul in Tests, finishing with remarkable figures of 10 wickets at an average of 15.70.

While South Africa lost the Test match, Mlaba's performance was a shining light, demonstrating her mastery of spin bowling in the longest format. She also contributed in the ODI series against England, where she picked up two wickets and chipped in with 20 runs.

AFC Asian Cup 2027 to take place in Riyadh, Jeddah and Al Khobar from Jan 7 to Feb 5

AGENCIES
KUALA LUMPUR, JAN 7

The AFC Asian Cup 2027 will take place from January 7 to February 5 across three cities - Riyadh, Jeddah and Al Khobar - in Saudi Arabia, the AFC announced on Tuesday.

A total of five stadiums in Riyadh will host the tournament's matches; the King Fahd Sports City Stadium, the King Saud University Stadium, Imam Mohammed Ibn Saud University Stadium, Kingdom Arena and the Al Shabab Stadium.

Two stadiums have been confirmed for Jeddah - King Abdullah

Sports City and Prince Abdullah Al Faisal Sports City Stadium - with a new state-of-the-art venue to be built in Al Khobar, completing the world-class infrastructure set to provide the backdrop for Asia's top 24 national teams.

Saudi Arabia was announced as the host nation for the 2027 AFC Asian Cup in 2023. This will be the first time Saudi Arabia will host the tournament. "Confirming the dates and selecting the stadiums for the AFC Asian Cup Saudi Arabia 2027™ is a strategic milestone in our journey to host the tournament.

Winning U19 Women's WC as captain is one of the best moments of my cricketing career: Shafali Verma

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 7

Opener Shafali Verma said captaining India to the title in the inaugural U19 Women's World Cup is one of the best moments of her cricketing career.

The superstar batter guided India to victory in the inaugural tournament in South Africa in January 2023. Verma led from the front, scoring 172 runs across the competition and guiding her team to a seven-

wicket win over England in the final.

"Representing India in itself is a great honour. Being chosen to captain the Indian cricket team was icing on the cake, honestly. I was fortunate to have some of the finest talent in the age-group cricket from back home at my disposal," the ICC quoted Verma as saying.

"While it was simply brilliant to lead that talented lot, it was more about playing together as a unit, shar-

ing a solid camaraderie and making sure everyone is in great spirits as we looked to enjoy ourselves in the middle. "Obviously, winning the tournament - the first of its kind in women's age-group cricket - as a captain will remain one of the best moments of my cricketing career; something that I will remember forever. It is safe to say that I was pretty emotional as we were about to lift that trophy and started to celebrate a special triumph," she added.

India and 15 other nations are preparing for the second ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup, to be held in Malaysia from January 18 to February 2.

The first-ever edition of the tournament provided a platform for a number of top Indian prospects to announce themselves on the global stage.

Foremost among them were leg-spinner Parshvi Chopra, who took 11 wickets, and batter Shweta Sehrawat, who scored more

runs than anyone else with 297.

Verma believes the competition is an ideal stage on which young players can showcase their talent and test themselves against the best.

"It is a massive help to play in a tournament like this. It is a big opportunity to showcase your talent on the world stage. It has all the potential to fast track some of the young and promising cricketers to represent their respective countries with

the senior teams," said the 20-year-old.

"It also remains one of the vital learning grounds for the players where they get to play against the talented cricketers from across the globe. The players get to sharpen their skills and make a name for themselves and bring laurels to the country. It is a big boost to be a part of such tournaments."

A third edition is already scheduled for Bangladesh and Nepal in 2027, with

Verma seeing it as a vital addition to the ICC major events calendar.

"It is extremely crucial to have a U19 Women's tournament in a structure that only had senior women's tournaments before this," she said. "It is a win-win for the age-group teams as well as the senior sides where you have a larger pool of players available for selection. "There is healthy competition and that always is a welcome sign. The U19 Women's

tournament structure is a need of the hour as it also acts as a crucial segway to move into the senior sides. So, it is not only massive for the age-group cricket but also for the overall growth of the game." Nepal, Nigeria, Samoa, Scotland and United States have qualified through the regional route, giving new nations a chance to shine, and Verma hopes the next generation seize the opportunity presented to them over the coming weeks.

Baseline Survey under Mission YUVA-2.0 takes off in Jammu Division

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 7

The baseline survey to ascertain the contemporary entrepreneurial landscape and identify gaps in different regions was launched in several districts of Jammu division, here today under Project YUVA (Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan) 2.0.

The day also witnessed Information Education and Communication (IEC) campaigns to enlighten participants about the objectives of Mission Yuva: Udyam Jagriti 2.0, the opportunities it offers for skill development, financial and logistical support to aspiring entrepreneurs.

The survey aims to create a comprehensive database to design targeted interventions for capacity building, skill development, and entrepreneurship promotion under Mission YUVA.

The District Employment and Counselling Centre Jammu, conducted the Udyam Jagriti 2.0 - Baseline Survey and IEC Campaign under Mission YUVA at the Government College of Engineering and Technology Bhalwal.

Additional District Development Commissioner Sher Singh was the chief guest at the programme.

Participants were informed about government schemes and initiatives supporting startups and self-employment. The event saw active participation from students, faculty and officials.

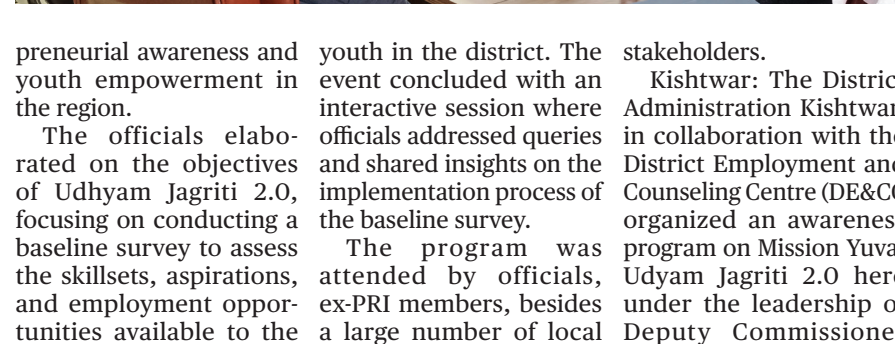
Ramban: District Administration Ramban, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, formally launched the baseline survey under Mission YUVA here at a mega event held today here in the Government Degree College. The initiative aims to empower the youth and drive meaningful development in the district.

College Principal Archana Koul, District Statistics and Evaluation Officer Ganesh Kumar, Assistant Director Employment Amit Kumar, BDO Ramban Tanzil Runyal and other senior officers participated in the inaugural program.

Interacting with the participants, DSEO Ganesh Kumar provided insights into the methodology and objectives of the baseline survey.

Kathua: A district-level program was held at Panchayat Bhajwal in Block Nagri to launch the Baseline Survey for Udyam Jagriti 2.0 under Mission YUVA.

Additional District Development Commissioner Surinder Mohan Sharma inaugurated the program and highlighted the significance of Mission YUVA in fostering entre-



preneurial awareness and youth empowerment in the region.

The officials elaborated on the objectives of Udyam Jagriti 2.0, focusing on conducting a baseline survey to assess the skillsets, aspirations, and employment opportunities available to the

youth in the district. The event concluded with an interactive session where officials addressed queries and shared insights on the implementation process of the baseline survey.

The program was attended by officials, ex-PRI members, besides a large number of local

stakeholders.

Kishtwar: The District Administration Kishtwar, in collaboration with the District Employment and Counseling Centre (DE&CC) organized an awareness program on Mission Yuva: Udyam Jagriti 2.0 here under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner

Rajesh Kumar Shavan.

The program aimed to raise awareness about the key schemes for youth like Mission YUVA and others, which focuses on fostering entrepreneurship and skill development among the youth.

Various stakeholders, including students from ITI

participated in the event.

The AD DE&CC informed that till date more than 20,000 students in the District have registered themselves in the Baseline Survey under the Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) framework. The

Baseline Survey, launched earlier, seeks to gather insights into the current entrepreneurial landscape and identify gaps that need to be addressed.

SAMBA: The Krishi Vigyan Kendra Arazi, Samba hosted a pivotal one-day program focused

on the Udyam Jagriti 2.0 Baseline Survey, a cornerstone initiative under Project YUVA (Yuva Udyami Vikas Abhiyan). The program, spearheaded by District Development Commissioner Rajesh Sharma, marks a significant step forward in the district's commitment to youth entrepreneurship development.

The survey aims to create a data-driven foundation for implementing targeted youth development programs across the district.

RAJOURI: Deputy Commissioner Rajouri Abhishek Sharma flagged off an awareness rally on Mission YUVA, a revolutionary initiative aimed at promoting self-employment and entrepreneurship among the youth. The rally commenced from Dak Bungalow, Rajouri and concluded at Mandi Bridge.

The rally witnessed active participation from various departments, including Rural Development Department (RDD), Labour & Employment, ITI, Industries, and students from across the district. Speaking on the occasion, the Deputy Commissioner highlighted the transformative potential of Mission YUVA, emphasizing that the scheme has been designed to overcome challenges faced by young entrepreneurs. "The baseline survey for Mission YUVA can now be updated through the Mission YUVA app, making the entire process digital. Young entrepreneurs no longer need to visit multiple departments for plan processing, as everything is streamlined online," he stated.

UDHAMPUR: A district-level awareness program, "Udyam Jagriti 2.0," under Mission Yuva, was organized at Riwaayat Banquet Hall Udhampur to spread awareness about the Mission Youth scheme. Video clips showcasing the goals and objectives of Mission Youth were screened at the event, followed by a detailed lecture by the DDM NABARD Udhampur. The DDM elaborated on the credit facilities under Mission Yuva, emphasizing the provision of collateral-free loans and interest subvention to entrepreneurship among youth. Xen PDD also briefs on PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojana.

POONCH: District Department Commissioner Poonch, Vikas Kundal presided over Mission YUVA (Udyam Jagriti) 2nd Awareness Campaign in panchayat Dagwar organised by DECC in collaboration with RDD Department. A large number of people from adjoining panchayats attended the awareness campaign. They were educated about the aims and objectives of Mission YUVA.

Ensure completion of SDHs Sunderbani, Nowshera within targeted time: Dy CM to officers

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 7

Underscoring the need for providing better healthcare facilities to the people living in far flung areas, Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today directed the officers for speeding up the pace of work on the ongoing health related infrastructural projects.

The Deputy Chief Minister was addressing the officers during a review meeting convened to discuss the status of comple-

tion of under-construction Sub District Hospitals of Sunderbani and Nowshera in Rajouri district.

The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary, Power Development Department, Secretary, PW(R&B) Department, Secretary, H&ME Department, MD JPDCL Jammu, Director Health Services, Jammu, Chief Engineers, PW(R&B) Zone Pir Panjal/Mechanical and Hospital Engineering Department Jammu/JPDCL Jammu and other senior officers.

The Deputy Chief Minis-



ter directed the officers to maintain close coordination for ensuring that the SDHs are completed within

the stipulated time. He said that the bottlenecks, if any, should be removed so that the work on the

project is speeded up and people get benefitted from the initiatives undertaken by the government for pro-

viding better healthcare facilities to them. "Ensure the work on these ambitious healthcare projects

is done in double shifts for speedy completion of these projects", he asked the officers.

"We are committed for providing enhanced healthcare facilities to the people of Jammu and Kashmir with emphasis on rural and far-flung areas. Instructions have already been passed for speeding up the pace of work on various healthcare related infrastructural works especially the under-construction Hospitals. Besides, strict monitoring is also being done so

that they are completed as early as possible", the Deputy Chief Minister maintained.

The meeting was told that the 50 bedded Sub District Hospital at Sunderbani is being constructed with an estimated cost of Rs. 18.57 crore and is expected to be completed by July, 2025. Similarly, upgradation of 100 bedded SDH at Nowshera is being taken up with an estimated cost of Rs. 18.8 crore which is expected to be completed by July, 2025.