

DENGUE WARNING SIGNS

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

Watch out for dengue warning signs!

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

- Headache and continuous fever above 102°C
- Joint and muscle pain
- Diarrhea
- Present vomiting
- A skin rash
- Disorientation
- Steady low pulse or weak, rapid pulse
- Redness in eyes

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

JINDRAH IMAGES

DAILY | JAMMU | VOL NO: 12 | ISSUE NO: 8 | 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

Police bust major 'cross-border' drug racket, seize 8 kg heroin worth Rs 32 crore

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 08

Police on Wednesday said they busted a major drug network and arrested two key traffickers in Srinagar. Addressing a press conference here, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar, Imtiaz Hussain, as per the news agency, said the seizure was part of a major crackdown on cross-border drug trafficking. He said 8 kilograms of heroin were seized and two key drug traffickers were arrested during a routine checkpoint operation at Barthana Crossing in Qamarwari. The SSP said the operation was carried out by a police team from Police Post Qamarwari, who intercepted a Tata Sumo

vehicle bearing registration number JK05D-1837 at the checkpoint. Upon a thorough search, 6 kilograms of heroin were found hidden beneath the driver's seat, he said, adding that 2 kilograms were recovered from the suspects during a personal search, with each carrying 1 kilogram in polythene bags. The officer said two persons from north Kashmir's Kupwara have been arrested. He identified them as Anas Ajaz Awan, a resident of Dildar Tangdar, Kupwara, and Zahid Ahmad Sheikh, a resident of Channipora, Tangdar, Kupwara. Police have registered an FIR (No. 03/2025) under sections 8/21 and 29 of the NDPS Act at

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We are promoting the blue economy to fully harness ocean-related opportunities: PM

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 8

Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid foundation stone, inaugurated development works worth over Rs. 2 Lakh Crore in Visakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh. Paying his due respects to Lord Simhachalam Varaha Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy, Shri Modi said it was after a gap of 60 years, with the blessings of the people, a Union Government was elected for the third time in a row in the country. He added that officially, it was his first program in Andhra Pradesh after the formation of the Govern-



ment. Shri Modi thanked the people for a grand welcome given to him during the roadshow prior to the event. He added that he respected the spirit of every word and feeling of Shri Chandrababu Naidu during his speech. The Prime Minister expressed confidence in achieving all the goals mentioned by

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Youth leading Viksit Bharat campaign in J&K: LG Sinha

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 08

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, on Wednesday, underlined the significant role of youth in shaping India's developmental trajectory over the past decade. Interacting with the 55-member youth contingent from J&K that left for New Delhi today to participate in the Viksit Bharat Young Leaders Dialogue - National Youth Festival 2025, LG Sinha said, "Pichle 10 varsho main desh nay jo vikas ki gati dekhi hai, usmein youth power ka bahut yogdan hai (the development trajectory witnessed by the country and has seen significant contributions from the youth power)."



The Lieutenant Governor, according to the news agency, highlighted the pivotal role of youth in the ongoing 'Vikshit Bharat' campaign in Jammu and Kashmir, emphasizing that the campaign's leadership was entrusted

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Srinagar International Airport registers over 28,000 flights, 44 lakh passengers in 2024



J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 08

Srinagar International Airport witnessed considerable flight activity in 2024, recording a total of 28,348 arrivals and departures. Despite some minor weather-related disruptions,

the airport facilitated travel for approximately 4.4 million passengers throughout the year. Airport officials said flight operations were largely uninterrupted during the year, with only minor disruptions caused by weather conditions.

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2025 begins with 59% deficit rainfall in J&K



J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 08

The New Year-2025 has begun with the deficit precipitation as Jammu and Kashmir has recorded a deficiency of 59 per cent in the first week of January. According to the details available with the news agency, from January 01 to January 08, J&K has recorded a deficit rainfall

of 59 per cent despite the recent snowfall in most parts of the Valley. Against the normal rainfall of 18.4 mm, J&K has recorded a precipitation of 7.6 mm. Nine stations across J&K including the winter capital of the Union Territory-Jammu recorded large deficit rainfall. The large deficit rainfall is being marked from 60 per cent to 99 per cent.

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Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo Unveils J&K Bank Calendar

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 8

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo today unveiled the J&K Bank's much-awaited Wall-Calendar for the year 2025 at a prestigious event held in the Civil Secretariat, Srinagar. The event was attended by the Bank's MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee, Executive Director Sudhir Gupta, General Manager Imtiaz Ahmad Bhat, DGM Manju Gupta and other senior officials. During the unveiling ceremony, Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo expressed his admiration for the Bank's initiative of releasing a new Calendar for 2025. He said, "I am pleased to see that through this Calendar, J&K Bank has successfully captured the essence of transformation underway



in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. The depiction of these infrastructural projects is in line with the Government vision of comprehensive and inclusive economic development of the regions." "As the major shareholder in the Bank, the Government of J&K has high expectations from this institution, and we believe that the Bank will achieve new heights while

playing a pivotal role in supporting the inclusive economic growth of the people of this region", he added. While expressing his gratitude for the unwavering support of the J&K Government, MD & CEO Amitava Chatterjee thanked the Chief Secretary for his valuable guidance and the time. He further stated, "I feel immensely happy

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HMPV similar to Covid-19, no need to panic: Experts

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 08

There is no need to panic as the Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV) is similar

to Covid-19 but there is a need to take precautions to prevent the spread of the virus. Dr Mudasar, a Pulmonologist, told the news agency that there is no need to panic about the HMPV, but the people must remain cautious. He said that HMPV has been in the community for decades and around 10 per cent of the elders being admitted in the hospitals have this virus, so it is a

part of community infection. Usually illness due to HMPV remains mild and there is no specific treatment and vaccine for the virus as most of the patients don't need any treatment. He said that symptoms of HMPV are running nose, cough, fever, wheezing and shortness of breath. He said that the people must avoid visiting crowded places, especially hospitals. Dr Khursheed Ahmad said that

HMPV is spread through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes, or through direct contact with contaminated surfaces. "The virus primarily attacks the respiratory epithelium, leading to inflammation and respiratory distress," he said, adding that young children, elderly, immunocompromised individuals and people with

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Two youth injured in attack by Pistol-Wielding assailants in Jammu

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 8

Two youths were injured in an attack here by two pistol-wielding assailants over some old rivalry, a police official said on Wednesday. Jasraj Singh (22) of Trikuta Nagar and Chand Wazir (20) of Babilana were allegedly attacked by Jaspreet Singh and Amandeep Singh at Gadigarh in Satwari area late Tuesday, the official said. He said the accused also opened fire on the victims from a country-made pistol during the assault, resulting in bullet injuries to Jasraj while Wazir had stab injuries. Both injured persons were hospitalised, the official said, adding police have registered a case in the matter. They said a hunt is on to arrest the culprits who fled the scene before a police party reached the scene. He said Jaspreet had also attacked the victims earlier and was recently released on bail.

3 injured in Poonch road accident

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 8

Two Junior Engineers were among three people injured on Wednesday in a road accident at Dhakki Bridge near OP Hill Ground in Mendhar area of Poonch district. Officials said that a collision occurred between a motorcycle and a Tata Sumo near OP Hill Ground Mendhar. In this incident three people were injured who were shifted to Sub-district

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PM Modi to inaugurate Z-Morh tunnel in Kashmir on Jan 13

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 8

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will visit the Kashmir Valley on January 13 (Monday) to inaugurate the strategic Z-Morh tunnel that would allow all-weather connectivity to popular tourist destination - Sonamarg with Srinagar. The 6.5 km long tunnel along Srinagar-Leh high-

way in the Ganderbal district has been built at a cost of Rs 2,400 crore. Sources told news agency that PM Modi will arrive in Kashmir on Monday next week to inaugurate the tunnel himself. This will be PM Modi's first visit to Jammu and Kashmir after the 2024 assembly elections and the formation of elected government in the

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MHA asks states to take steps for reducing overcrowding in prisons

J1 NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JAN 8

The Centre has asked all states to ensure that an undertrial prisoner arrested for an offence for which the punishment of death or life imprisonment has not been specified should be released if he or she has already undergone detention for half of the maximum prison term specified for that offence, thus reducing overcrowding in jails. In a communication

to chief secretaries and directors general of prisons of all states, the ministry of home affairs said the prison authorities should approach the court concerned for release of such eligible prisoners under the provisions of the Section 479 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS). The Section 479 of the BNSS states that when a person has, during the period of investigation, inquiry or trial of an

offence under any law (not being an offence for which the punishment of death or life imprisonment has been specified as one of the punishments under that law) undergone detention for a period extending up to one-half of the maximum period of imprisonment specified for that offence under that law, he shall be released by the court on bail. "In case of first-time offenders, such prisoners shall be released on bond

by the court, if they have undergone detention for a period extending up to one-third of the maximum period of imprisonment for that offence. Further, Section 479 (3) of the BNSS casts a specific responsibility on the Superintendent of the Prison to make an application to the concerned court for release of aforementioned undertrial prisoners on bail/bond," the communication said. The ministry

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SBI RSETI Ramban hosts Entrepreneurship Awareness Program Camp at Batote

J1 NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JANUARY 8

State Bank of India's Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI) Ramban on Wednesday organized an Entrepreneurship Awareness Program Camp here at Thopal Batote.

Held under the direction of Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, the camp was spearheaded by Director RSETI Harvinder Singh and witnessed the enthusiastic participation of 40 aspiring entrepreneurs from the region.

The event focused on fostering entrepreneurial skills and enhancing awareness about self-employment opportunities. Participants were introduced to the self-employment government schemes such as PMEGP, Mudra Yojana and JKREGP,



which are designed to support individuals in starting and growing their businesses.

Speaking at the event, the Director RSETI emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship in ensuring economic development and creating sustainable livelihoods. He encouraged participants to explore opportunities in sectors such as agriculture,

handicrafts, and small-scale industries, which hold immense potential in the region.

Participants also gained insights into the support and training, including financial literacy, business planning, and entrepreneurial competencies. The session included interactive discussions, case studies, and testimonials from successful entrepreneurs

trained by the institute.

The camp concluded with an open interaction session where participants raised queries about funding options, skill development programs, and market linkages. The Director assured the attendees of continued support and encouraged them to enroll in upcoming training programs offered by the institute.

Distt Admin Ganderbal holds grievance redressal camp at Wakura

J1 NEWS SERVICE
GANDERBAL, JANUARY 7

A Block Diwas was convened today at the Tehsil Office Wakura to listen to public issues, grievances and demands for their timely redressal.

The camp, presided over by the Assistant Commissioner Revenue (ACR), Mohammad Altaf, was attended by a large number of residents from Wakura block and surrounding areas.

Tehsildar Wakura, BDO Wakura, and officers from various line departments were also present.

During the session, the residents of Wakura and nearby villages raised several pressing concerns. They called for the enhancement of PHC Wakura's infrastructure and the establishment of a Jan Aushadhi center there.

Other issues raised



included the designation of Wakura as a horticulture zone, improvements to irrigation canals, ensuring seed availability at the agriculture office, and addressing staff shortages at the animal husbandry office, particularly the absence of a veterinary doctor.

The public also demanded upgrades to playfield infrastructure, creation of employment opportunities, establishment of a Skill Development Institute, and the development of a recreational park for children.

Additionally, residents urged the restoration of SRTC bus services to Lal

Chowk, improvements to transportation services, and the repair of the deteriorating condition of Wakura-Dab road.

The ACR instructed officers to coordinate closely to ensure the equitable development of all areas. He directed concerned officers to prioritize resolving the public's genuine demands and submit a detailed report on pending issues for consideration by higher authorities.

The ACR reiterated the administration's commitment to addressing these concerns promptly and encouraged active public participation in such outreach programs.

Distt admin Srinagar reaches out to the fire victims of Hazratbal

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 8

On the directions of Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat, a team of District Administration, Srinagar today visited Hazratbal area of the District to provide immediate assistance to the fire affected families whose houses were gutted in a fire incidents here on Wednesday morning.

The Immediate relief was sanctioned by Deputy Commissioner Srinagar and was provided to the affected families through the team of District Administration in the form of blankets, besides Rs10,000 to each affected families as an interim relief out of the District Red Cross Fund.

Arrangements finalized for Dubjan Winter Festival at Shopian

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, JANUARY 08

Arrangements for inaugural Winter Carnival, 'NAGRAI HEEMAL,' scheduled for January 11th and 12th at Dubjan, Shopian were finalized today here at Mini-Secretariat Shopian under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar.

On the occasion, the DC detailed out the department wise action plans for the impactful organisation of mega and first of its kind event in the district, which aims to promote tourism, culture, and community engagement.

The carnival will feature a variety of activities, including snow crafts, snow igloos, ice sports, competitions for children, and exhibitions of local cuisine and arts.

The administration has



sought participation of locals for engaging them in activities of adventure, arts etc along with showcasing the rich culture and heritage of the district.

The District administration has made all arrangements and is coordinating efforts across various departments to ensure the event's success for promoting the tourism potential of Mughal road-Heerpora wildlife sanctuary and Historic Sarais

circuit.

DC emphasized the importance of effective planning and collaboration among departments to provide a memorable experience for participants and has called out for maximum participation. SSP, Shopian, Anayat Ali; ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone; ADC, Dr. Zakir Hussain Faaz officers of district administration & security forces were present.

Block Diwas: Public Grievances redressal camp held at Chak Desa Choudharian in Marheen block

J1 NEWS SERVICE
KATHUA, JANUARY 8

As part of Block Diwas, a public outreach Programme was held at village Banyari of Panchayat Chak Desa Choudharian block Marheen today.

MLA Hiranagar Vijay Sharma; Deputy Commissioner Kathua Dr Rakesh Minhas; DDC Marheen Karan Attri, Ex-PRI members, District and Sectoral officers besides a large number of people attended the programme.

Scores of individuals and deputations including Ex-PRI members projected demands and apprised the District Administration about the problems faced by the inhabitants of their respective areas.

The people highlighted varied demands seeking provision of Borewell, augmentation of Flood Protection infrastructure, provision of Veterinary dispensary, early completion of GHSS Kana Chack building, better road connectivity, provision of drinking water supply in uncovered areas and other amenities etc.



The other main issues highlighted during the programme included the opening of Lavatory complex in Banyari, early completion of Bridge on Chhabe Chack road, improvement of road connectivity in Mathre Chack area.

MLA Hiranagar also highlighted the issue of smooth access to the farmers for cultivation near the International Border in Hiranagar sector. He assured that sanctioning of Rs 76 lac for completion of GHSS Kana Chack will be taken up at appropriate forum. He also called for regulating the unscheduled power cuts in border areas.

Addressing the gathering, the DC said the objective of holding Public Outreach Programme under Block Diwas is to reach

out to the people and listen to their grievances besides extending arrays of services and knowledge about different government schemes at their doorsteps.

The DC said district administration has rolled out a baseline survey cum awareness campaign under Mission YUVA which provides collateral free loans for small to medium size businesses as per the requirements of the beneficiaries in line with the objective of promoting entrepreneurship especially among youngsters.

Responding to the demands of people, the DC passed on spot instructions to the concerned departments for time bound resolution of all the issues. He stressed upon the officers to prioritize the grievances.

Committed to End TB by 2025: NTEP team organises Nikshay Shivr in Border villages of Uri



J1 NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, JANUARY 8

In line with the national goal of eliminating tuberculosis (TB) by 2025, the NTEP Team Uri, under the guidance of the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Baramulla and with the support of Block Medical Officer (BMO) Uri, organized a Nikshay Shivr in the border villages of Balkote, Hathlanga, and Mothal in Uri.

The camp witnessed encouraging response from the local population, providing free TB screening, diagnosis, and treatment to residents in these remote areas. A skilled team of doctors, nurses, and paramedics was deployed to deliver comprehensive medical services.

During the camp, 204 individuals were screened for TB. Out of these, 54

were tested using NAAT, 130 underwent X-ray examinations, and 18 were tested with Cy-TB. The initiative aimed to ensure early detection and timely treatment of TB cases in these underserved communities.

Speaking on the occasion, a retired teacher, expressed his gratitude to the district health administration for reaching out to these far-flung areas with much-needed healthcare services. He commended the efforts of the NTEP team for their commitment to public health.

While interacting with media, Dr. Iftikhar Ahmad, Nodal Officer for NTEP, assured that similar camps will be organized in every panchayat of Block Uri. He emphasized the importance of these camps in bridging the gap between rural communities and quality healthcare.

Director Agriculture inaugurates fully Automated Pulse Jet Bag Filter at Seed Processing Plant Jammu



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 8

Director Agriculture Jammu S. Arvinder Singh Reen today inaugurated and commissioned the fully automated pulse jet bag filter at the Plant no. 2 of Seed Processing Plant Government Agriculture Engineering Workshop Jammu.

The newly installed facility has a filtration capacity of 64 bags, powered by a 15HP CG motor and blower.

The programme was attended by Agriculture Research Engineer Er. Vinay Kumar Bhardwaj, Er. Arshad Hussain AAE, Er. Rajeev Magotra SMS-II

(Engg.), and the staff of the Agriculture Engineering Workshop.

Director Agriculture, S. Arvinder Singh Reen, highlighted the significant benefits of the pulse jet bag filter in enhancing the air quality and operational efficiency of the seed processing plant.

"This marks the first successful commissioning of such environmental control equipment in Jammu & Kashmir UT, which is fully controlled through an electronic panel. This system automatically opens rotary valves at regular intervals to collect dust particles and other particulate matter in the collection

bag and release clean air into the atmosphere through an exhaust opening" he added.

Agriculture Research Engineer, Er. Vinay Kumar Bhardwaj explained that the pulse jet bag filter, with a processing capacity of 5.0 TPH, has been specially designed and fabricated to meet the requirements of the Jammu seed processing plant and procured under the CAPEX Budget after following all necessary formalities. "The installation of this equipment is a crucial step towards mitigating the environmental hazards caused by dust pollution in and around the Seed Processing Complex" he informed.

The advanced filtration system is expected to significantly reduce dust pollution, improve the working environment, and ensure compliance with environmental standards.

DC Anantnag formally launches PMAY-G 2.0

J1 NEWS SERVICE
ANANTNAG, JANUARY 8

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag, Syed Fakhruddin Hamid today formally launched the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana Gramin (PMAY-G) 2.0 at an official ceremony held at Dak Bungalow Khanabal, here.

This significant launch aims to bring the government's vision of 'Housing for All' closer to reality by ensuring affordable housing for all eligible rural beneficiaries.

Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD) Anantnag provided an in-depth overview of PMAY-G 2.0, emphasizing its key objectives, implementation strategies, and benefits for rural households. A live demonstration of the online registration portal was conducted, showcasing its functionality and ease of use.

The surveyors deployed for the initia-



received hands-on training on the mobile application and technical aspects of data collection. This training aims to ensure accurate and seamless registration of eligible beneficiaries.

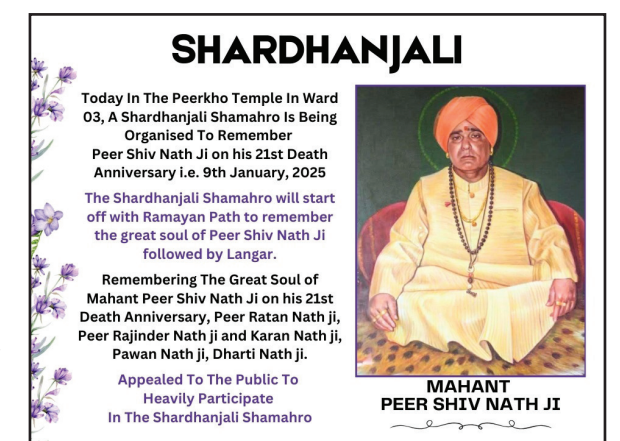
The DC highlighted the transformative potential of PMAY-G 2.0 in enhancing rural housing and living standards. He urged the survey teams to ensure that no eligible beneficiary is left unregistered and

directed them to strictly adhere to the scheme's guidelines. He further emphasized the need for inter-departmental cooperation to facilitate smooth implementation and accurate data collection.

The DC also called upon the media to play a proactive role in raising awareness about the scheme to ensure its wider outreach among the rural population. He stated that the recently opened registration

portal by the Ministry of Rural Development offers a significant opportunity for eligible beneficiaries to secure affordable housing. He added that the launch of PMAY-G 2.0 in Anantnag reaffirms the district administration's commitment to improving living standards and addressing housing challenges in rural areas, marking a pivotal step toward achieving housing equity and improving rural living conditions.

The administration remains committed to realizing the scheme's objectives through collaborative efforts and community engagement. The event was attended by senior officials, including the Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Assistant Commissioner Development (ACD), Block Development Officers (BDOs), and officials from the Rural Development Department (RDD).



SHARDHANJALI

Today In The Peerkho Temple In Ward 03, A Shardhanjali Shamahro Is Being Organised To Remember Peer Shiv Nath Ji on his 21st Death Anniversary. I.e. 9th January, 2025

The Shardhanjali Shamahro will start off with Ramayan Path to remember the great soul of Peer Shiv Nath Ji followed by Langar.

Remembering The Great Soul of Mahant Peer Shiv Nath Ji on his 21st Death Anniversary, Peer Ratan Nath Ji, Peer Rajinder Nath Ji and Karan Nath Ji, Pawan Nath Ji, Dharti Nath Ji.

Appealed To The Public To Heavily Participate In The Shardhanjali Shamahro

MAHANT PEER SHIV NATH JI

Seminar on NEET held at GDC Shopian



JI NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, JANUARY 8

A seminar for the aspirants of National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) of the district was today organized at Government Degree College (GDC) Shopian by District Administration Shopian. The event was hosted by the Chief Education Officer, Shopian in collaboration with GDC Shopian and DIPR Shopian and was attended by NEET aspirants and recent NEET Qualifiers of the district.

The function was aimed to orient the NEET aspirants of the district about the upcoming initiation of the free NEET Coaching and mentorship program by the district administration at two centres put up in Shopian town and Zainapora Subdivision.

The function was also graced by recent NEET Qualifiers of the district who provided guidance and mentorship/ counseling to the aspirants. It also served as a motivational event, recognizing the achievements of the district's NEET qualifiers and inspiring others to pursue

their dreams in the medical field.

Deputy Commissioner Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar attended the seminar and took the opportunity to felicitate the NEET qualifiers from the district with Mementos and Appreciation certificates.

The seminar aimed to provide a platform for aspirants, qualifiers and educators to discuss the importance of NEET, its exam pattern, and preparation strategies, said Shahid Saleem.

He urged the aspirants to use the facility provided by the district administration to give shape to dreams in the much cherished field of medical education and health.

The District Administration's initiative demonstrates its commitment to promoting education and encouraging students to excel in competitive exams like NEET.

Principal, GDC Shopian, Dr. (Prof), Shafiq Ahmad, CEO, M Shabir, DIO Showkat Hussain Ganie and other concerned officials were also present on the occasion.

DDC Budgam Chairman meets LG Manoj Sinha, highlights key development demands



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 8

Nazir Ahmad Khan, Chairman, District Development Council Budgam, called on Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha, today. The DDC Chairman submitted a memorandum of demands to Lieutenant Governor highlighting key development issues of Budgam district including stoppage of the Vande Bharat train at Budgam railway station. He requested that the stoppage of Vande Bharat train would provide a much-needed boost to the district's economy by improving connectivity and attracting more tour-

ists to renowned destinations such as Doodhpathri, Yusmarg, Tosamaidan, and the revered Charar-e-Sharief shrine.

Sh Nazir Ahmad Khan also extended gratitude to the Lieutenant Governor for his continued support in developmental projects in Budgam, particularly the construction of bridges over Nalla Sukhnag in the Beerwah constituency, which has been a long-pending demand of the local population.

The Lieutenant Governor assured the DDC Chairman that appropriate action will be taken to address the issues projected by him during the interaction.

Capacity building programme for Officials of I&C Department commences at IIT Jammu

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 8

A two day capacity building programme was inaugurated here today by Commissioner Secretary, Industries and Commerce, Vikramjit Singh at IIT Jammu Campus.

As many as, 40 officers of the rank of Functional Manager, Project Manager and Industrial Promotion Officers participated in the training programme.

The training session commenced with welcome address by Dr. Arun Manhas, Director, Industries and Commerce, Jammu followed by inaugural speech by Commissioner Secretary, I&C Department.

The Commissioner Secretary said that the training program is aimed at providing comprehensive knowledge base to the officers of the department covering various topics related to Modern

Industrial Ecosystem including Policy Implementation Strategies and intervention of technologies including Generative AIs. "The program will enhance critical thinking skills and providing Stress Management Techniques bringing in conducive working environment at workplace", said Vikramjit Singh.

He further highlighted the need for capacity building exercises and urged the participants to upgrade their existing skill sets to cope up with the emerging demand and working environments.

Dr. Manoj Singh Gaur, Director IIT Jammu, also addressed the participants and requested them to indulge in the interactions with the speakers and obtain maximum benefits from the program.

The intensive training session has been divided

into theoretical and case study based practical exercises which will equip the officers in applying analytical approaches in executing their assignments.

Hosting Team headed by Dr. Amitash Ojha, Assistant Professor, department of Humanities and Social Science, IIT Jammu, distinguished speakers and SMEs possessing academic and industrial knowledge would contribute in deliberating on different topics.

Besides the participants, Joint Director (M&P), Joint Director (Dev), Chief Accounts Officer I&C, Deputy Director (Planning), Assistant Director and faculties from IIT Jammu were present in the program.

The inauguration session concluded with vote of thanks by Miss Garima Assistant Professor, IIT Jammu.

Progress of 21st Livestock Census in J&K reviewed



JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 8

Director of Animal Husbandry Statistics Division within the Department of Animal Husbandry Dairying & Fisheries of the Government of India, V.P. Singh along with Director Animal Husbandry, Kashmir, Dr. Parvinder Singh convened a meeting to assess and monitor the progress of the 21st Livestock Census in Jammu & Kashmir.

This meeting provided a detailed examination of existing challenges and obstacles.

During this session, district nodal officers were given strict directives to ensure that data is uploaded in real-time while addressing any outstanding backlogs comprehensively. The discussion also focused on the livestock

census concerning the pastoralist community. It was reported that data pertaining to this community has already been compiled, and the Government of India is formulating policies aimed at enhancing welfare and healthcare for their livestock. Furthermore, migratory livestock will be prioritized in upcoming policies from the Central Government.

It is important to note that a livestock census is conducted every five years across the entire country, overseen by the Government of India. Currently, the 21st Livestock Census is underway.

The meeting included participation from Deputy Director Central, Deputy Director of Planning, all Chief Animal Husbandry Officers and District Nodal Officers.

Nikshay Poshan Kits presented to TB Patients in Samba



JI NEWS SERVICE
SAMBA, JANUARY 8

District Administration Samba today gave away Nikshay Poshan Kits to 50 TB patients under the ambitious "100 Days of TB Elimination" campaign. The initiative, funded by the Indian Red Cross Society, was organized under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma, and the supervision of Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Samba, Dr. Vidhi Bhatiyal.

Addressing the event, the DC underscored that

TB is a fully curable disease if patients strictly follow their medication regimen and maintain a balanced diet. They also urged the public to discard societal taboos surrounding the disease, emphasizing the need for a supportive environment for TB patients.

The "100 Days of TB Elimination" campaign, launched in December 2024 by the Government of India, aims to accelerate progress toward making India TB-free by 2025, well ahead of the global target of 2030.

DC Srinagar chairs DLC meet, finalizes action plan for re-verification of beneficiaries in PDS database

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 08

In order to finalize the action plan for re-verification process of beneficiaries listed in the Public Distribution System (PDS) database in the District, a meeting of District Level Committee was Wednesday held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat here in his office chamber.

During the meeting, the DC asked the officers to expedite the re-verification process for all beneficiaries, particularly those under the AAY and PHH categories. He stressed the officers to conduct a detailed review of current income status of the beneficiaries to ensure the transparent PDS database.

On the occasion, the DC also directed the Officers to ensure 100% completion of e-KYC for all beneficiaries and to incorporate any eligible beneficiaries



who may have been left out from the system.

The DC also directed the formation of Sub Committees at the Village and Ward levels which will conduct general surveys to streamline and update the database in stipulated time.

Notably, the District Level Committee has been formed by the Government of Jammu and Kashmir to oversee the verification of beneficiaries enrolled under the Public Distribution System (PDS) database. As per Government order the Committee will be responsible for

verifying the eligibility of beneficiaries, identifying any left-out eligible individuals, and completing the e-KYC process for pending beneficiaries.

The District Level Committee headed by the Deputy Commissioner, with the Assistant Commissioner (Revenue), Assistant Commissioner (Development), District Social Welfare Officer, and Assistant Director (FCS&CA) as members is tasked with verifying the eligibility of all beneficiaries enrolled in the Public Distribution System (PDS) database, in accordance with the applicable rules, and ensuring the removal of ineligible beneficiaries.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner, Syed Ahmad Kataria, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Assistant Director FCS&CA, Tehsildar Headquarters and other concerned.

Awareness programme on PMEGP, JKREGP held at ITI Jammu

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 8

An awareness programme on Prime Minister's Employment Generation Program (PMEGP) and JKREGP scheme, being implemented by Khadi and Village Industries Board (KVIB), was held at Industrial Technical Institute (ITI), Jammu.

Deputy CEO, KVIB, Tilak Raj and Principal ITI briefed the participants about the PMEGP and

JKREGP scheme which is being run with the objective of providing financial and technical assistance to encourage youth to start small and medium scale manufacturing and service enterprises.

"Through PMEGP and JKREGP scheme, the Government aims to create such entrepreneurs who can generate employment for themselves and for others as well so that the burden to provide employment on the existing struc-

ture can be eased out" they added. They informed that KVIB invites all such individuals, and organizations, who want to set up their own business units under the authorized categories. KVIB not only helps in providing financial and technical assistance to the beneficiaries under various government schemes, but also arranges for their training, if required. The programme was attended by the students and staff of ITI and KVIB.

Govt. regularises 38 I/c Deputy Directors of JKESS as Deputy Directors

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 8

In a significant move towards enhancing administrative efficiency, the Jammu and Kashmir Government regularised 38 in-charge Deputy Directors of Jammu and Kashmir Economics and Statistics (JKESS) as Deputy Directors.

As per the order issued by Planning, Development and Monitoring department, the regularisations have been made in respect of these officers in the pay level-11 (67700-208700) with effect from 21.12.2023 as per the recommendations of Departmental Promotion Committee/ J&K Public Service Commission.

Secretary, Planning, Development and Monitoring department, Dr. Shahid Iqbal Choudhary said that this decision comes as a part of the government's continued efforts to streamline the administrative structure and ensure that experienced officials are recognized for their contributions. He added that this step will further strengthen the department and enable it to deliver better services and play a crucial role in policy making through data-driven insights.

Parwah/ Care - Free Medical camp held at Shopian

JI NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, JANUARY 8

A free medical camp, 'Parwah' or 'Care' was organised today by the Motor Vehicles Department, Shopian in collaboration with the Health Department for the drivers of district Shopian at Batapora Stand, Shopian.

The camp was inaugurated by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar in the presence of ARTO, Shopian.

The DC appreciated the initiative taken by departments, showcasing the administration's commitment to providing much needed medical screening for the vital section of



our society. Such events demonstrate the efforts being taken to promote healthcare and wellness in the district, said Shahid Saleem.

The medical camp aimed to provide comprehensive health check-ups and medical facilities to the

members of the transport sector.

MVD & Health Departments have been regularly conducting the Medical Camps in the district for the transporters of the district in order to provide the services of free healthcare to them.

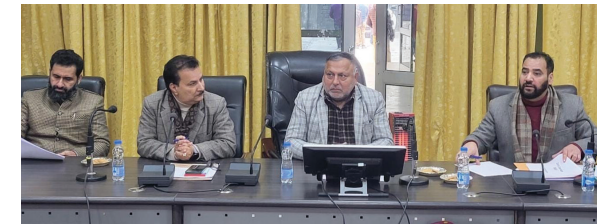
ADDG Ramban reviews execution of District Capex Plan 2024-25

JI NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JANUARY 8

Additional District Development Commissioner Ramban Roshan Lal today chaired a meeting here in the Conference Hall and took a comprehensive sector-wise review of the developmental activities under the District Capex Plan 2024-25.

The meeting was attended by ACD Srinath Suman, CPO Dr. Shaheen Ahmed Rather, ACP Ashfaq Ahmed, and all other District and Sectoral officers.

Emphasizing the impor-



tance of timely execution, the ADDC issued strict directions to Block Development Officers (BDOs) to ensure 100% expenditure of the MGNREGA material component and expedite tendering process for all sanctioned works.

The BDOs were given 2-day time to submit the lists for the distribution

of solar lights in their respective blocks under PRI grants, ensuring convenience for the general public.

Expressing displeasure over the slow progress of SOS works, the ADDC directed the BDOs to accelerate efforts and achieve the prescribed targets within the stipulated time

frame. Additionally, the ADDC reviewed the progress of the flagship schemes of Health, Social Welfare, Industry, Revenue, Jal Shakti, and JPDCL. All concerned officers were directed to submit detailed reports of their achievements to be highlighted on public platforms.

The CPO informed the meeting regarding department wise status of progress and stressed upon the officers to achieve developmental milestones and ensure timely delivery of services under the District Capex Plan 2024-25.

FROM THE FRONT PAGE...

Police bust major...

Police Station Parimpora, the SSP said, adding that the seized vehicle and narcotics have been taken as evidence, and further investigations are underway to identify other individuals involved in the racket.

Meanwhile, preliminary investigations suggest that the seized heroin was smuggled from Pakistan as part of a cross-border drug trafficking network, SSP Hussain said. "Police are now pursuing both backward and forward linkages to dismantle the syndicate, and the drugs seized from their possession are worth around Rs: 32 crores in the international market," he said.

Hussain said the police department has a zero-tolerance policy towards narcotics. He called on the people to support the police's efforts to create a drug-free society. "We urge citizens to share any information related to drug trafficking or suspicious activities with the nearest police station or by dialling 112," he added. KNO

We are promoting...

\$2.5 trillion economy by 2047. He remarked that to realize this vision, the government of Shri Chandrababu Naidu had initiated the 'Swarna Andhra@2047' initiative. The Prime Minister emphasized that the Union government was working shoulder to shoulder with Andhra Pradesh to achieve every goal and added that the central government was giving special priority to Andhra Pradesh in projects worth lakhs of crores. The Prime Minister remarked that today, projects worth more than Rs 2 lakh crore were inaugurated and congratulated the people of Andhra Pradesh and the entire nation for these development projects.

Highlighting that Andhra Pradesh, due to its innovative nature, is a significant hub for IT and technology, the Prime Minister remarked "It is now time for Andhra Pradesh to become a center for futuristic technologies". He emphasized the importance of leading in emerging technologies, such as green hydrogen. Shri Modi noted that the National Green Hydrogen Mission was launched in 2023, with a target of producing 5 million metric tonnes of green hydrogen by 2030. He added that in the initial phase, two green hydrogen hubs would be established, one of which will be in Visakhapatnam. The Prime Minister stated that Visakhapatnam will be among the few cities globally with large-scale green hydrogen production facilities. He highlighted that this green hydrogen hub will create numerous job opportunities and develop a manufacturing ecosystem in Andhra Pradesh.

Shri Modi remarked that he had the opportunity to lay the foundation stone for the bulk drug park project in Nakkapalli and highlighted that Andhra Pradesh was one of the three states in the country where such a park is being established. The Prime Minister emphasized that this park will provide excellent infrastructure for manufacturing and research, boosting investor enthusiasm and confidence while benefiting local pharma companies.

The Prime Minister noted that the government views urbanization as an opportunity and aims to make Andhra Pradesh an example of new-age urbanization. He added that to realize this vision, the foundation stone for the Krishnapatnam Industrial Area, also known as Kris City, was laid today. He remarked that this smart city will be part of the Chennai-Bengaluru Industrial Corridor, attracting thousands of crores in investment and creating millions of industrial jobs in Andhra Pradesh.

Remarking that Andhra Pradesh was already benefiting from Shri City as a manufacturing hub, Shri Modi underscored that the aim is for Andhra Pradesh to be among the top states in the country in the industrial and manufacturing sectors. The Prime Minister emphasized that the government was promoting manufacturing through initiatives such as Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, resulting in India being counted among the top countries in the world for manufacturing various products.

The Prime Minister noted that the foundation stone for the South Coast Railway Zone headquarters was laid in the new city of Visakhapatnam. He highlighted the importance of this development for Andhra Pradesh, fulfilling a long-standing demand for a separate railway zone. The Prime Minister stated that the establishment of the South Coast Railway Zone headquarters will expand agricultural and trade activities in the region, and provide new opportunities for tourism and the local economy. He also mentioned the inauguration and foundation laying of connectivity projects worth thousands of crores. Shri Modi said that Andhra Pradesh was among the states with 100% railway electrification, and more than 70 railway stations are being developed under the Amrit Bharat Station Scheme. He highlighted that seven Vande Bharat trains and the Amrit Bharat train were being operated for the ease of travel for the people of Andhra Pradesh.

"The infrastructure revolution in Andhra Pradesh, with better connectivity and facilities, will transform the state's landscape", said Shri Modi. He remarked that this development will enhance ease of living and ease of doing business, forming the foundation for Andhra Pradesh's \$2.5 trillion economy.

Noting that Visakhapatnam and Andhra Pradesh's coast have been gateways for India's trade for centuries and continue to hold significant importance, the Prime Minister emphasized the promotion of the blue economy in mission mode to fully utilize maritime opportunities. He stressed the modernization of Visakhapatnam Fishing Harbour to increase the income and business of those involved in fisheries. He mentioned the provision of facilities like Kisan Credit Cards to fishermen and the steps being taken to ensure maritime security.

Shri Modi stressed the government's commitment to inclusive and all-around development in every sector, ensuring that the benefits of development reach all sections of society. He reiterated the Union government's dedication to building a prosperous and modern Andhra Pradesh. Concluding the speech, the Prime Minister congratulated everyone on the projects being inaugurated today, ensuring the prosperity of the people of Andhra Pradesh.

Transport Commissioner inaugurates Free Health Check-Up Camp for Drivers, conductors at Bakshinagar

J1 NEWS SERVICE

JAMMU, JANUARY 8

The Transport Commissioner of Jammu and Kashmir, Vishesh Mahajan today inaugurated a free health check-up camp for drivers and conductors here at Bakshi Nagar Matar Stand.

The camp was organized by the Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) Jammu, in collaboration with the Health Department and the Minibus Union Jammu.

During the Camp more than 270 drivers and conductors participated and availed themselves of the

facility like eye check-up for colour-blindness, defect in eye sight, test to check Blood Pressure Sugar, Hb etc.

Speaking on the occasion, the Transport Commissioner J&K informed the participants that the aim of organizing such medical camps is to spread awareness among drivers about the significance of personal health and hygiene for safe driving. "Such camps will be organized for drivers on a regular basis so that they keep their health in check and well monitored as they hold the responsibility of ensuring the safety



of passengers", he added.

The Transport commissioner also emphasized the importance of adopting safe and responsible driving habits especially among passenger vehicle drivers and conductors and urged the drivers to avoid drunken and rash driving and use of mobile phones while driving.

He reiterated that strict adherence to speed limits is crucial, as drivers carry the responsibility of many co-passengers. He said that in many instances it was observed that a minor negligence on the road can lead to tragic loss of lives.

The Transport Commissioner also informed that the department would

take up the matter with oil companies to ensure that violators—such as riders without helmets, drivers without seat belts, or those breaching traffic laws are denied fuel at petrol pumps.

He further added that although the transport department is implementing all possible measures to reduce accidents, it has constituted a Committee to study the root cause of mishaps in few identified black spots of Jammu district so that necessary steps can be implemented to prevent fatalities. He also sought active partici-

ipation of drivers and transport unions to achieve the goal. Responding to the demands of the transport community, he assured that the department would take every initiative to provide moral and administrative support to drivers, enabling them to deliver their services without hindrance.

Earlier, Regional Transport Officer Jammu, Pankaj Bhagotra also spoke at length about road safety awareness and reaffirmed the commitment of all stakeholders to ensuring a safer and healthier environment for the transport sector in the district.

The Governor of Andhra Pradesh, Shri S. Abdul Nazeer, Union Minister for Civil Aviation, Shri Kinjarapu Rammohan Naidu, Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh, Shri N. Chandrababu Naidu, Deputy Chief Minister, Shri Pawan Kalyan were present among other dignitaries at the event.

Youth leading Viksit...

to the younger generation. "I have full faith in your skills, hard work, and dedication, and I hope that your creative power will help in expediting the process of Vikshit Bharat and building a prosperous Jammu and Kashmir," he said, expressing his confidence in the potential of the region's youth to drive significant change.

Reflecting on the past five years, the LG noted that the Jammu and Kashmir administration has made concerted efforts to empower and transform the youth. "Efforts have been put to transform the youth power, and to a great extent, we have been successful in channelizing their energy towards constructive avenues," he added.

LG Sinha said, "The administration has launched various skill development programs, entrepreneurship initiatives, and educational reforms to ensure that the youth are equipped to meet future challenges."

ENVISIONS INDIA'S GDP CONTRIBUTION REACHING 35%

Touching upon the larger picture of India's economic growth, LG Sinha drew attention to the remarkable progress made over the years. "In 1950, our GDP contribution to the global economy was just 4%. Today, it has risen to 15%, and by 2047, we must ensure that our contribution reaches 35%," he said, envisioning a dynamic and globally competitive India by the centenary of its independence.

He added that this vision of a 'Badalta Bharat' (Changing India) could only be realized through the collective efforts of every citizen, with the youth playing a central role in shaping the country's future.

J&K OCCUPIES IMPORTANT PLACE ON NATIONAL CULTURAL MAP

Referring to the objective of the National Youth Festival, the Lieutenant Governor said the glorious event prepares our youth to assume future challenges and responsibilities towards the nation with patriotic feelings.

LG Sinha said, "Jammu Kashmir occupies an important place on the national cultural map. The youth festival will provide an opportunity to make our rich cultural legacy popular and enrich cultural consciousness of the society,"

"At UT level, the event brings youth from different districts and different backgrounds to mingle and learn from each other. This helps in developing better understanding and appreciation of different cultures and talents," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor called upon the youth to embrace this special opportunity to display their leadership talent and demonstrate diversity in folk dance, poetry, writing, painting and music.

He asked the youth to achieve excellence in their respective competition and also explore ways to contribute to nation building. "Youth are responsible for writing their own destiny and shaping the future of Jammu Kashmir. Never feel satisfied. Remove the word 'Impossible' from your dictionary and move forward with determination and confidence," he said.

During the interactive session, the youth spoke about different themes in which they are representing J&K and also shared the role of the younger generation of Jammu Kashmir in realising the vision of Viksit Bharat.

Sarmad Hafeez, Secretary, Youth Services and Sports Department; Rajinder Singh Tara, Director General, Youth Services and Sports; Jitendra Mishra, Nodal Officer, participating youth and officials accompanying the contingent for National Youth Festival were present on the occasion. KNO

Srinagar International...

Airport include Spicejet, IndiGo, Air India Express, Akasa Air, and Air India among others.

The Director of Srinagar International Airport expressed satisfaction with the year's performance, saying, "2024 has been a successful year for Srinagar International Airport, with smooth flight operations despite occasional weather disruptions. This achievement reflects the hard work and dedication of our staff. We take pride in accommodating over 4.4 million passengers from India and beyond."

Looking forward to 2025, he said they plan to enhance the airport's infrastructure, improve passenger experiences and ensure seamless connectivity for both domestic and international travellers. "Our continued focus will be on safety, efficiency, and reliability to make

Srinagar a preferred choice for air travel," he added.

Last year, officials announced the installation of an advanced Instrument Landing System (ILS CAT-II) under the Indian Air Force, which is a crucial technological upgrade designed to facilitate smooth flight operations during low-visibility conditions, such as fog and adverse winter weather. KNO

2025 begins with...

Four stations including the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, Srinagar have recorded the normal precipitation during the period. As per the details, Budgam and Ganderbal stations in central Kashmir saw large excess rainfall from January 01 to January 08.

Meanwhile, the local Meteorological department (MeT) has issued a yellow warning, saying that there is a possibility of an isolated cold wave till January 10.

Amidst the forecast of an isolated cold wave, Director MeT, Dr Mukhtar Ahmad said that there is a possibility of generally dry weather conditions and cloudiness during the 10th evening and night.

On January 11, he said that generally cloudy weather is expected with possibility of light rain in plains of Jammu and snow at isolated higher reaches of Jammu division & Kashmir division.

On January 12-14, the weather would remain generally dry, he said, adding that on January 15 & 16, generally cloudy weather is expected with possibility of light snow at isolated to scattered places.

Moreover, the tourists, travelers and transporters are advised to follow administration and traffic advisory. KNO

Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo...

at the launch of the Bank's Calendar - 2025, which has always been more than a mere date-keeper; it is a symbol of our deep emotional connect with our people and our roots. This year we have tried to capture some of the milestones of developmental vision expressing itself in the form of infrastructural projects representing people's aspirations for their progressive and prosperous future."

"Holding an iconic place in the hearts of the people of the region, its presence in homes and offices across our areas of operations serves as both a token of gratitude to our valued stakeholders and an effective medium of enhanced brand promotion/recall to augment the Bank's connect with the people across its operational geographies", he added.

Executive Director Sudhir Gupta emphasized further the significance of the Calendar and said, "This calendar is a medium to showcase the beauty, aspirations and spirit of the people of our core geography. Besides reaffirming our commitment to contribute to the economic progress, we believe, featuring these major infrastructural projects will inspire confidence and instil pride among the people."

The theme of the 2025 calendar celebrates the landmark infrastructure projects that are transforming J&K and Ladakh, showcasing their developmental journey.

The calendar highlights significant projects such as the upcoming train to Kashmir - a symbol of enhanced connectivity and integration. It also features the majestic Reasi Bridge in Jammu - world's highest railway bridge; the revamped iconic Clock Tower at Lal Chowk - a historical and cultural hub of Srinagar; All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Jammu - representing a leap in healthcare infrastructure, Kargil Sports Stadium - the state-of-the-art field for promoting sports and youth engagement; and Indian Astronomical Observatory at Hanle in Ladakh that captures the region's scientific potential and breath-taking beauty.

The calendar also includes QR codes linked to product details on the Bank's website for easy customer access. Moreover, in line with the digital shift, J&K Bank will continue to offer an eco-friendly e-Calendar, which will soon be available for download on both Android and iOS devices.

HMPV similar to...

pre-existing conditions like chronic respiratory or cardiovascular diseases are more vulnerable.

He said that severe complications that are rare include bronchiolitis, Pneumonia and exacerbation of Asthma or COPD that requires hospitalization.

Doctors said that preventive measures including hygiene practices, stay away from individuals showing symptoms of respiratory infections, clean frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, toys, and electronic devices, wear a mask in crowded or high-risk areas, especially during respiratory virus outbreaks, maintain a healthy diet, exercise regularly, and get adequate sleep can reduce the risk of infection.

Meanwhile, a top health official told KNO that Jammu and Kashmir Health department has intensified efforts

to meet any eventuality to address the situation in case of rising cases of Human Metapneumovirus (HMPV).

He said that as a precautionary measure, the isolation wards are being set up across J&K to ensure preparedness and swift action.

"Our hospitals are adequately equipped with oxygen plants, intensive care units, and oxygen concentrators to manage any emergency," official said, adding that no HMPV cases have been reported in Jammu and Kashmir so far but the department is very and prepared to meet any emergency. KNO

PM Modi to inaugurate...

Union Territory.

The tunnel is being constructed in an area prone to snow avalanches, making the road to Sonamarg impassable during most part of the winter.

The tunnel would provide all-weather connectivity to the renowned tourist destination with Srinagar. It is the key part of the larger Zojila tunnel project - the longest road tunnel in India - being built to allow all-weather connectivity to Ladakh with the Kashmir Valley.

The tunnel was recently targeted after terrorists stormed one of the construction sites of the tunnel. Seven workers, including a doctor were killed in the terrorist attack on October 20 last year.

The tunnel was originally planned to be built by the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) in 2012, but it was re-tendered later by the National Highways & Infrastructure Development Corporation Limited (NHIDCL) to a private company.

Meanwhile, chief minister Omar Abdullah, in a post on X, stated that Jammu and Kashmir looks forward to the inauguration of the vital infra project in the coming day. He said that the asset will be a game changer for the expansion of winter tourism in the Valley.

"J&K, especially central Kashmir, looks forward to the inauguration of a vital piece of infrastructure in the coming days. This asset will be a game changer for the expansion of winter tourism in the valley," he said-(KNO)

MHA asks states to...

said it had issued an advisory to the states and union territories on the issue on October 16, 2024 and had requested them to provide the benefit of the provisions of Section 479 of BNSS to all eligible prisoners and have their bail applications filed in the court accordingly.

It said on the occasion of Constitution Day i.e. November 26, 2024, the home ministry had launched a special campaign under which all the states and union territories were requested... to identify eligible prisoners under the provisions of the Section 479 of BNSS and move their applications to the concerned courts for their release on bail/bond.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah had also sent a letter to chief ministers of all states and Union territories in this regard. The states and Union territories had actively participated in this exercise and had furnished the details of the number of prisoners who benefited from the provisions of Section 479 of BNSS up to November 26, 2024.

However, the ministry has conveyed to the states that it was not a one-time exercise and the states and Union territories need to take advantage of the provisions of Section 479 of BNSS and provide the benefit of the same to all eligible prisoners on a continuous basis.

"The states and UTs are requested to provide details, as in the attached proforma, for the period November 27, 2024 to December 31, 2024, on urgent basis, whereafter a monthly report, even a NIL report, is to be provided to this ministry in the prescribed proforma, starting from January 1, 2025," the communication said.

The home minister said the provisions of Section 479 of BNSS can go a long way in mitigating the situation of long detention faced by undertrial prisoners and can also address the issue of overcrowding in prisons.

"It is, therefore, expected that all states and UTs will cooperate in the matter and will advise the concerned prison authorities for taking necessary action in the matter and to furnish the desired information to MHA in a timely manner," it said. (Agencies)

3 injured in...

hospital Mendhar.

The injured have been identified as Akshit Sharma JE (28) son of Anil Kumar resident of Jammu, Amar Khan JE (26) son of Hussain resident of Ari Sharuti and Ruby Kousar (27) wife of Tariq Hussain resident of Kalaban.

Medical officer SDH Mendhar Dr Javid Iqbal also confirmed the incident and said that we have received three injured people, one of the injured Amar Khan has been referred to GMC Rajouri.

Advisor Nasir Aslam Wani concedes demise of Tahir Ajaz's son

JI NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 8

Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, today expressed profound shock and sorrow over the untimely demise of Imad Tahir, son of Tahir Ajaz, Additional Secretary in the Chief Minister's Secretariat who passed away yesterday.

In his condolence message, the Advisor conveyed deep sympathies with the bereaved family at this hour of grief and sorrow. He prayed for eternal peace to the departed soul and strength to the family to bear this irreparable loss.

200 Students from Women's Colleges of 20 States Visit Kala Kendra

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, 8TH JANUARY 2025:

Two hundred students from women's degree colleges representing 20 states of India visited Kala Kendra today as part of the National Integration Camp (NIC), 2025, organized by the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, under the aegis of the Higher Education Department, Government of Jammu and Kashmir. The camp, themed "Women Empowerment and Emancipation", symbolizing "Nari Shakti", is being held in Jammu from 3rd to 9th January 2025. The visit aimed to familiarize students with the rich visual and indigenous arts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The presidium for the event featured distinguished academicians and



art enthusiasts, including Prof. Masrofa Qadir, Dr. Javaid Rahi, Secretary of the Kala Kendra Society, Dr. Anuradha Chowdhary, Dr. Ritu Manghiya, Dr. Liaqat Jafri, and Dr. Anupam.

Dr. Javaid Rahi, welcomed the faculty and the students and highlighted Jammu and Kashmir's rich artistic heritage. He emphasized the significant contributions of the region's visual artists to modern Indian art while

also showcasing its vibrant folk traditions, tribal culture, and indigenous art forms.

During their visit, the students explored all eight galleries of Kala Kendra and viewed an impressive exhibition featuring paintings, sculptures, and over 200 artifacts that reflect the artistic diversity and cultural wealth of Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing the students, Dr. Liaqat Jafri described the National

Integration Camp as a flagship initiative of the National Service Scheme (NSS), designed to promote national unity, social harmony, and inclusivity among Indian youth. He further noted the participation of 200 NSS volunteers, 25 Program Officers, and 18 contingents from various states, highlighting India's rich cultural diversity.

Participants, including Prof. Masrofa Qadir, Dr. Anuradha Chowdhary, Dr. Ritu Manghiya, and Dr. Anupam, shared their experiences and insights about art and their interaction with visual artists.

The visit underscored the role of art in bridging cultural divides and inspiring a collective national identity, leaving a lasting impression on the visiting students.

DC Baramulla finalizes arrangements for Republic Day-2025



JI NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, JANUARY 8

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, chaired a meeting today to finalize the arrangements for the Republic Day 2025 celebrations in the district.

Senior officers from the civil administration, police, education department, and other concerned agencies were present in the meeting.

The DC reviewed the arrangements in detail, including seating, heating, security and the cultural programs planned for the event. He emphasized the importance of

ensuring proper seating arrangements, uninterupted heating facilities.

The main event will be held at District Police Lines, Baramulla, where the National Flag will be hoisted and cultural programs will showcase the region's heritage and diversity. Departments were instructed to ensure active participation of participants and local artists to add vibrancy to the celebrations.

The DC also reviewed security arrangements and directed the police to deploy adequate personnel and ensure stringent measures at all venues.

Traffic management, emergency response plans, and crowd control measures were also discussed to ensure a smooth and secure event. Additionally, the DC directed the concerned departments to ensure the availability of essential services, such as water supply, power backup and medical facilities, to address any exigencies during the program.

The meeting concluded with the DC directing all departments to work in coordination to make the Republic Day celebrations a grand success, reflecting the spirit of unity and patriotism.



Ajatshatru Singh, former Minister and senior BJP Leader called on Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha, today. He was accompanied by Smt Ritu Singh.



Ms Abida War, Chairperson J&K Solace Employees Working Women Association and Ms Jagmeet Kour Bali, President, All Sikh Minority Employees Association and All Employees Joint Association Kashmir (M) also called on the Lieutenant Governor.

NSS Special Winter Camp begins at GDC Thannamandi

JI NEWS SERVICE
THANNAMANDI, JAN 8

A 7-day NSS Special Winter Camp started at Government Degree College Thannamandi, amidst great enthusiasm and fervour under the guidance of Principal Dr. Farooq Ahmed. The inauguration ceremony was graced by the presence of esteemed guests, including Dr. Ashaq Malik, Coordinator IQAC, Anuj Bali, Chief Librarian, and NSS PO Prof. Supriya Gupta. The camp, which will run for seven days, aims to foster community service, social awareness, and personality development among the volunteers.

Dr. Ashaq Malik, Coordinator IQAC, highlighted the significance of volunteer's ship in shaping individuals and society. His inspiring words motivated



the volunteers to dedicate themselves to the cause and make the most of the camp's activities.

Prof. Supriya Gupta encouraged the volunteers to actively participate in community service and make a positive impact on society.

On Day 1, the NSS volunteers embarked on a

cleanliness drive within the college campus, creating beautiful flower beds and undertaking beautification of the selected area. The camp will feature a range of activities including cleanliness and plantation drives, beautification of college campus, seminars, workshops, and community outreach programs.

ABVP delegation submits memo to LG, raises various demands of edu sector



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 8

Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) delegation of Jammu Kashmir today met with Lieutenant Governor of Jammu Kashmir Manoj Sinha at Raj Bhawan, Jammu and submitted a memorandum regarding various demands of the education sector.

ABVP demands Upgradation of offsite campuses Jammu University, Allocation of permanent posts of Teaching Staff in the Cluster Universities of Jammu &

Srinagar, Opening of Cluster University in Hilly Terrains of Jammu Kashmir, Upgradation of Nursing Colleges Infrastructure and Education, Augmentation of Infrastructure in colleges of state, Appointment of Permanent Director at NIT Srinagar, Establishment of National Law University and Sports University.

ABVP Jammu Kashmir State Secretary Sannak Shrivats said, we believe that addressing these demands will significantly improve the educational landscape in Jammu Kashmir by pro-

viding students with better opportunities and resources to succeed. LG Manoj Sinha gives patient hearing to the delegation and assures that these demands will be addressed to improve and uplift the education sector of the state.

Zonal Organizing Secretary ABVP Gaurav Attri, State President Dr Ajay Sharma, Ex State Secretary Akshi Billowria, Joint Secretary Shamim Parvej, Akriti Chib, Sourav Manhans and State Organizing Secretary Tilak Thakur were also present.

6th day of NSS camp: filled with Teamwork, Learning, Cultural Unity



JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 8

The 6th day of the NSS National Integration Camp was filled with enthusiasm, learning and cultural exchange. Participants from various states joined to engage in diverse activities that fostered unity and camaraderie. The day started refreshingly with a nutritious breakfast, energizing participants for the exciting day ahead at the GCW, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. As the sun rose so did the spirits of the campers, eager to partake in the planned activities To encourage teamwork and a sense of friendly competition at GCW, Parade Ground, Jammu, the group engaged in a lively spoon-lemon race. Participants showcased their agility and competitive spirit, running with lemons balanced on spoons while

cheering each other on. The laughter and joy echoed throughout the venue, reinforcing the bonds of friendship and unity among diverse participants.

Following the spirited games, the camp transitioned into an enriching session of academic discussions. Esteemed speaker Ms. Arunima Sinha, senior faculty of The Art of Living, visited GCW, Parade to conduct an interactive session on "Mind Management". She focused that mind management refers to the process of effectively directing one's thoughts, emotions and actions to achieve personal and professional goals. It involves developing awareness of one's mental habits and patterns enabling individuals to cultivate positive thinking and reduce stress by mastering the art of Mind Management.

Indian Army Successfully concludes Stitching and Tailoring Classes for Women at Haribudha, Poonch



JI NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, JAN 8

The Indian Army is proud to announce the successful conclusion of its 30-day Stitching and Tailoring Classes for women, held at Haribudha, Poonch District. The program, which aimed at empowering women with essential skills for financial independence, culminated in a grand closing ceremony attended by participants, facilitators, and distinguished guests. Over the course of the month-long program, a group of 10 women from remote areas of Haribudha participated in the skill-building workshops, which equipped them with practical knowledge in stitching, tailoring, and sewing techniques. The classes were designed to help these women develop vocational skills that can provide them with sustainable livelihood

opportunities in the garment and textile industry. As a special part of the program, sewing machines were distributed to the participants at the closing ceremony, enabling them to continue their journey towards financial independence. The distribution of sewing machines is a key milestone in ensuring that the women have the tools they need to put their newly acquired skills into practice. Speaking at the closing ceremony, a representative of the Indian Army expressed their commitment to women's empowerment and skill development. "We believe in fostering a sense of independence among women by providing them with skills that not only enhance their lives but also benefit their communities. Today marks a significant achievement in the lives of these remarkable women, who are now

equipped to take charge of their futures." The closing ceremony recognized their hard work and dedication throughout the course. Guests at the event applauded the participants for their efforts and encouraged them to continue their growth in the field. This initiative is a part of the Indian Army's ongoing efforts to support women's empowerment in rural and underserved areas, providing them with the resources, education, and skills needed to build a better future for themselves and their families. The Indian Army remains committed to the cause of empowering women across J&K through various training programs and initiatives under Op Sadbhavana. This project stands as a testament to the power of education and the incredible impact it can have on individuals and communities.



A delegation of newly elected office-bearers of J&K High Court Bar Association, Jammu led by its President Advocate K. Nirmal Kotwal, called on Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha. The delegation comprised of Adv. Baldev Singh, Adv. Pardeep Majotra, Adv. Anshu Mahajan and Adv. Rahul Aggarwal apprised the Lieutenant Governor on various concerning issues of the legal fraternity.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR,
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, TUBE-WELL IRRIGATION DIVISION, JAMMU.
e-mail : twidjammu2024@gmail.com

Subject:- Deep drilling of 125 mm dia. Bore Hole & Providing Installation Testing Commissioning of Submersible Pump set at Brig. Rajinder Singh Park at Bagoona District Samba.

Reference:- i) This office e-NIT No:- 29 of 2024-25 issued under endstt No. TWID/J/4453-4470 Dated:- 26-12-2024.
ii) This office corrigendum / Extension Notice II issued vide endtt. No. TWID/J/4541-56 Dtd:-2-1-2025.

Extension Notice-II

It is hereby circulated for General Information of all the concerned that the last date of online receipt of tenders for above subjected work tendered vide e-NIT No. 29 of 2024-25 is hereby extended upto 14-01-2025 upto 12.00 noon and the same shall be opened on or after 15-01-2025, 12.00 Noon.

All other terms and conditions of the e-NIT shall remain same.

No: TWID/J/4583-98
Dated:-07-01-2025.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Tube-Well Irrigation Division
Jammu

DIP/J-9014/24
Date: 8-1-25

EDITORIAL

NC stands at a crossroads

The National Conference (NC) finds itself grappling with a deepening internal rift. Senior party leader and Lok Sabha member Aga Ruhullah Mehdi's recent criticism of Chief Minister Omar Abdullah has exposed the widening cracks within the party. Ruhullah's remarks, suggesting that Omar risks being seen as "New Delhi's representative" unless he leads the charge for the restoration of Article 370 and statehood for Jammu and Kashmir, have stirred considerable controversy and embarrassment for the NC leadership. Ruhullah's accusations reflect a growing disaffection within the NC ranks. His statement that "Kashmiris are not only disappointed but also worried about Chief Minister Omar Abdullah" underscores the disconnect between the party's leadership and its mandate. This discontent stems from the perceived failure to robustly address the aspirations of the people, particularly in the wake of the abrogation of Article 370 in August 2019. Ruhullah's veiled critique that Omar should "not distance himself from the people of Jammu and Kashmir or the mandate that the NC secured in October 2024" is a clarion call for introspection within the party. The context of this mandate is crucial. As Ruhullah points out, it was a significant expression of democratic resilience by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. They chose to participate in elections despite the "undemocratic and unconstitutional" abrogation of Article 370, delivering a verdict that carries immense political weight. According to Ruhullah, this mandate is a political disapproval of the events post-August 2019, placing a huge responsibility on the NC leadership to articulate and address public aspirations effectively. However, the party's internal discord threatens to undermine this responsibility. Ruhullah's participation in a protest outside the Chief Minister's residence has drawn sharp criticism from his colleagues, including Minister Sakina Itoo, who dismissed his actions as a "cheap publicity stunt." Such public infighting not only tarnishes the party's image but also raises questions about its unity and ability to present a cohesive front in addressing the pressing issues facing Jammu and Kashmir. Adding to the party's woes is the BJP's criticism, which seeks to portray the NC as engaging in "fear politics." The BJP's demand for Ruhullah's removal over his controversial remarks about tourism's cultural impact in Kashmir further complicates the situation. While Ruhullah's concerns may resonate with some, the NC must ensure that its narrative does not provide ammunition to political opponents. Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's response to these challenges will be pivotal. Ruhullah's warning that the Modi government's "disrespectful" treatment of Jammu and Kashmir's mandate could have dire consequences is a reminder of the delicate balancing act required. Omar must navigate between addressing internal dissent, managing public expectations, and engaging with the central government to advocate for statehood and Article 370's restoration. The delay in granting statehood, despite assurances to the Supreme Court, has only deepened public frustration. As Ruhullah aptly notes, the people of Jammu and Kashmir are "more committed than ever" to these demands. For the NC to remain relevant and regain the trust of its constituents, it must rise above internal squabbles and unite around a common vision. The National Conference leadership must confront the internal rift head-on, reaffirm its commitment to the people's aspirations, and present a united front to address the challenges ahead. Anything less risks not only the party's political future but also the broader struggle for justice and dignity in Jammu and Kashmir.

Farmers shunning use of nano-urea despite promotion

UTTAM GUPTA

Last year, around this time, the Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers Mansukh Mandaviya had said "Consumption of urea this fiscal (read: FY 2023-24) is likely to be 8 percent less than in FY 2022-23 due to the use of its liquid nano variant. Because of this and higher domestic production, import of urea, the soil nutrient that accounts for 70 percent of the fertilizer subsidy bill, declined more than a fifth on year in 2023. Further spread of nano urea consumption and the start of a new large urea plant (Talcher in Odisha) by September 2023 would lead to elimination of imports in two-three years".

Nano-urea is urea in the form of a nanoparticle containing nitrogen particles of 20-50 nanometres (nm) in size. It provides nitrogen or 'N' to plants in liquid form as an alternative to conventional urea which is mostly supplied as prill (it is a small diameter, spherical white solid). The minister's statement pointed towards the commitment of the government to promote the use of nano-urea so that imports of conventional urea are brought down to eliminating it.

However, according to data from the Fertiliser Association of India (FAI) - an umbrella body of the fertilizer industry

- the sales of Nano urea plummeted by nearly 43 per cent during FY 2023-24 (this happened after growing by a significant 62 per cent during FY 2022-23). Meanwhile, the total production of Nano urea during FY 2023-24 was 81 per cent less than in the previous FY.

The manufacturers knew that there wouldn't be much demand for it; so they reduced the output even as its production capacity rose by 59 per cent. Why did the sales of Nano-urea decrease? But, before that, we need to understand why the government is so keen to promote its use.

The beauty of nano-urea lies in its ultra-small size and high surface area (10,000 times over 1 mm urea prill), which enable easy absorption by plant leaves. These particles enter the plant through cuticular pores, or stomata, and then penetrate the cell membranes through endocytosis. Once inside the cell, these release nutrients slowly and ensure full absorption by eliminating waste that normally happens with conventional means. The innovator namely Nano Biotechnology Research Centre (NBRC) of the Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) claims its efficiency (a measure of how much of the 'N' supplied from it is absorbed by the plant) is over 80 per cent against around 40 per

cent for the conventional stuff.

The use of nano-urea also results in higher crop yield by 3-16 per cent when compared to traditional urea. Moreover, unlike the latter which raises environmental concerns including nitrate leaching, global warming, ozone layer depletion, and groundwater pollution, the former causes less soil, water and air pollution. According to a study, two foliar sprays of nano-urea curtailed nitrogen load by 25 per cent, besides reducing the greenhouse gas (GHG) emission from 164.2 to 416.5 kg CO₂-eq ha⁻¹ under different crops.

A more startling claim made by IFFCO/NBRC is that a 500-ml bottle of nano-urea is equivalent to a 45-kg bag of conventional urea.

The latter contains 46 percent N nutrient, or 20 kg (45x0.46). In contrast, the former contains 4 per cent N, or 20 grams (500x0.04). The equivalence between the two means that urea in nano-form with a mere 20 grams can achieve what conventional urea does with 20 kg - a gap of 1000 times in efficiency. It is this monumental difference in efficiency that also enables the manufacturer to deliver a 500-ml bottle of nano-urea to farmers for Rs 240 without any subsidy support.

In contrast, the cost of supplying equivalent conventional urea in a 45 kg

bag, is over eleven times at around Rs 2650 (while, this figure is for imported urea, even for urea produced domestically, the cost is substantially higher and varies from unit to unit), the Government has to give a subsidy of Rs 2410 to make available to the farmer at the same price of Rs 240. There being 22.22 bags in a ton of urea (1000/45), the subsidy on the import of a ton of conventional urea comes to Rs 53,550 (2410x22.22).

If we were to replace one million tons of imported urea with nano-urea which doesn't require any subsidy support, the government would save Rs 53,550 million or Rs 5355 crore. Mandaviya had kept a target of producing about 55 million bottles of nano-urea during FY 2023-24 which replaces 2.5 million tons of conventional urea. This would yield savings of around Rs 13,400 crore in subsidy.

Around 600 cubic metres of natural gas (NG) is needed to produce a ton of conventional urea. For generating the same effect through the nano-urea - given the efficiency difference of 1000 times, the requirement of NG would be a mere 0.6 cubic metres (600/1000). This would lead to huge savings in the import of gas (currently, India imports one-third of its requirement for domestic urea production). Drastic reduction in load on infrastructure

will be a bonus. Imagine the impact of handling, moving, storing and delivering a 500 - ml bottle of nano-urea vis-à-vis a bag of conventional urea containing 45,000 grams of the material.

The use of nano-urea thus offers unprecedented possibilities in terms of not just a substantial reduction in fertilizer subsidy but also trimming excess consumption of urea thereby reducing the imbalance in fertilizer use improving soil health, and helping achieve the environment-related goals. Additional benefits will accrue by way of savings in foreign exchange outgo, and a reduction in the current account deficit.

What explains the setback during FY 2023-24? Reportedly, the industry's argument that the fall in production and sales was due to 'the launch of new products such as Nano urea plus, with a higher concentration of nitrogen and reduction in sales of earlier variants of Nano urea that had lower nitrogen concentration' is untenable. This is because whatever the level of 'N' concentration, fundamentally the product remains 'Nano-urea'. Another explanation is that 'the drop in sales could be because fact that farmers had bought large quantities of Nano urea in the previous years' doesn't cut ice. Farmers generally are not prone to stocking

fertilizer material as the majority of them just don't have the wherewithal to hold stocks.

A third possibility that lower domestic sales could be due to the export of nano-urea doesn't make sense. For a country that depends heavily on imports and even incurs huge subsidies, why would the government allow exports? The industry, however, concedes that there was unsold inventory with dealers and that might have impacted sales during 2023-24. This shows that even during 2022-23, farmers didn't lift nano-urea to the extent revealed by the sales figures of that year. One can't escape inferring that nano-urea could be losing charm amongst farmers.

If it is due to factors like their being unable to cope with the rigours of the new technology (spraying it on leaves is more challenging than prill urea) or shortage of skilled labour etc, those can be overcome. But, if it is due to tall claims regarding efficiency or yield going haywire, it is a matter of concern. For instance, a study released by Punjab Agricultural University (PAU) in January 2024 says that the 'use of nano-urea led to decrease in the yield of wheat and rice by 21.6 per cent and 13 percent respectively'.

(The writer is a policy analyst; views expressed are personal)

Ten Meaningful Resolutions for 2025

SHAINY SHARMA

The dawn of a new year provides a blank canvas to rewrite your story, redefine your priorities, and reimagine the future. In 2025, seize this opportunity by setting resolutions that not only align with your aspirations but also enhance your quality of life. This year calls for more than just ambitious declarations - it demands realistic, sustainable changes that can truly transform our lives. Here are ten meaningful resolutions worth keeping making 2025 your best year yet.

1. Digital Wellness Revolution: The first and foremost is to break free from screen addiction by implementing a "sunset hour" for devices. Keeping aside one hour before bedtime

for offline activities like reading or meditation will definitely help in improving both sleep quality as well as mental health.

2. Financial Intelligence Upgrade: Financial stability is a key component of a stress-free life. Start by evaluating your spending habits and creating a realistic budget by dedicating at least 30 minutes weekly to learning about investments and financial planning. By aiming to save consistently and work towards reducing debt, setting financial goals can provide clarity and motivation.

3. Sustainable Living Practices: As global awareness of environmental challenges grows, adopt-



ing sustainable habits is more important than ever. By transforming your environmental impact through practical steps such as switching to reusable products, adopting a plant-based meal day, and calculating your monthly carbon footprint to identify areas for improvement.

4. De-clutter your space: A cluttered environment often mirrors a cluttered mind. Take time in 2025 to organize and declutter your living and working

spaces. Try working towards donating or recycling items that are no longer in need and creating systems to maintain the same.

5. Relationship Enrichment: Human connections are the bedrock of happiness and fulfillment. This year, try making a conscious effort to nurture your relationships with family, friends, and colleagues.

6. Physical Health Revolution: Developing regular physical activity is the cornerstone of good health. In 2025, move a daily habit. Whether it's strength training, yoga, swimming, or brisk walking, find an activity you enjoy and stick to it. Aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise per week to improve

cardiovascular health, strengthen muscles, and boost mental well-being.

7. Mental Fitness Focus: A positive mindset can transform your experiences. In 2025, focus on the good in every situation, practice self-compassion, and surround yourself with uplifting individuals. Integrate daily mental health practices such as five minutes of mindfulness, gratitude journaling, or therapeutic creativity. Positivity fuels resilience and empowers you to overcome challenges with grace.

8. Knowledge Expansion: Read one book monthly on subjects outside your comfort zone. This broadens perspectives and keeps your mind agile in our rapidly changing world.

9. Community Engagement: Helping others fos-

ters a sense of purpose and connection. Find a cause you care about and dedicate time or resources to it. Community service not only helps others but also provides networking opportunities and personal fulfilment. Volunteering not only benefits those in need but also enriches your own life with meaning and fulfilment.

10. Creative Expression: Dedicate time weekly to any form of creativity - writing, painting, music, or crafts. Creative outlets reduce stress and enhance problem-solving skills. As we embrace 2025, let's move beyond traditional resolution-setting and focus on creating meaningful, lasting changes that enhance both our personal growth and our impact on the world around us.

(The writer is an educator; views are personal)

Prashant Kishor's Jansuraj: A new political force or BJP's strategic move in Bihar?

RAJESH KUMAR SINGH

Prashant Kishor, a name synonymous with political strategy, has made his debut in Bihar politics with the launch of his party, Jansuraj. Drawing an analogy to a potter, Kishor likens his work to shaping the best clay into something meaningful, declaring, "We are bringing forward the best people of society. My role is to make this party win. I am in the role of a sutradhar (narrator); I have announced after the formation of the party that I will not run it. The party people will run the party."

This declaration, however, has done little to quell speculations about his aspirations. Rumors abound that Kishor is vying for the post of Chief Minister, a claim he repeatedly denies. "I am not contesting the elections,"

he insists. "I do not feel like contesting, but if the party decides that only I can secure a seat, then it will be a collective decision. I am not bigger than the party."

Despite his assertions, Kishor's entry into Bihar politics has stirred discussions about the impact of Jansuraj on the state's political landscape, particularly in the context of the 2025 assembly elections. Questions loom: will his party weaken the NDA or the INDIA alliance? Political analysts suggest that Kishor, with his background as a strategist for both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, could be a disruptive force. Some even speculate that he might be a BJP-backed "pawn," designed to fragment opposition votes, a claim fueled by his apparent inability to align with

the Congress or RJD leadership.

Kishor's criticisms of Nitish Kumar's governance have been particularly sharp. He has lambasted Kumar's leadership style, though his past affiliations with the BJP have also fueled skepticism. Adding to the intrigue, JDU leaders have dismissed Kishor's efforts as insignificant.

JDU, meanwhile, continues to champion causes like the nationwide caste census and the "One Nation, One Election" policy. It also plans to hold a workers' meeting in Nalanda on January 20, 2025, to gauge its position before the elections. JDU's reliance on caste-based politics, particularly its focus on Mahadalits, underscores its strategy for retaining relevance.



Recognizing the centrality of caste and community dynamics in Bihar politics, Kishor has crafted his approach accordingly. His first major move was targeting the Muslim and backward caste vote banks, which collectively account for 53.8 per

cent of the electorate. To solidify his position, he announced plans to field more candidates from Muslim and extremely backward communities in the upcoming elections. The appointment of a Dalit as Jansuraj's first working president further under-

scored this strategy. This decision, however, drew criticism, with some perceiving it as an overt counter to JDU's Mahadalit card. Kishor's emphasis on Dalit representation, though a significant gesture, was met with resistance from sections of the political spectrum.

Before launching Jansuraj, Kishor spent two years traveling across Bihar, conducting a padayatra and engaging in public dialogues in villages and towns. His campaign drew heavily from the ideas of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore, echoing a narrative of grassroots empowerment. However, his advocacy for ending Bihar's liquor prohibition—a policy closely associated with Nitish Kumar's governance—has

sparked controversy. Critics argue that this stance contradicts Gandhian principles and exposes Kishor to allegations of opportunism.

Despite the criticisms, Kishor's efforts signal a genuine attempt to address Bihar's long-standing issues. Bihar has long grappled with challenges like unemployment, poor infrastructure, and rising crime. Kishor positions Jansuraj as a platform to tackle these problems, but whether he can deliver remains to be seen.

Kishor's focus on marginalised communities, grassroots dialogue, and inclusive leadership sets a distinct tone. However, his political credibility and ability to translate ideas into action will be closely scrutinized.

As the assembly elections approach, the political battlefield in Bihar is

How might a Mediterranean diet affect inflammatory bowel disease?

Experts are interested in how diet and nutrients might influence inflammatory bowel disease (IBD).

A narrative review notes key nutrients of the Mediterranean diet that could have particular benefits for people with IBD.

The review highlights the need for more research into the specific underlying mechanisms surrounding nutrients, IBD, and the microorganisms in the gut.

Inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) refers to a group of chronic conditions that impact the intestines. The two primary types of IBD are Crohn's disease and ulcerative colitis.

The Mediterranean diet is one dietary pattern that may help people with IBD.

A recent narrative review published in the journal *Nutrients* discussed nutrients specific to the Mediterranean diet and how they might affect IBD.

A few of the nutrients highlighted include plant-derived protein, omega-3 polyunsaturated fats, and resveratrol. A deeper understanding in

this area could help improve approaches for helping people with IBD.

Mediterranean diets and IBD
The review authors note that gut microorganisms affect the development of IBD. Thus, they note that diet could be very helpful in adjusting the gut microbiome in people with IBD.

The Mediterranean diet has several components, including high amounts of fiber, fruits, and vegetables and low consumption of ultra-processed food.

The diet can likely help with both management and prevention of IBD and is already a recommendation in most cases of IBD. But, as the authors also note, the precise reasons why the Mediterranean diet can help the gut microbiome for people with IBD is a little unclear.

The authors used PubMed to identify recent research in this area, primarily looking at data from 2019 to 2024. They used keywords in their search like preclinical, Mediterranean diet, and inflammatory bowel disease.



How Mediterranean diet nutrients could affect IBD

The authors looked at several nutrients in their research. First, they looked at carbohydrates. For example, they found some data to support the notion that fructo-oligosaccharides may help improve intestinal permeability in people with Crohn's disease and increase certain levels of desirable gut microorganisms.

Additionally, the data suggest that components like chitosan, pectin polysaccharides, and fruits like cranberries may offer benefits. How-

ever, some dietary fibers may lead to negative effects in some people who have active IBD.

Next, researchers looked at proteins. The data supports that plant-derived proteins may have anti-inflammatory properties.

Nuts and seeds may help decrease proinflammatory bacteria and improve bacterial diversity. Certain dairy products found in the Mediterranean diet may also be helpful, like kefir.

Kefir has high levels of *Lactobacillus* and may help modulate gut microbiota and improve inflamma-

tion. The amino acid tryptophan may also help, but more research is required to confirm its effects.

The Mediterranean diet primarily includes unsaturated fats, with olive oil being a big fat source. Olive oil contains polyphenols and other elements that may help with inflammatory disorders.

However, more research on olive oil's benefits will be helpful, and it appears that the composition of the olive oil may impact its effects.

Researchers also highlight that omega-3 polyunsaturated fatty acids from fish and seeds have anti-inflammatory properties.

Some human studies support that omega-3 fatty acids' anti-inflammatory properties help with IBD, but the data is mixed. One case-control study found that seafood and nuts may contribute to IBD development. These and other data suggest the need for more research on fat and IBD.

Dietitian Natasha Haskey, PhD, RD, who was not involved in this review, commented to *Medical News Today* that: "This is a comprehensive

review providing evidence-based rationale as to the benefits of the Mediterranean diet in IBD, written by experts in the field. The diet's anti-inflammatory, antioxidant, and gut microbiota-modulating properties can help maintain remission and potentially reduce disease flares [...]. The inclusion of key nutrients like polyphenols, omega-3 fatty acids, and fiber may synergize with existing pharmacological treatments, potentially enhancing therapeutic outcomes and addressing nutritional deficiencies common in IBD." How lesser-known Mediterranean diet nutrients may impact IBD? The authors further delved into the potential benefits of red wine, which is part of the Mediterranean diet. Some studies suggest that consuming moderate red wine could help protect people from developing IBD or IBD progressing.

Components of red wine that may be beneficial include resveratrol, which may help minimize intestinal inflammation and increase levels of helpful microorganisms, and tannins.

What To Know About Vision Loss?

Vision loss is a health condition where there is partial or a complete inability to see. This can occur suddenly or even progressively over time. It can range between mild blurring to total blindness and can affect one or both eyes in people. Various factors can be a cause of vision loss, such as age-related conditions like macular degeneration or cataracts, eye injuries, infections, genetic disorders, or systemic diseases such as diabetes and hypertension. Environmental factors may also lead to vision loss. Vision loss can impact one's daily life significantly, requiring immediate diagnosis and proper management to save or restore sight where possible. Keep reading as we list everything you might want to know about vision loss.

Causes of vision loss

Some of the most common causes for vision loss include cataracts, glaucoma, macular degeneration, and presbyopia. These are more prevalent in older adults.

Systemic diseases like diabetes (diabetic retinopathy), hypertension, and autoimmune conditions can lead to damage in the blood vessels or optic nerves leading to disrupted vision.

Infections and inflammation can lead to vision loss. Conditions such as uveitis, conjunctivitis, or corneal ulcers can impair vision if not treated.

Physical trauma to the eyes from accidents or exposure of the eyes to harmful chemicals can cause immediate as well as progressive vision impairment in some cases. Certain genetic conditions can lead to inherited vision problems.

Risk factors

Smoking, poor diet, poor lifestyle and lack of regular eye care as well as check ups can increase your risk of vision loss.

Environmental factors such as prolonged exposure to UV rays, pollution, or excessive screen time may strain you and damage your eyes.

Some chronic diseases can be difficult to control. Conditions like diabetes, high blood pressure or thyroid disorders can all lead to complications affecting the eyes.

Prevention of vision loss

Getting eye exams regularly can help find early signs of diseases like glaucoma or cataracts. Consuming foods rich in nutrients such as vitamins A, C, and E, omega-3 fatty acids, and zinc greatly support eye health. You are encouraged to wear UV-protective sunglasses outdoors and safety goggles during activities that involve potential eye hazards. Follow the 20-20-20 rule—which is a popular hack to help you keep your eyes healthy. You are supposed to look at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds every 20 minutes.

Manage diabetes, hypertension, or other systemic conditions properly to prevent complications to your eyes.

Treatment for vision loss

Glasses or contact lenses can help correct eye issues such as myopia or hyperopia. Medications such as eye drops, injections, or oral medications can be helpful for conditions like glaucoma or infections. Procedures such as cataract removal, laser treatments, or corneal transplants can help restore or preserve vision. Training and assistive devices, like magnifiers or screen readers, help patients adapt to vision loss. Early detection, preventive care, and prompt treatment are key to reducing the impact of vision loss and preserving eye health.



How Oestrogen Drives Alcohol Bingeing In Women

Ladies, blame your levels of oestrogen -- female sex hormone -- for making you binge on alcohol, according to a preclinical study in mice on Monday.

Scientists at Weill Cornell Medicine showed that the hormone oestrogen regulates binge drinking in females, causing them to "pregame" or binge. The study, published in the journal *Nature Communications*, establishes that circulating oestrogen increases binge alcohol consumption in females and contributes to known sex differences in this behaviour.

"We know a lot less about what drives alcohol drinking behaviour in females because most studies of alcohol use have been done in males," said senior author Dr. Kristen Pleil, Associate Professor of pharmacology at the varsity.

Yet recent studies indicate that women have increased their heavy alcohol consumption more than men. This overindulgence is set to make them more susceptible to the negative health effects of alcohol than males, said Pleil.

"Many studies show this pattern of



drinking enhances alcohol's harmful effects," said the expert, noting that the findings could lead to novel approaches for treating alcohol use disorder in women.

To assess oestrogen's potential involvement, the team first monitored the hormone levels throughout the oestrous cycle (similar to the menstrual cycle in women) of female mice and then served them alcohol.

The results showed that a high level of circulating oestrogen in women drives them to drink much more than on days when their oestrogen is low. This enhanced bingeing behavior was reflected in heightened activity in those same neurons in the BNST -- a brain

Why You Should Consume Coconut Water In Winters

Below we discuss various ways in which consuming coconut water in winter can be beneficial to your health.

Coconut water is highly nutritious and beneficial for overall health. It is a natural, low-calorie beverage packed with essential nutrients like potassium, magnesium, calcium, and antioxidants. Consuming coconut water in winter is highly beneficial. While it's popularly consumed in summer for hydration, its nutrient profile supports immunity, digestion, and energy even during colder months. It helps maintain electrolyte balance, which is essential for staying active during the winter. Its cooling properties don't make it unsuitable for winter, as the moderate climate allows its consumption in controlled amounts. In this article, we discuss various ways in which consuming coconut water in winter can be beneficial to your health.

Coconut water is a natural electrolyte drink that keeps the body hydrated even in winter, when we may not feel as thirsty. Proper hydration supports overall metabolism and prevents dryness of the skin and mucous membranes caused by the cold weather.

Being low in calories and fat, coconut water is a great alternative to sugary drinks. It provides natural sweetness and nutrients while promoting fullness, which helps curb overeating during the winter season, often associated with heavier meals.

Coconut water contains bioactive enzymes that support digestion and prevent common winter complaints like constipation and bloating. Its natural fibre helps regulate bowel movements, keeping the digestive system efficient. The antioxidants and nutrients in coconut water, such as vitamin C and magnesium, enhance immune system function. This helps the body combat winter-related illnesses, such as colds and flu.

Its hydrating and antioxidant properties help keep the skin moisturised and glowing, reducing dryness and flakiness caused by winter air. Drinking it regularly supports skin health from within.

Coconut water is rich in potassium, which helps balance sodium levels and supports blood pressure regulation. This is particularly beneficial for maintaining cardiovascular health during winter, a time when heavy foods can strain the heart.

It acts as a natural energy booster due to its carbohydrate content and electrolytes. This makes it a good choice for staying active and combating the sluggishness often felt in colder months.

Coconut water helps prevent kidney stone formation by reducing the crystallisation of oxalate and other compounds. Staying hydrated with it in winter promotes optimal kidney function.

Its alkaline nature helps balance the body's pH, reducing acidity that might result from consuming rich winter foods. This aids in improving metabolism and reducing acid reflux.

The magnesium and potassium content in coconut water prevent muscle cramps and soreness, which can be more common in winter due to less

NEWS

Weight Loss Drugs Not A Safe Quick-Fix: Doctor



We are surrounded by influencers offering advice and formulae for quick weight loss. While Elon Musk, Oprah Winfrey and Amy Schumer have been proponents of miracle weight loss drugs, others like Karan Johar and Kim Kardashian have vehemently denied using these for their transformation. Whether it is Hollywood, Bollywood, X, Instagram or Tik-Tok, we hear only about the so-called success stories. What about the flip side? A Scottish nurse died of acute pancreatitis recently after taking two doses of a weight loss injection she purchased online. Numerous other stories of severe side effects are often lost in the buzz. So let's analyse the pros and cons of these wonder drugs.

What are these "viral" weight loss drugs?

Semaglutide injection is sold as 'Ozempic' for diabetes management while the higher dose version of the same injection that has been approved by FDA for weight loss is called 'Wegovy'. Another drug Tirzepatide is sold as injection 'Mounjaro'. Technically, these are Glucagon Like Peptide (GLP)-1 receptor agonists which stimulate insulin release from pancreas and also delay emptying of food from stomach. This causes a feeling of fullness even on eating small quantities of food and suppresses appetite. This results in weight loss and better sugar control. These drugs have been primarily developed for management of obese diabetic patients with comorbid conditions like hypertension and high cholesterol. These are meant to be used in conjunction with diet control and exercise. It not only improves diabetes control but also protects against heart attacks and stroke. The medication is supposed to be prescribed by a doctor after appropriate screening especially for a history of a particular form of thyroid cancer in the patient or his family. These are excellent anti-diabetic drugs and work well when prescribed as per guidelines.

Handle With Care

Obesity has been declared a 'disease' by WHO. It is associated not only with heart disease, diabetes, stroke, gallstones, osteoarthritis knees but also has mental ramifications. The obesity epidemic is associated with binge eating disorder (BED), Anorexia Nervosa (AN) and Bulimia. Almost 20% diabetics are fond of bingeing. Some obese individuals just can't stop themselves from opening a bag of chips or rummaging their fridge at midnight. For them, food is better at the waist than to let it go waste. Anorexic patients are already undernourished. Using these drugs may cause some amount of weight loss but does nothing in terms of addressing the psychological aspect of the disease. There have been stray reports of suicidal ideation while on these drugs. In fact, these drugs can precipitate weight cycling or a yo-yo situation wherein there is a weight loss but it all comes back when you stop the drug.

PM Modi, CM Naidu, Pawan Kalyan hold huge roadshow in Vizag

AGENCIES

VISAKHAPATNAM, JAN 8

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and Deputy Chief Minister Pawan Kalyan held a huge roadshow here on Thursday evening. Andhra Pradesh tourism guide



The three leaders were standing in an open-top flower-bedecked vehicle waving at people lined up on both sides of the road. The roadshow began at Venkatadri Vantillu restaurant area in Siripuram Junction and concluded at Andhra University Engineering College ground, where the Prime Minister

will address the public meeting after launching various development projects.

Hundreds of people, who were waiting for several hours, lustily cheered as the three leaders waved at them. Many were seen showering petals towards the vehicle as security personnel kept a tight vigil on

the crowd.

BJP MP and party's state president D. Purandeswari was also seen standing behind the Prime Minister during the roadshow held for about 1.5 km. Flags of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), Jana Sena and BJP were seen along the roadshow route.

All three coalition part-

ners mobilised a large number of people from various parts of north Andhra. Cultural programmes, reflecting the culture of north Andhra, were also organised during the roadshow.

Earlier, Governor S. Abdul Nazeer, the Chief Minister, Deputy Chief Minister and senior officials accorded a warm welcome to the Prime Minister on his arrival. On his first visit to Andhra Pradesh after the TDP-led NDA formed the government in the State, the Prime Minister will virtually launch several major projects aimed at driving sustainable growth and infrastructure develop-

ment, with a particular focus on North Andhra Pradesh.

He will inaugurate and lay the foundation stones for projects worth over Rs 2 lakh crore. This is Narendra Modi's second visit to Andhra Pradesh after assuming office as the Prime Minister for the third term.

In June last year, he had attended the swearing-in of Chandrababu Naidu and his ministers in Vijayawada. The Prime Minister was scheduled to visit Visakhapatnam on November 29 but the programme was postponed due to cyclone alert. Andhra Pradesh tourism guide

Akali Dal protests move to re-designate Advisor's post to Chief Secy in Chandigarh

AGENCIES

CHANDIGARH, JAN 8

Senior Akali leader Sukhbir Singh Badal on Wednesday warned the Union government against going ahead with the reported decision to re-designate the post of Advisor to Punjab Governor-cum-Chandigarh Administrator as the Chief Secretary.

He said the decision "comes with the active collusion of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government in Punjab and its Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann."

"Mann had formally acknowledged Haryana's right over Chandigarh by agreeing to setting up of the Haryana Legislative Assembly in Chandigarh," Badal said in a statement. "He had the same anti-

Punjab stand on Panjab University and the PGI," the Akali leader said and added that the transfer of Chandigarh to Punjab is a settled issue, committed by two Prime Ministers and endorsed by the Union Cabinet as well as by both Houses of Parliament following the Memorandum of Settlement on Punjab in July 1985.

"Even the issue of the Hindi speaking areas to be transferred to Haryana in lieu of Chandigarh stands settled beyond any possible dispute or doubt. Two commissions set up by the Union government had categorically ruled in favour of Punjab, saying that there was no Hindi speaking area in the state that could be transferred to Haryana," said Badal.

"So, the only unfinished agenda of the 1966 reorganisation of Punjab was to restore to us our constitutional rights on the river waters as a riparian state, the transfer of Chandigarh and other Punjabi-speaking areas to Punjab left out of the state and restoration of the state's control over institutions and authorities like the BBMB, educational and cultural institutions, etc.

Punjab demands nothing more than its due rights as guaranteed under the Constitution," he said.

"We have never flinched from our duty to the country. But anti-Punjab decisions of Union governments have been bleeding the nation's strong arm and granary. This must stop," Badal lambasted.

ACI recognition reinforces CSMIA's role as global leader in airport operations: Jeet Adani

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, JAN 8

The prestigious Level 5 accreditation from Airports Council International (ACI) for Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) reinforces the airport's role as a global leader in airport operations and passenger service, Jeet Adani, Director, Adani Airport Holdings Limited (AAHL), said on Wednesday.

CSMIA, managed by AAHL, is the first airport in India and third airport in the world to achieve this remarkable milestone. "CSMIA is thrilled to stand among the world's leading airports to receive this esteemed recognition. This prestigious accreditation is the outcome of our dedication to understanding and enhancing the passenger experience," said Jeet Adani.

According to the company, design thinking

methodologies employed at CSMIA enabled the development of innovative solutions that address needs of stakeholders, including airlines, retail and lounge partners, and regulatory bodies.

Continuous collection and analysis of customer feedback and CSAT scores helped identify pain points and areas for improvement. Employees, vendor partners and stakeholders like CISF, Immigration, Customs and Airlines play a crucial role in customer service. All teams at CSMIA have undergone rigorous training focused on enabling smooth passenger journeys. A significantly expanded digital gateway programme has enhanced the travel experience for both DigiYatra and non-DigiYatra passengers. E-gates at the entry to T2 have been increased from 24 to an impressive 68 - the highest number of e-gates at the kerbside at any airport in India.

CREATE FEAR AMONG CRIMINALS, K'TAKA CM TELLS POLICE; HM LAUDS FALL IN CRIME RATE

AGENCIES

BENGALURU, JAN 8

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Wednesday urged police to create a sense of fear among criminals while ensuring a fear-free environment for common people, even as Home Minister Parameshwara praised the force and emphasised that crime rates in urban areas have been declining in the state.

Speaking after inaugurating newly-constructed police stations and offices in Chamarajpet, Cubbon Park, and High Grounds, as well as new police housing complexes in Pulakeshinagar in Bengaluru, CM Siddaramaiah emphasised the role of the police department in ensuring peace and safety in the state.

CM Siddaramaiah issued a strong warning against collusion between the police and the real estate mafia.

"The government will not tolerate police officers

supporting the real estate mafia under any circumstances. Create a sense of fear among criminals while ensuring ordinary citizens feel safe," he said.

"The population of the state has crossed seven crore. Protecting the lives, property, and dignity of these people while creating a safe and peaceful environment is the responsibility of the police department. The government is always ready to provide the necessary facilities and establish new police stations to support this mission," CM Siddaramaiah said.

The CM stressed that peace and order in the state lead to faster development.

He urged the police to adopt a people-friendly approach and treat visitors to the police station with respect and care.

"It is reassuring that crime rates in the state are decreasing. However, if the police lower their guard, criminals will exploit the



situation to escape the law. This must not be allowed," he warned.

Siddaramaiah pointed out that unemployment and lack of opportunities often drive people towards crime, while the real estate sector in cities has contributed to the rise in criminal activities.

The CM also acknowledged the hard work of the police force, emphasising the government's responsibility towards their welfare. He assured that the government would continue the housing scheme for police personnel.

Speaking on the occasion, Home Minister Parameshwara said, "Karnataka police are recognised as some of the best in the country, effectively tackling numerous challenges."

"During Siddaramaiah's tenure as Chief Minister from 2013 to 2018, the department received significant support and incentives. When we examined police housing, we found it lacked proper facilities. To address this, the police housing scheme was launched, aiming to provide suitable residence-

es. So far, 46 per cent of the planned housing has been delivered, and the scheme will continue in the coming days."

He mentioned that a request for increased funding has been submitted to the central government. If approved, it would enable the provision of better facilities for police officers and staff.

He urged the police to work harder to bring justice to the public, emphasizing that crime rates in urban areas have been declining.

Highlighting progress in controlling cybercrime, Parameshwara stated, "We have taken significant steps to curb cybercrime. Karnataka is the first state to appoint a DGP-level officer exclusively for the Cybercrime Division. Necessary measures are being taken to prevent data theft."

Parameshwara also emphasised women's and children's safety in urban areas. Under the Nirbhaya

Scheme, Rs 650 crore has been spent to install CCTV cameras in Bengaluru.

He praised the police force for ensuring no untoward incidents occurred during New Year celebrations, demonstrating their diligence.

Reiterating the government's commitment to a 'Drug-Free Karnataka,' he said, "Drugs worth hundreds of crores have been seized and destroyed. A special operation was launched a month before New Year to combat drug trafficking, and this effort will continue."

The event was attended by Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, Energy Minister K.J. George, Chief Minister's Political Secretary Dr. K. Govindaraju, MLA Rizwan Arshad, DGP Alok Mohan, Managing Director of the Karnataka Police Housing and Infrastructure Development Corporation K. Ramachandra Rao, and Bengaluru Police Commissioner B. Dayananda.

Take police 'highhandedness' on CT Ravi seriously: K'taka Governor to Siddaramaiah

AGENCIES

BENGALURU, JAN 8

Karnataka Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot has written a letter to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah over the alleged police highhandedness against BJP MLC C. T. Ravi in connection with the derogatory remark case, asking him to consider the matter seriously, sources said on Wednesday.

The Governor has asked Siddaramaiah to initiate action against the Belagavi Police Commissioner and the SP of Belagavi over highhandedness and also to look into the demand of providing security to the BJP MLC.

"I am advising you to take steps in this regard as you (CM Siddaramaiah) are also a representative of people like Ravi," he stated.

The Governor wrote a



letter in this regard after a delegation of the state BJP leaders complained to him about the issue on December 24. The state government has yet to respond to the letter.

Karnataka BJP delegation has demanded Governor Gehlot to intervene in the investigation of the derogatory remark case involving BJP MLC Ravi and state Women and Child Development Minister Laxmi Hebbalkar to ensure a judicial inquiry.

The delegation, headed by Leader of the Opposition R. Ashoka, former CM and BJP MP Basavaraj

Bomma, Leader of the Opposition in the Council Chalawadi Narayanaswamy, briefed the Governor on how Ravi was "arrested, tortured, denied food, taking him to undisclosed areas".

"Ravi comes from the sensitive naxal-prone area of Chikkamagaluru and he also faces threats from Islamic fundamentalists. All previous governments had provided him with a gunnery facility. Despite all this, the move of the Police Department to take Ravi to a quarry, sugarcane field overnight creates suspicion," the team

had submitted.

Leader of the Opposition R. Ashoka stated, "We have told the Governor that this is a buffoon government. Ravi should be given proper security. An unbiased investigation has to be carried out. While C.T. Ravi was taken to the police station, I saw the Police Commissioner getting calls every minute. I was there for five hours. Who called him? Whether it was CM or the Dy CM? If it comes out, there will be transparency in the investigation."

The row erupted on December 19 during a heated debate in the Karnataka Legislative Council. C.T. Ravi allegedly referred to Congress MP and Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, as a "drug addict".

This provoked strong reactions, with Minister Hebbalkar calling Ravi a

"murderer". Ravi allegedly responded with an obscene remark directed at Hebbalkar.

The alleged comment led to Ravi's arrest on charges of using derogatory language against Hebbalkar. However, following a High Court directive, Ravi was released, creating further political drama.

The Congress government has handed over the case to the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) even as Council Chairman Basavaraj Horatti stated that the case is a closed chapter and police interference is unacceptable.

Meanwhile, Minister Hebbalkar challenged Ravi to swear before Lord Manjunatheshwara at the famous Hindu pilgrimage centre in Dharmasthala in Karnataka, regarding his alleged use of derogatory words against her in the Legislative Council.

Enrollment rate in elementary education increases, dropouts reduce in Arunachal Pradesh: CM Khandu

AGENCIES

ITANAGAR, JAN 8

Arunachal Pradesh Chief Minister Pema Khandu said on Wednesday that the enrollment rate in elementary education has significantly increased and the average annual school dropout numbers at the secondary level have reduced.

The Chief Minister said the average annual dropout rate at the secondary level reduced to 11.7 per cent.

In his post on the X, CM Khandu said: "In sync with the grand vision of Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, as brilliantly captured in the new National Educa-

tion Policy-2020, Team Arunachal is giving a big push to the state's educational landscape through a set of well-crafted interventions and enabling measures."

He said: "Our concerted efforts have yielded remarkable outcomes. The Adjusted Net Enrollment Rate in elementary education has reached an impressive 100 pc. Similarly, the average annual school dropout rate at the secondary level has reduced significantly."

Innovative programmes like 'Building as Learning Aid' and the establishment of new Eklavya Model Residential Schools have ensured

that modern educational facilities are accessible to every child, reinforcing our commitment to inclusive and quality education for all, the Chief Minister said.

He said that as per the 2024 SDG scorecard, 100 per cent adjusted net enrollment rate in elementary education.

CM Khandu recently announced that a university-level institute would be established in the state in collaboration with the US-based International Centre for Cultural Studies (ICCS) for the promotion, documentation, research and education on indigenous culture, faith and languages of the state.

Pravasi Bharatiya Divas: Indian diaspora delegations express gratitude to PM Modi

AGENCIES

BHUBANESWAR, JAN 8

Large delegations from the Indian diaspora across 50 countries are set to participate in the 18th Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) Convention, which will be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday.

The convention is part of the ongoing three-day Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, which began on

Wednesday in Odisha's capital, Bhubaneswar.

According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), participants from over 50 nations have registered for the PBD Convention. As the flagship event of the Indian government, it serves as a vital platform for the diaspora to connect with their roots and engage with one another.

This is the first time that the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas Conven-

tion is being held in Odisha. The state has made extensive preparations to highlight its rich historical, cultural, and spiritual heritage.

Speaking to IANS, Deputy Chief Minister K.V. Singh Deo expressed his gratitude to Prime Minister Modi and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar for entrusting Odisha with the responsibility of hosting the prestigious event.

"Under the 'Look East' policy, the Prime Minister has maintained that until the east rises, India will not be developed. And under this policy, he has given this opportunity to Odisha. I believe that through this, not only India but Odisha will also progress," Singh Deo said.

On Wednesday, key dignitaries, including Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar,

Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports Mansukh Mandaviya, Minister of State for External Affairs Pabitra Margherita, and others also delivered their address.

Chief Secretary Manoj Ahuja stated that over 5,000 NRIs are expected to participate in the event. Delegates will visit 21 selected sites across Bhubaneswar, Puri, and Jajpur, with the aim of promoting Odisha as

a destination for international tourism.

Speaking to IANS, several diaspora members expressed their excitement and gratitude ahead of the event.

Amit Kumar, a delegate who represents the Bhojpur Association of Singapore, told IANS, "I am an Indian and have been living and working in Singapore for the last 16 years. It is a very pleasant thing that the Prime

Minister's message reached us, and I am sure this message is spreading globally. The government's vision is clear and reaches grassroots levels, which is rare." Revathi Pillay from South Africa said, "I would like to say to every single Indian that I am incredibly proud of you. When I read about India's advancements in IT and technology, it inspires me. India will always be my motherland."

Nepal-Tibet earthquake: 126 killed, several houses collapsed

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 8

At least 126 people were killed, 188 were injured and over 1000 houses collapsed after a powerful 7.1-magnitude earthquake struck the Nepal-Tibet border region, according to media reports.

The National Centre for Seismology (NCS) confirmed that the earthquake occurred at 6:35 a.m. (IST) on Tuesday morning, 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.

Japan's weather agency warns of heavy snow on Sea of Japan side

AGENCIES
TOKYO, JAN 8

Japan's weather agency said Wednesday heavy snow is forecast from northern to western Japan, especially areas along the Sea of Japan coast, until Friday, with some regions expected to see extremely strong winds with snow.

In the 24 hours through Thursday morning, Niigata Prefecture, the Hokuriku and Tohoku regions and Gifu Prefecture could see up to 70 centimetres of snow, while there may be up to 50 centimetres in the Chugoku region, 40 centimetres in Hokkaido, 35 centimetres in the Kinki region, 20 centimetres in Yamaguchi Prefecture and the Shikoku region, as well as 5 centimetres in northern Kyushu, the Japan Meteorological Agency (JMA) said. In the subsequent 24-hour period until Friday morning, 70 centimetres of snow is



forecast for Niigata Prefecture, the Hokuriku and Tohoku regions, Gifu Prefecture and the Chugoku region, 50 centimetres for Hokkaido and the Kinki region, 30 centimetres for Yamaguchi Prefecture and the Shikoku region, and 7 centimetres for northern Kyushu, the JMA said.

Weather officials warned of possible traffic disruptions while advising people to watch out for blackouts caused by snow accumulation on power lines, avalanches, strong winds, high waves, and lightning strikes, Xinhua news agency reported.

Meanwhile, the JMA on Tuesday revealed that the country's average temperature in 2024 was the highest on record, driven by global warming and westerly winds.

The average temperature from January through December was 1.48 degrees Celsius higher than the mean temperature for the 30-year period through 2020, marking the biggest difference since comparable data became available in 1898 and surpassing the previous year's record of 1.29 degrees Celsius, the JMA said.

Cambodia sees spike in landmine, ERW casualties in 2024

AGENCIES
PHNOM PENH, JAN. 8

Cambodia recorded 49 landmines and explosive remnant of war (ERW) casualties in 2024, up 53 per cent from 32 in the year before, a spokesperson said on Wednesday.

"Twelve people were killed, 29 injured, and eight amputated due to landmine and ERW explosions last year," Lang Kosal, a spokesperson for the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA), told Xinhua.

He added that the victims were 30 men, 11 boys, three women, and five girls. According to Kosal, from 1979 to 2024, landmine and ERW explosions had claimed 19,834 lives and either injured or amputated 45,252 others.

Cambodia is one of the countries most affected by landmines and ERWs. An estimated four million to six million landmines

and other munitions had been left over from three decades of war and internal conflicts that ended in 1998.

Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Manet said in a public speech last November that although Cambodia achieved full peace in 1998, the shadow of landmines continued to loom large and posed a dire threat to human lives and post-war recovery.

He said Cambodia has so far cleared over 3,000 square km of landmines, destroying over one million anti-personnel mines and three million ERWs.

"We have declared 15 of the 25 capital cities and provinces as mine free," Manet told Xinhua news agency.

"Nevertheless, our journey is far from over. We still have over 1,600 square km of contaminated land and is affecting lives of approximately 1 million people."

The Siem Reap-Angkor

Summit on a Mine-Free World held in north-west Cambodia's Siem Reap province discussed actions to build a safer and more peaceful world from mines and brought together delegates from more than 150 countries, which are state parties to the Mine-Ban Convention, known as the "Ottawa Treaty".

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, Under-Secretary-General of the United Nations and Executive Secretary of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), also said that the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will remain out of reach for affected communities if the landmine threat is not fully addressed.

"In the face of new and ongoing conflicts, we must ensure that our commitments translate into practical, sustained support for countries in need," she said.

Gotta pay for it: Trump threatens to use 'economic force' to make Canada 51st state; Trudeau reacts

AGENCIES
FLORIDA, JAN 8

US President-elect Donald Trump has proposed the idea of using "economic force" to merge Canada and the United States, creating what he frequently describes as the "51st state."

He cited reasons such as military assistance provided by the US and trade deficits between the two nations to support his suggestion.

Addressing a press conference at his Mar-a-Lago residence in Florida on Tuesday, Trump said, "You get rid of that artificially drawn line, and you take a look at what that looks like, and it would also be much better for national security."

"Canada and the United States, that would really be something. We've been



good neighbours, but we can't do it forever," he added.

Emphasising the financial burden on the US, Trump said, "Don't forget, we basically protect Canada. But here's the problem with Canada. So many friends up there; I love the Canadian people. They're great, but we're spending hundreds of billions a year to protect it. We're spending hundreds

of billions a year to take care of Canada. We lose in trade deficits."

Trump reiterated his plan to impose "substantial" tariffs on goods from both Canada and Mexico.

"Canada is subsidised to the tune of about \$200 billion a year, plus other things. And they don't essentially have a military. They have a very small military. They rely on our military. It's all fine, but

you know they gotta pay for that," he added.

In a social media post on Truth Social, Trump shared an edited image of Canada as part of the US, captioning it, "Oh Canada."

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau dismissed the suggestion, responding firmly, "There isn't a snowball's chance in hell that Canada would become part of the United States. Workers and com-

munities in both our countries benefit from being each other's biggest trading and security partners."

Canadian Foreign Minister Mélanie Joly also criticised Trump's remarks, accusing him of a "lack of understanding" about Canada. She stated that Canada would "never back down" from such threats.

Trump has repeatedly floated the idea of a US-Canada "merger" since his presidential election victory in November. He has often referred to Trudeau as the "Governor" of the "Great State of Canada" in a mocking tone.

Previously, Trump threatened to impose a 25 per cent tariff on Canadian goods unless Canada took significant steps to bolster border security and curb the influx of drugs and illegal immigrants into the US.

South Korea: National Assembly rejects special probe Bills targeting Yoon, first lady in re-vote

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JAN 8

South Korea's National Assembly rejected two special counsel Bills targeting impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol over his failed martial law bid and allegations surrounding first lady Kim Keon Hee in a re-vote on Wednesday.

The special counsel Bill targeting Yoon calls for the designation of special prosecutors to look into insurrection charges related to Yoon's short-lived martial law imposition.

The Bill was rejected

in a 198-101 vote with one abstention and was ultimately scrapped as it failed to gain the two-thirds support required to override the president's veto.

The Opposition parties unilaterally passed the Bill at a plenary session last month before the Cabinet demanded the National Assembly reconsider its decision in a meeting chaired by acting President Choi Sang-mok.

The Opposition-controlled National Assembly also rejected another Bill that calls for a special counsel probe into two key allegations involving the



first lady over her alleged involvement in a stock manipulation scheme and interference in election nominations through a power broker.

The Bill was voted down

in a 196-103 vote with one abstention.

It is the fourth version of the bill targeting Kim following a similar proposal vetoed by Yoon, which was ultimately scrapped in

a revote.

People Power Party floor leader Kwon Seong-dong earlier reaffirmed his party's official decision to vote against the special counsel bills, while the main opposition Democratic Party vowed to reintroduce the bills to the Assembly if they are rejected.

Parliament also voted down six more Bills, including a controversial grain Bill that was vetoed by then acting President Han Duck-soo, during the session.

The Grain Management Act mandates the govern-

ment purchase of surplus rice to stabilise prices during market fluctuations.

A similar Bill was vetoed by Yoon in March 2023 and subsequently scrapped in a revote, Yonhap news agency reported.

Other Bills include the National Assembly Act, aimed at preventing the automatic submission of the government budget to the plenary session after the legal deadline, and the National Assembly Testimony Appraisal Act, which would require companies to submit requested data to lawmakers.

Thailand receives over 35.5 million foreign tourists in 2024

AGENCIES
KIYU, JAN 8

Thailand received over 35.54 million foreign tourists in 2024, a rise of 26.27 per cent from a year earlier, thanks to eased entry rules and visa exemption measures, official data showed.

With 6.73 million arrivals, Chinese tourists made up the largest source market for the Southeast Asian country last year, followed by 4.95 million from Malaysia and 2.12 million from India, according to

the Thai Ministry of Tourism and Sports on Tuesday. Thailand generated approximately 1.67 trillion baht (about \$48.45 billion) in revenue from international tourists in 2024.

Starting in January, visitors to Thailand can apply for an electronic visa through an online system available at all Thai embassies and consulates-general worldwide, ensuring a streamlined application process and convenient online payment options, reports Xinhua news agency.

Indonesia to send 27 doctors abroad for cardiology training amid high mortality rate

AGENCIES
JAKARTA, JAN 8

The Indonesian government has announced plans to send 25 doctors to China and two doctors to Japan to enhance their skills in treating cardiovascular diseases, which are the leading cause of death in Indonesia.

Health Minister Budi Gunadi Sadikin said on Monday that cardiovascular diseases claim around 500,000 lives each year in the country. One reason for the high mortality rate is the shortage of heart specialists trained

in interventional cardiology, reports Xinhua news agency. "There are only 30 to 50 training positions available each year in Indonesia. That is why we are sending doctors abroad," Budi said.

He emphasised that this initiative is a crucial step toward reducing the number of deaths caused by these diseases. "Cardiovascular disease is the primary cause of death. We need to quickly prepare services to save hundreds of thousands of patients," he said.

Budi highlighted the importance of the "golden

period" in the treatment of cardiovascular issues.

This term refers to the critical timeframe in which medical interventions can be performed to ensure optimal treatment and prevent complications. For heart attacks, this golden period is two hours after the onset of symptoms, while for strokes, it is one hour.

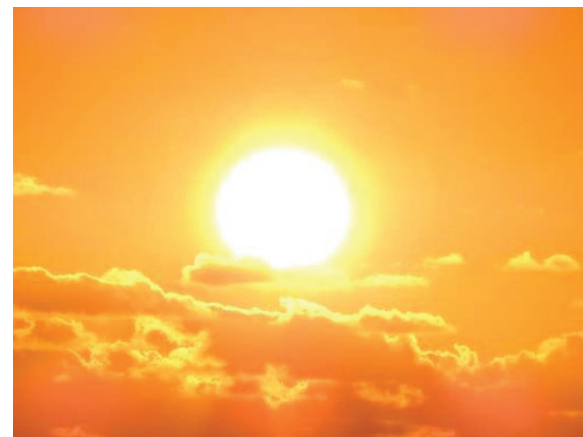
He pointed out that the limited number of doctors and the uneven distribution of medical facilities across regions could hinder emergency treatment for cardiovascular patients.

2024 New Zealand's 10th-warmest year on record: NIWA

AGENCIES
WELLINGTON, JAN 8

2024 was New Zealand's 10th-warmest year on record, and eight of New Zealand's 10 warmest years on record have occurred since 2013, according to the annual climate summary published by the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) on Wednesday.

The ongoing warming trend observed both locally and globally is consistent with human-caused climate change, which is largely driven by human greenhouse gas emissions, said a NIWA statement, adding atmospher-



ic carbon dioxide (CO2) levels continued to rise, surpassing 420 parts per million (ppm) at NIWA's monitoring station during 2024.

The 2024 nationwide average temperature calculated from NIWA's seven station series was 13.25 degrees Celsius, being 0.51 degree Celsius above

the 1991-2020 annual average, it said, adding eight months of 2024 had temperatures that were well above average or above average.

The prevalence of west-southwest winds contributed to a dry year for many northern and eastern areas of New Zealand, with the dryness exceptional in some locations, said the annual climate summary, adding several extreme rainfall events occurred throughout the year, with four local state of emergency declarations, it said.

"Global temperatures continued their upward trend in 2024, after an extended streak of excep-

tionally high monthly global mean temperatures," said GNS Science Principal Scientist Nick Craddock-Henry, Xinhua news agency reported.

New Zealand was 1.5 degrees above the long-term average in 2024, and the trend towards increased rainfall in western regions, and hotter, generally drier conditions in the east continues, Craddock-Henry said, adding enhancing resilience and accelerating adaptation action to safeguard lives and livelihoods will be an essential part of New Zealand's response planning, going forward, regardless of how 2025 unfolds.

India's securitisation volume surges 27 pc in 9 months driven by private banks

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JAN 8

Securitisation volume surged by around 27 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1.78 lakh crore in the first nine months of the current financial year, supported by large issuances from private sector banks, according to a CRISIL report released on Wednesday.



Among asset classes, vehicle loans (including commercial vehicles and two-wheelers) accounted for 48 per cent of securitisation volume (vs 40 per cent in the corresponding period in the last financial year).

In the third quarter alone, issuances touched Rs 63,000 crore, up 60 per cent year-on-year, with private sector banks contributing to 28 per cent of this.

On the other hand, originations by non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) were up by a

modest 5 per cent. Like-to-like growth (adjusted for volume from a large HFC that merged with a bank) for the nine months of this fiscal is in line with the moderation in the assets under management (AUM) growth.

However, during this same period, there were about 15 first-time NBFC issuers, bringing the total number of originators to 152, compared with around 136 in the corresponding period in the last fiscal year.

CRISIL Ratings director Aparna Kirubakaran said:

"Private sector banks with high credit-deposit ratios are expected to continue to use the securitisation route as an efficient balance sheet management tool, thereby propelling the securitisation market volume to all-time highs this fiscal. As for NBFCs, while volume growth remains muted, we foresee more new participants entering the market as small and mid-sized entities seek alternative funding sources beyond bank loans."

Stronger volume growth in certain asset classes

continues to ensure the market mix is in favour of pass-through certificates (PTC) over direct assignment (DA). For the first nine months of this fiscal, PTC issuances accounted for 57 per cent of securitisation volume and DAs the remaining 43 per cent. PTC issuances surged over 100 per cent on-year and surpassed Rs 1 lakh crore in the first nine months of this fiscal, equalling the tally for the last fiscal, the report states.

After vehicle loans, mortgage-backed loans accounted for about 23 per cent of securitisation volume (vs 20 per cent in the corresponding period last fiscal). Securitisation backed by gold loans has made a comeback following the lifting of regulatory curbs on a large originator, and DA continues to be the preferred route of securitisation for this asset class, according to the report.

The share of microfinance loans in securitisa-

tion fell to 11 per cent (vs 15 per cent in the corresponding period last fiscal) as the sector continues to grapple with asset-quality issues.

Meanwhile, the share of personal and business loans grew to around 16 per cent (vs 14 per cent) as more players tapped the securitisation market to raise funds.

Although participation from newer investor classes, including mutual funds, insurance companies and alternative investment funds, is increasing, banks remain the dominant investor class accounting for 70 per cent of securitisation volume.

Securitisation remains an attractive fund-raising option for NBFCs amid tighter regulations around lending by banks. Given the sustained participation of private banks in originations, the market is on track to hit record highs this fiscal, the report said.

South Korea's startups ministry to provide \$1 bn financial aid to SMEs

AGENCIES
SEOUL, JAN 8



The startups ministry here said on Wednesday it will provide 1.5 trillion won (\$1.03 billion) worth of financial support to small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in South Korea that suffered damage in trade due to the recent weakening of the local currency.

The announcement was made as part of the Ministry of SMEs and Startups' plan for this year reported to acting President Choi Sang-mok, reports Yonhap news agency.

Small businesses in the country have reported heavy losses in their trade activities as the Korean won weakened sharply amid deepening political crisis and growth woes, once going below the 1,470 won per dollar level during intraday trading last month, the lowest mark in nearly 16 years.

The ministry said it also plans to create a 1.9 trillion-won fund to revit-

alise the venture capital market and work to foster 1,000 startups in strategic industries, such as system semiconductors and artificial intelligence, in 2025.

Under the plan, the ministry will expand its program aimed at facilitating cooperation between startups and conglomerates, and create K-startup Silicon Valley town, an organization that will help local startups to launch their business in the U.S. market.

It will also promote exports of Korean beauty and food products, as well as media content and technology services, by creat-

ing a K-beauty global fund and a joint fund with Saudi Arabia for local game companies wishing to break into the Middle Eastern market.

Additionally, the ministry said it will conduct a comprehensive investigation into unfair business practices in the delivery platform sector.

Last month, the government vowed to introduce measures to ease the burden on small merchants from delivery app commission fees and other business challenges as part of efforts to boost sluggish domestic consumption.

Microsoft partners govt's India AI Mission to skill 5 lakh people by 2026

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 8



Microsoft Chairman and CEO Satya Nadella here on Wednesday announced several AI partnerships in the country, which includes an MoU with the government's 'India AI Mission' to skill 5 lakh people.

The MoU with India AI, a division of Digital India Corporation, aims to leverage AI to drive innovation, enhance productivity, and foster inclusive growth across the country.

As part of the MOU, Microsoft and India AI together will skill 500,000 individuals, including students, educators, developers, government officials, and women entrepreneurs, by 2026.

They will also establish an AI Center of Excellence, called 'AI Catalysts', to promote rural AI innovation

and support 100,000 AI innovators and developers through hackathons, community-building solutions, and an AI marketplace.

As part of the MoU, they will also set up 'AI Productivity Labs' at 20 National Skill Training Institutes (NSTIs)/NIELIT centres in 10 states to impart foundational courses for 20,000 educators.

The collaboration will also focus on developing

AI-enabled solutions for citizen-scale domains such as healthcare, education, accessibility, and agriculture.

"We are excited to work closely with the government to extend the benefits of the India AI mission to every corner of the country and democratize access to technology and resources," said Puneet Chandok, president, Microsoft India and South

Asia. RailTel and Microsoft also entered a five-year strategic partnership to advance digital, cloud, and AI transformation in the Indian railways and public sector space.

A recent IDC study, commissioned by Microsoft, showed AI usage in India jumped from 63 per cent in 2023 to 72 per cent in 2024.

On Tuesday, Microsoft announced plans to invest \$3 billion in cloud and AI infrastructure in India over the next two years, including the establishment of new data centres.

The tech giant also announced to train and skill 10 million people in AI by 2030.

The company has already empowered 2.4 million Indians, including civil servants, college students and people with disabilities, with AI skills.

Safe internet: Govt's GAC resolves 2,081 user appeals against social media intermediaries

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 8



In order to enhance grievance redressal framework for a safer internet, the government's Grievance Appellate Committee (GAC) has resolved 2,081 user appeals for 980 appeals through 1,214 orders issued, it was announced on Wednesday.

The GAC was established under the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, as part of the government's commitment to creating a safe, trusted, and accountable internet.

Operational since January 2023, the GAC provides an online dispute resolution mechanism for users aggrieved by decisions of intermediaries' grievance officers.

An average of over 300 appeals are being received per month in its second year, marking a significant increase from the first year. Around 10,000 users are registered on the platform.

Towards achieving this goal, a workshop was organised by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to address stake-

holder concerns regarding a safer internet. It was attended by GAC members, social media intermediaries, and senior government officials.

The Centre urged social media intermediaries to act quickly against fake content to build public trust in grievance officers.

It was also emphasised that GACs must work efficiently to resolve issues

promptly, ensuring users can navigate the internet safely and with confidence.

According to S. Krishnan, Secretary, MeitY, GACs must ensure a swift grievance redressal process to address issues promptly, as trust in the mechanism is established only when complaints are resolved efficiently.

He also said that regular interaction between the appellate authority and the regulatory framework is crucial for identifying potential issues and finding effective solutions, ultimately benefiting stakeholders.

Bhuvnesh Kumar, Additional Secretary, MeitY, the number of grievances received at the appellate level by the GACs was initially limited but has now seen a notable rise, primarily driven by increased public awareness.

Markets regulator SEBI sends notice to Ola Electric for violating disclosure norms

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 8



Electric vehicle (EV) company Ola Electric Mobility Limited has received an administrative warning from the markets regulator, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI), for violating disclosure norms.

The reason cited is that Ola Electric announced its e-scooter expansion plans first on social media instead of announcing it on the stock exchanges.

In an administrative warning, sent via email on January 7 for violating various sections of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements)

Regulations, 2015, the regulator asked the EV firm to ensure "equal, timely, cost-efficient access to rel-

evant information for all investors" via stock exchanges.

"By failing to first dis-

seminate the information on the stock exchanges and instead announcing it on social media platforms, you have failed to provide equal and timely access to information to all investors," read the SEBI warning.

Ola Electric Founder Bhavish Aggarwal had posted a video on his X handle on December 2 before 10 a.m, in which he shared his plan to increase the company's sales network by nearly four times by December 20. The company later informed the exchanges post 1.30 p.m on December 2.

SEBI stated in its warning letter that "The above violations have been taken

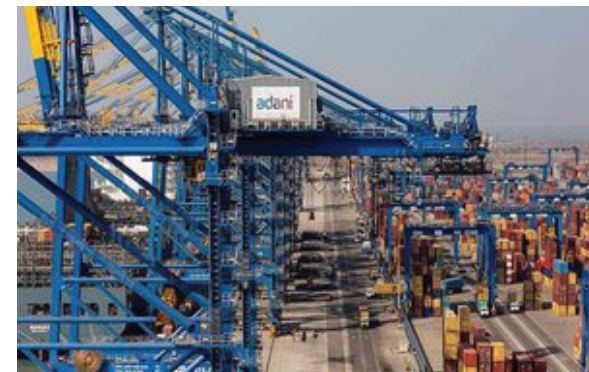
very seriously. You are warned and advised to be careful in future and improve your compliance standards to avoid recurrence of such instances, failing which appropriate enforcement action may be initiated."

On Wednesday, at around 10:13 am, the EV company's shares declined 4.78 per cent to Rs 75.38 per share.

In addition, Ola Electric's market share declined by 5 per cent on a MoM (month-on-month) basis to 19 per cent in December. It was 24 per cent in November, dethroning it as the top Indian 2-wheeler EV company.

Adani Ports ranks among top 10 transportation, infra companies in S&P global list

AGENCIES
AHMEDABAD, JAN 8



Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd. (APSEZ) on Wednesday said it has been ranked among the top 10 global transportation and infrastructure companies in the 2024 S&P Global Corporate Sustainability Assessment (CSA).

With a score of 68 (out of 100) - a three-point improvement over last year, APSEZ is now placed in the 97th percentile within the sector, improving from the 96th percentile in 2023, the Adani Group company said in a statement.

"We firmly believe responsible business prac-

tices drive innovation and long-term success. The latest recognition only reflects our commitment to sustainability and corporate responsibility," said Ashwini Gupta, Whole-Time Director and CEO of APSEZ.

"Our team's dedication to integrating sustainability across all our opera-

tions has been key to this achievement.

We remain committed to our Net Zero by 2040 goal," he added.

APSEZ is the country's largest private port operator.

For the second consecutive year, APSEZ secured the top spot in the Environment dimension.

DoJ's selective probe of Adani officials can derail India ties: US Congressman Lance Gooden

AGENCIES
NEW YORK, JAN 8

In a letter to US Attorney General Merrick B. Garland, the Congressman said the Department of Justice (DoJ) should focus on domestic issues instead rather than engaging with "selective prosecution of foreign entities and the potential harm such actions pose to US's global alliances and economic growth".



the DOJ should focus on punishing bad actors at

home, rather than chasing rumours abroad," Gooden wrote in the letter (dated January 7).

The Republican lawmaker further stated that "when we forego real threats from violent crime, economic espionage and CCP influence and go after those who contribute to our economic growth, it

discourages valuable new investors hopeful of investing in our country".

"Given the timing of these decisions coincides with the end of the Biden administration, concerns arise that the only true goal here is disruption for President Trump," Gooden wrote.

"As a cog in the outgo-

ing administration, it is your duty to the public to be mindful of not creating further complications that could compromise America's geopolitical eminence," Gooden added.

The letter comes ahead of US President-elect Donald Trump's inauguration on January 20.

"In complete abeyance

of public outcry about the rising violent crimes at home, the DOJ seems to be pursuing new expeditions to target businesses for alleged injustices abroad," he further noted, asking why has the DOJ not indicted a single American if the case involves a significant nexus with the United States.

Kaif opposes Bumrah's Test captaincy, suggests Rahul or Pant as successor to Rohit Sharma

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 8

Former Indian cricketer Mohammad Kaif has expressed his reservations about Jasprit Bumrah succeeding Rohit Sharma as India's Test captain.

Kaif emphasised that appointing Bumrah as skipper could overburden the pacer, affecting both his fitness and longevity. Instead, he advocated for a batter, such as KL Rahul or Rishabh Pant, to take up the leadership mantle, ensuring stability and performance continuity.

Speculation around India's Test captaincy has intensified following Rohit Sharma's absence from the Sydney Test during the recently con-

cluded Border-Gavaskar Trophy. Reports suggest that Rohit might step away from Test captaincy altogether, opening the door for potential successors. Jasprit Bumrah, who briefly captained India in the Perth and Sydney Tests, has emerged as a candidate for the role, but Kaif firmly believes this would be a misstep.

"The BCCI should think twice before appointing Jasprit Bumrah as the full-time captain," Kaif posted on X.

"He needs to focus solely on taking wickets and staying fit. Added leadership responsibilities and getting carried away in the heat of the moment can lead to injuries and potentially shorten an out-



standing career. Don't kill the golden goose."

Kaif also pointed to Bumrah's recurring injuries as a significant concern, noting that the pacer's workload already makes him vulnerable to physical setbacks.

Bumrah suffered a back injury during the Sydney Test, forcing him out of

action in Australia's first innings, which hindered India's chances of pushing for a victory.

Kaif argued that a batter is better suited to the role of Test captain due to their relatively lower physical demands compared to bowlers.

He proposed Rishabh Pant and KL Rahul as prime candidates, citing their leadership experience in the IPL as evidence of their capability.

"Rishabh and KL have done captaincy in the IPL, so one of them can be a good choice," Kaif said in his You Tube video. "Bumrah becoming Rohit Sharma's successor is not the right idea because he is the only bowler who puts his life out for the team

and takes a huge load of pressure with very little support. This is the reason he gets injured repeatedly."

Kaif emphasised that choosing a batter would help maintain balance within the team while allowing Bumrah to focus solely on his role as a spearhead of the bowling attack.

Bumrah has had brief opportunities to captain India, stepping in during the Perth Test when Rohit was on paternity leave and later in the Sydney Test when Rohit opted out after a poor run of form. While Bumrah impressed with his bowling performances throughout the series, taking 32 wickets at an average of 13.06.

Archie Vaughan to captain England Under-19 team on tour of South Africa

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 8

All-rounder Archie Vaughan will captain England men's U19 team on its upcoming tour of South Africa. Archie, who is the son of former England captain Michael Vaughan, will lead an 18-man squad across three 50-over and two red-ball games happening from January 14 to February 6.

Archie took 15 wickets and scored 236 runs in just four County Championship matches for Somerset in the last season. "I found out that I was going to be captain during the training camp before Christmas and it was a very special moment. To get the opportunity to represent England at this level is really special in itself, but to

lead the team out is something else," said Archie in a statement issued by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB).

"It will obviously be a good challenge and we'll have to adapt to the conditions. The training camp that we had over there before Christmas was really beneficial and we're all ready and raring to go."

"If someone had told me 12 months ago that I would have forced my way into the Somerset first team and be captaining the Under-19s I wouldn't have believed them. It's happened quickly but I'm going to keep my feet on the ground and work harder and harder. The next step is to try and win in South Africa and hopefully, I can perform as well," he said.

The England Under 19 squad will fly out on Thursday ahead of the first 50-over game against the South Africa U19 team on January 17. The two-match red-ball series begins in Stellenbosch on January 26 before the second game happens in Cape Town on February 3.

"After putting in a lot of purposeful work on a really good camp before Christmas, we get the opportunity to play against South Africa Under-19s, which will be very exciting for the boys competing in an England shirt," said England U19 head coach Michael Yardy.

Meanwhile, South Africa also announced their U19 squads, with Bennie Hansen to captain them in both 50-over and red-ball games.

Top Indian riders Johann, Kavin join Gaman Racing; set to train in Spain for 2025 season

AGENCIES
CHENNAI, JAN 8

Promising Indian riders Geoffrey Emmanuel, Kavin Quintal, Johann Emmanuel, along with a lady rider Nadine Balaji, have joined Gaman Racing, and will be honing their skills in Spain for the competitive 2025 season as the Spanish outfit inked an agreement with top Indian team Gusto Racing India, to build and promote Indian talent.

This collaboration marks a turning point for the four Chennai riders offering world-class training and a platform to shine on the international stage. Under the leadership of former racing star Emmanuel Jebaraj, Chennai-based team Gusto Racing India, has partnered with Spain-based Gaman Racing Global Service to develop and nurture young Indian riders.

The initiative is designed to strengthen India's pres-

ence in global motorsports and to foster grassroots talent in Chennai.

For the 2025 season, Geoffrey, Kavin, and Johann will train at MotorLand Aragon, Gaman Racing's state-of-the-art facility in Spain. They will undergo rigorous physical preparation and skill development.

The four riders achieved notable milestones in 2024, where Geoffrey Emmanuel competed in the Moto2 European Championship at FIM JuniorGP, with five podiums in the Supersport 600 class at the Qatar Superstock Championship (QSTK).

Kavin Quintal became the first Indian in WorldSBK's Supersport 300 class, and achieved success in the FIM JuniorGP STK class. Finished first and third in his first wildcard race in Round 4 of the Qatar Superstock Championship (QSTK).

Ponting lauds Australia for leadership, team's resilience, adaptability in BGT victory

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 8

Australia reclaimed the Border-Gavaskar Trophy with a 3-1 series win over India, ending a decade-long wait for victory in the iconic rivalry. The triumph drew high praise from former Australia cricketer and ICC Hall of Famer Ricky Ponting, who lauded the team's resilience, adaptability, and leadership.

The series began on a sour note for Australia, as they faced a crushing defeat in Perth. Jasprit Bumrah's devastating spell and centuries from Yashasvi Jaiswal and Virat Kohli propelled India to a dominant win. Australia appeared disjointed, sparking criticism from fans and pundits alike.

Ponting reflected on the poor start, saying, "When I look back to the start of this series and just look how far off the mark the Aussies were in that first game, I think there was a lot of criticism that was

flying around about the team. It almost looked a little un-Australian," Ponting told ICC Review.

However, the extended break between the first and second Tests proved to be a blessing. According to Ponting, it allowed the Australians to reset, work on their game plans, and avoid external distractions. "When you lose a Test match like that against another very strong opposition side, you do have to do a bit of soul-searching and a lot of talking. The break gave the Australians a chance to put the media speculation and white noise away and focus on the Adelaide game," he noted.

The changes were evident in Adelaide as Australia rebounded with a commanding win, setting the tone for the rest of the series. Travis Head emerged as a standout performer, delivering crucial innings when the team needed them most. Ponting highlighted the strategic management of



key players like Head and Pat Cummins, whose peak performances proved decisive. "As we saw, it ended up being great management because those guys ended up being at their best at the back end of the five Test matches," Ponting said.

A cornerstone of Australia's success was their world-class bowling unit, featuring Mitchell Starc, Josh Hazlewood, Nathan Lyon, and skipper Pat Cummins. Together, they form a historically dominant quartet, with each bowler amassing over

300 Test wickets. "The bowling group in itself has achieved some incredible things," Ponting said. "It's the first time in Test match history that you've had four bowlers with those sorts of records in the same lineup."

Ponting also lauded Cummins' dual role as captain and match-winner. The Australian skipper was instrumental, finishing the series with 25 wickets (the second-highest) and scoring 159 valuable runs. "Pat has grown as a player, he's grown as a leader," Ponting remarked. "When-

ever things get tough as captain, he doesn't look around to anybody else. He brings himself straight back into the attack and more often than not gets the job done."

Australia's victories in Melbourne and Sydney underscored their adaptability. Historically considered favorable to India, these venues witnessed Australia outplaying their opponents in all departments. Ponting emphasised the significance of winning in such conditions, saying, "The conditions that you think India would normally play better in, Australia found a way to outplay them."

Despite their success, Ponting acknowledged the inevitable challenges of an ageing squad. With no players in their 20s apart from 19-year-old sensation Sam Konstas, Australia must plan for a generational shift. "There's not one player in their 20s in that team. That's going to be the next challenge for this Australian group, not just

for the team but for Australian cricket as a whole," Ponting cautioned.

He highlighted the importance of upcoming tours to Sri Lanka and the West Indies as opportunities to integrate young talent into the side. However, he warned that debuting in challenging conditions like Sri Lanka could be a daunting task for inexperienced players.

"If they are looking at bringing young players in, it probably needs to start in Sri Lanka and the West Indies," Ponting said. "But Sri Lanka is not going to be an easy place for anyone to start."

With the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, the ICC World Test Championship, and the ICC 50-over World Cup in their possession, Ponting believes this Australian team has established itself as a cricketing powerhouse. "They now own every bilateral trophy there is around the world," he said. "They've achieved some amazing things together."

ISL 2024-25: Chennaiyin FC eye a double against Odisha FC at home

AGENCIES
CHENNAI, JAN 8

Chennaiyin FC will aim to kick off the new year with a win when they take on Odisha FC in an Indian Super League 2024-25 match at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here on Thursday. The Marina Machans started their ISL 2024-25 campaign with a memorable comeback win over Odisha in September, with Farukh Choudhary scoring twice to condemn the Jugger-nauts to a first home reverse in 569 days.

Four months on, Chennaiyin FC have won four matches and drawn three, keeping themselves within touching distance of the playoffs. Head coach Owen Coyle is now looking forward to stitching together a

strong run in the second half of the season.

"We have ten games now remaining, six at home and four away, every one of them is very winnable," Coyle told the media at the pre-match press conference in Chennai.

"We had hoped to have a fit and healthy squad, but regardless the available players have to step up and we need to now go on a winning run, which we are more than capable of. We're starting with a tough Odisha side, but one which we have already played earlier in the season.

"We know their strengths, we know their qualities, but equally, we know we are capable of beating them. We did it earlier in the season and we need to do it again,"

he said.

The New Year brings with it the commencement of the January transfer window, and head coach Coyle revealed he is keen to add a few players to his squad.

"The January window is a difficult one because clubs are reluctant to let players go. But, we're actively trying to boost the squad where we can, and we'd like to freshen up with one or two players," he said.

Joining Coyle was goalkeeper Mohammad Nawaz, signed in the summer from Mumbai, who has since made the No.1 spot his own. Quizzed about the changing backline and unforeseen mistakes, Nawaz underlined the need to stick together and support each other.

I-League 2024-25: Gokulam Kerala FC break winless streak with 5-0 win over Delhi FC

AGENCIES
MAHILPUR, JAN 8

A rejuvenated Gokulam Kerala FC jumpstarted their 2024-25 I-League campaign post-Christmas and New Year break with a resounding 5-0 victory against Delhi FC in a vital I-League 2024-25 away match at the Mahilpur Football Stadium on Wednesday. The team showed a renewed hunger and zeal as they broke their five-match winless streak in spectacular fashion. The winners led 1-0 at halftime.

Adama Niane emerged as the standout performer, netting twice to lead the scoring spree, ably supported by goals from Rahul Raju, Sinisa Stanisavic, and Ignacio De Loyola Abeledo. This emphatic



win, only their second victory of the season following an initial win against Sreenidi Deccan FC, propelled Gokulam Kerala from seventh to third in the league standings. They now have 10 points from seven games, including two wins, four draws and one loss.

In contrast, Delhi FC found themselves belea-

guered and ineffective, particularly in the attacking third, leaving them frustrated and stuck in seventh place with eight points. The match, though, began with Delhi FC attempting several shots on target, all comfortably saved by Gokulam Kerala's alert goalkeeper, Shibinraj Kunniyil.

However, as the game progressed, Gokulam Kerala found their rhythm and began to dominate. They narrowly missed taking the lead when Soosairaj's precise cross from the left was met with a powerful header by Stanisavic. But Delhi FC's goalkeeper Lalmuansanga pulled off a remarkable save.

The breakthrough finally came in the 41st minute when Tondomba Singh Naorem's challenge on Niane led to a penalty. Niane initially had his spot kick saved but made no mistake with the rebound, putting Gokulam Kerala ahead.

The second half saw Delhi FC striving to equalise, but their aggressive approach left them vulnerable at the back and Gokulam Kerala happily

exploited the gaps. Niane doubled his tally in the 63rd minute, rounding Lalmuansanga after a superb through ball left him one-on-one with the goalkeeper.

A defensive mistake by Delhi defender Danilo Augusto Azevedo then allowed Raju to slot home the third goal in the 81st minute.

Gokulam Kerala continued to press, and their efforts were further rewarded when Abelado's cross was cleverly diverted by Sergio Llamas Pardo to an unmarked Stanisavic, who tapped in the fourth goal in the 89th minute.

The rout was completed in injury time when Pardo set up Abeledo for a powerful left-footed strike, sealing a dominant 5-0 win for Gokulam Kerala.

NZ opener Martin Guptill confirms retirement from international cricket

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 8

New Zealand opener Martin Guptill has confirmed his retirement from international cricket, bringing an end to a decorated 14-year career. Guptill, 38, has scored 23 international centuries across all three formats while playing 198 ODIs, 122 T20Is and 47 Tests for

New Zealand.

He last played for New Zealand in 2022 and now ends his international career as the side's leading T20I run-scorer with 3,531 from 122 matches, the second-most appearances in the format for a player from the country. He also amassed 7,346 ODI runs, which places him third on the ODI run-scorers list behind Ross

Taylor and Stephen Fleming.

"As a young kid it was always my dream to play for New Zealand and I feel incredibly lucky and proud to have played 367 games for my country. I will forever cherish the memories made wearing the silver fern alongside a great group of guys. I want to say a huge thanks to all my team-mates and coach-

ing staff over the years, in particular Mark O'Donnell who has coached me since the Under 19 level and been a source of ongoing support and wisdom over my career.

"A special thanks must also go to my manager Leanne McGoldrick - all of the work behind the scenes never went unnoticed and I'll be forever appreciative of all your

support. To my wife Laura and our beautiful children Harley and Teddy - thank-you. Thank you Laura for the sacrifices you have made for me and our family. You've been my biggest supporter, my rock and my counsel through all of the ups and downs that come with the game. I am eternally grateful. Finally I'd like to thank all the crick-

et fans, here in NZ and around the world for all their support throughout the years," said Guptill, who will continue to play in various T20 leagues, in a New Zealand Cricket (NZC) statement.

Guptill, who made his international debut in 2009, became the first New Zealand men's batter to score an ODI double-century when he

smashed 237 not-out in the 2015 ODI World Cup quarter-final win over the West Indies at Wellington Stadium. He also holds the record for having three of New Zealand's top four individual ODI scores.

Apart from hitting a whopping 1,385 fours and 383 sixes during his international career, Guptill is also remembered for his stunning run-out of

M.S. Dhoni during New Zealand's semi-final win over India at the 2019 ODI World Cup in Manchester.

NZC said Guptill's illustrious international career will be acknowledged during New Zealand's third and final ODI against Sri Lanka at Eden Park in Auckland on January 11, a venue where he's been the all-time leading run-scorer for the Blackcaps.

HEW Jammu spreads awareness about gender equality, women centric schemes

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 8

Jammu-Mission Shakti SANKALP HEW Social Welfare Department conducted awareness sessions in Village Khanpur block Nagrota and Kalka colony Bahu Fort to empower women and promote gender equality.

The initiative was designed to inform the community about the government schemes focused on uplifting and supporting women, with a broader mission of fostering gender equality and strengthening the role of women in society.

At the informative session, Mission Shakti's team covered an array of government programs that cater specifically to women's welfare, economic empowerment, safety, and security. Key schemes high-



lighted included:

The officials explained Pradhan Mantri Matru Vandana Yojana (PMMVY), providing financial support to pregnant and lactating women to improve health and nutrition; State Marriage Assistance Scheme (SMAS) for underprivileged women to support marriage-related expenses; Janani Suraksha Yojana (JSY) scheme to encourage safe motherhood through institutional deliveries;

Widow and Old Age Pension Schemes ensuring financial aid for widows and the elderly, focusing on social security for vulnerable groups.

The sessions also introduced women to vocational and entrepreneurship programs such as Skill Development Courses at ITIs and Polytechnics to enhance employability of women; Business Startup Schemes like the Prime Minister's Employment Generation

Programme (PMEGP), Tejaswini, Mumkin, SC/ST Corporation, and the Women Development Corporation (WDC), offering women the resources and guidance to start their own ventures.

Beyond these specific schemes, Mission Shakti emphasized the critical role of women in nation-building and highlighted the importance of the girl child in Indian society.

Medical camp held for drivers at Pulwama to promote safer roads

JJ NEWS SERVICE
PULWAMA, JANUARY 8

As part of the ongoing National Road Safety Month 2025, the Motor Vehicles Department (MVD) Pulwama, organized a comprehensive medical camp for drivers to enhance their health and well-being, an essential aspect of ensuring safer roads and responsible driving practices.

The camp witnessed an encouraging response with a large number of drivers actively participating in the health check-up activities. Various essential medical services were provided during the camp, including assessments of physical fitness, eyesight evaluations, blood sugar monitoring and blood pressure examinations.

These services were meticulously carried out



to identify any potential health issues that could affect the drivers' ability to operate vehicles safely and efficiently.

Asst. Regional Transport Officer (ARTO) Pulwama emphasized the critical role of driver health in promoting road safety and reducing accidents.

Speaking on the occasion, the ARTO stated the health and fitness of drivers are fundamental to ensuring the safety of all road users. A healthy driver is a safe driver and

initiatives like these go a long way in preventing accidents and saving lives.

The month-long campaign culminating on January 31 will feature various activities, including awareness drives, workshops and educational programs aimed at instilling responsible road behavior. Special emphasis will be placed on educating drivers, pedestrians and cyclists about the importance of adhering to traffic rules and adopting safe practices.

Canals, distribution network being closed for maintenance, de-siltation work

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 8

The Jal Shakti (Ravi Tawi Irrigation) Department is going to close Canals and distribution network for annual de-siltation and maintenance works.

"It is hereby notified to all the concerned that Tawi Lift Irrigation Canal and Ravi Canal (including their distribution network) shall be closed from 10th January 2025, for execution of annual desilting/other works. The date for opening of the canals shall be notified separately" a notice issued here today stated.

All the concerned Superintending Engineers and Executive Engineers have been directed to ensure completion of all these works well before the scheduled opening of the canals.

Health Deptt B'la conducts BLS training for Police personnel at Kunzer & Kreeri

JJ NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, JANUARY 08

The Health Department Baramulla, in collaboration with local police, organized a special Basic Life Support (BLS) training session for police personnel in Kunzer and Kreeri blocks.

This initiative is aimed at equipping police personnel with essential life-saving skills, including CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation), airway management, bleeding control, and other critical techniques to stabilize accident victims until professional medical help arrives. As first responders to road accidents, police personnel play a vital role in reducing fatalities and ensuring timely medical intervention.

The Health Department's training underscores the importance of collaboration between law



enforcement and health-care providers, especially in remote areas, where rapid response can make a significant difference in saving lives.

The BLS training, conducted by certified instructors, included practical demonstrations and hands-on experience, ensuring that police personnel are well-prepared to respond

effectively during emergencies.

The Health Department is committed to expanding this training initiative to other blocks within the district to ensure that police personnel across Baramulla are fully equipped with the necessary skills to handle emergency situations with confidence and competence.

3 day orientation programme for MLAs to commence today at Jammu

JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 8

The three day orientation programme for MLAs of Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly will commence from 9th of January, 2025 at Central Hall of J&K Legislative Assembly Complex, Jammu.

The programme is being organised by J&K Legislative Assembly Secretariat in collaboration with PRIDE, Lok Sabha Secretariat.

The inaugural function of the programme will be graced by distinguished dignitaries like Chief Minister, Speaker, J&K Legislative Assembly, Deputy Chief Minister as well as other senior officers.

The first Legislative Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir was constituted on 8th October 2024.

The ninety (90) Member House presently has eighty eight (88) members, of which, fifty (50) members have been elected for the first time.

In order to help the newly elected members to effectively discharge their onerous responsibilities of meeting the aspirations of people, this three day orientation programme is being held on Parliamentary Practices, Procedure and Conduct of Business in the House.

The programme will feature discussions by eminent Parliamentarians like Dr. Sanjay Jaiswal, Chairperson, Committee on Estimates; N.K. Premachandran and Dr. Satayapal Singh, former Members Lok Sabha. The subjects to be discussed and deliberated during the programme includ-

ed Legislative Processes, Budgetary Process, Executive Accountability through Questions, Committee System and Information Support to Legislators, Do's and Don'ts for an Effective Legislator and a session on NEVA. The insights gained through these lectures will provide the newly elected members with a deep understanding of working of the legislature and the responsibility they carry as elected representatives. The lectures will also be co-hosted by Senior Officers of the Lok Sabha Secretariat.

This programme is expected to enhance the capacity of MLAs to significantly contribute to policy formulation and ensure its effective implementation for greater good of the Union Territory.

DEO Jammu inspects EVM-VVPAT warehouse construction



JJ NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 8

District Election Officer Sachin Kumar Vaishya, inspected the construction of the EVM VVPAT Warehouse at Bhagwati Nagar today.

The facility is going to have state of the art facilities, besides lifts, advanced security arrangements and hi tech surveillance system.

Speaking to the concerned officers, the DEO directed them to ensure timely completion of the project without compromising on quality standards.

Director (IT) NIC/District Informatics Officer Sanjeev Kapoor, Deputy DEO Rameshwar Kumar, Executive Engineer PWD and other officers accompanied the DEO during the inspection.

Mega IEC campaign begins in B'la to promote Mission YUVA, PM Surya Ghar, HADP schemes

JJ NEWS SERVICE
BARAMULLA, JANUARY 08

Minister for Agriculture Production, Rural Development and Panchayati Raj, Javed Ahmad Dar, in presence of Deputy Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, today kick started a Mega Information, Education and Communication (IEC) Campaign at Dak Bungalow, Chijhama, Raftabad, to create awareness about various government sponsored initiatives including HADP, PM Surya Ghar Yojana and Mission YUVA project.

Similar such IEC campaigns were also held across the district at the sub division and tehsil levels where the Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) from the respective constituencies spearheaded these programs to empower the public about the benefits of these schemes.

The campaign witnessed an overwhelming response from the local population including representatives and other stakeholders, empowering them to take full advantage of these



schemes for their economic upliftment.

The event began with the Minister inspecting the informative stalls set up by different government departments, providing detailed information on the schemes, their objectives and process for availing the benefits.

In a series of comprehensive presentations, senior officials from various departments highlighted the scope and importance of the schemes. Key emphasis was laid on the transformative potential of these initiatives in empowering

the rural population and enhancing their livelihoods.

In his address, the Minister highlighted the transformative potential of HADP to modernise agriculture, PM Surya Ghar to promote solar energy adoption and Mission YUVA to empower youth through skill-building and entrepreneurship.

Javed Dar urged all the stakeholders, including farmers, youth and local leaders to actively participate in these schemes, emphasising their potential to transform the economic landscape of the

region. The DC provided an in-depth presentation on the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP), Mission Yuva and PM Surya Ghar Yojana. He highlighted how these schemes are tailored to address critical challenges in agriculture, youth empowerment and renewable energy adoption.

Later, the Minister handed over the keys of tractors, weeders and other agricultural machinery to the beneficiaries under HADP and various other schemes.

DC Srinagar reviews arrangements for Republic Day-2025

JJ NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 8

In connection with celebrations of forthcoming Republic-Day-2025, a meeting was held today under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud Din Bhat at Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex here to ensure smooth and flawless conduct of the national event.

Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar, Intiyaz Ahmad was also present in the meeting.

At the outset, the DC took a Department wise review about the arrangements to be put in place by the respective Departments.

The DC directed the Officers of the concerned Departments to ensure all preparations including Seating arrangements, March Past Parade, Cultural programmes, Transport & Parking facilities, Power & drinking Water Supply, deployment of Sanitation staff, Medical/First Aid & Fire and Emergency teams, Installation of Public Address System, besides illumination of

Government Building on the eve of upcoming Republic Day.

On the occasion, matters related to Security, Media Management and entry of VVIPs, VIPs and other participants were also discussed in detail.

The DC stressed on making fool-proof security arrangements in and around the Stadium to ensure hassle-free celebrations of the function. He also enjoined upon the concerned Officers to maintain close coordination with each other for holding the function smoothly.

Regarding parking for vehicles, the DC asked the Officers of the Traffic Department to formulate an action plan so that the maximum number of vehicles of the dignitaries and other participants coming to attend the function are accommodated in a hassle free manner.

SMC authorities were asked to ensure proper cleanliness in and around the Bakshi Stadium, besides functioning of all washrooms and mobile toilet facility at the venue on January 26. They were



also asked to take measures for dog menace around the venue.

Dr Bilal asked the Education Department and Cultural Academy to ensure all necessary arrangements for boarding/lodging of participating school children and Artists are taken care well in advance with concerned, while transport arrangements will be made by JKRTC. He emphasized on proper safety measures of the participants at the accommodations.

He also stressed on making elaborate arrangements to tackle any water

logging, if any caused due to rain/snowfall on the occasion of Full Dress rehearsal proceedings and the main event on 26th January.

The DC also asked the PDD for illumination of identified Government buildings and other prominent spaces on the eve of the Republic Day-2025. He also asked the Officers to hoist the national flag in their respective offices on the Day.

SSP Srinagar also spoke on the occasion and briefed about the security plan being put in place for peaceful Republic day celebrations for this year.

Besides, Additional District Development Commissioner, Ghulam Hassan Sheikh, Additional Deputy Commissioner, Syed Ahmad Kataria, Chief Planning Officer, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, SDM East, SDM West, Chief Medical Officer, the meeting was attended by senior Officers of PDD, PHE, R&B, SRTC, Cultural Academy, Hospitality & Protocol, RTO, YS&S, Sports Council, Mechanical Engineering and other line Departments.