

**DENGUE WARNING SIGNS**

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

**Watch out for dengue warning signs!**

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

- Severe and continuous headache
- Joint and muscle pain
- Severe stomach pain
- Redness on the skin
- Stomach pain
- Stomach pain
- Stomach pain
- Stomach pain

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

# JINDRAH IMAGES

DAILY | JAMMU | VOL NO: 12 | ISSUE NO: 18 | 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

## Trump takes oath as 47th US President, returns to White House for second term

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON, JAN 20

Business mogul and Republican Party member Donald Trump returned to the White House on Monday for a historic second term by taking the oath as the 47th President of the US.

The oath was administered by Chief Justice John Roberts at the Capitol Rotunda.

Earlier, outgoing President Joe Biden and Trump rode together to the US Capitol for the latter's oath-taking programme after a traditional tea ceremony at the White House along with their wives, Kamala Harris and her successor J.D. Vance and their spouses.

Jill Biden and Melania Trump rode together to the Capitol in a separate



car as did Kamala Harris and her successor J.D. Vance.

This is only the second instance of the swearing-in taking place indoors -- the last time was in 1985 when President Ronald Reagan took the oath for his second term.

Earlier, Biden welcomed Trump to the White

House for a traditional tea ceremony with two words: "Welcome home", according to media reports.

Guests for the swearing-in had begun arriving at the Capitol Rotunda where the ceremony took place; indoors instead of the traditional venue outside.

This was only the second instance of the

swearing-in took place indoors; the last time was in 1985 when President Ronald Reagan took the oath for his second term.

Trump's return to the White House is also only the second time for an American President to serve two non-consecutive terms. The first was Grover Cleveland at the end of the 19th century.

The swearing-in was attended by Trump's nominees to the cabinet such as Marco Rubio, for secretary of state, who is expected to be confirmed, as early as Monday.

Trump started Monday's inauguration proceedings by attending a private service at St John's Church with the incoming first lady Melania Trump, J.D. Vance and wife

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

## 2025's first encounter in J&K: Army soldier killed in Sopore gunfight



JINNEWSERVICE  
SOPORE, JAN 20

An army soldier was killed in an encounter that erupted in the Sopore area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Monday. The operation marks the first gunfight in Jammu and Kashmir in the year 2025.

The operation, conducted in Gujjar Pati, Zaloor, under the jurisdiction of Sopore police district, was based on intelligence inputs regarding the presence of terrorists, an official informed the news agency.

He, however, said that

after an extensive search, the terrorists managed to flee the encounter site. The operation was then called off.

The official said the operation began with a joint team of the Army, CRPF, and Jammu & Kashmir Police cordoning off the area. The search intensified after fire was observed from inside a busted hideout.

The operation, which was halted due to darkness, resumed at first light. Security measures had already been heightened across the valley ahead of Republic Day celebrations.

In the ensuing gunfight,

### LG pays tribute to slain soldier

JINNEWSERVICE  
JAMMU, JAN 20

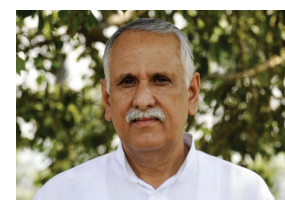
Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha paid tributes to Swr Pangala Kartheek, who laid down his life in the line of duty in Sopore.

"I salute the supreme sacrifice of our Army braveheart Swr Pangala Kartheek. His valour and sacrifice will never be forgotten. The entire nation stands firmly with the family of the martyr in this hour of grief," the Lieutenant Governor said. KNO

an army man, Swr Pangala Kartheek of 22 Rashtriya Rifles, sustained fatal injuries and succumbed, the official said, adding that despite sealing all entry and exit points, the terrorists escaped.

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

## BJP leader and Ex-MP Shamsher Singh Manhas dies in Jammu



JINNEWSERVICE  
JAMMU, JAN 20

Senior BJP leader and former Rajya Sabha member Shamsher Singh Manhas died after a prolonged illness at his residence here on Monday, his party colleagues said.

Manhas, 65, is survived by his wife, son and a daughter.

Jammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha expressed grief over Manhas's death. "Saddened by the demise of veteran leader and former MP Rajya Sabha...

He was always committed to the well-being of the people," the LG said in a post on X.

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

## LG takes pledge for Organ Donation



JINNEWSERVICE  
JAMMU, JAN 20

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha Monday took pledge for Organ Donation by registering on Ayushman Bharat Organ Donation Registry of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Gov-

ernment of India (notto.abdm.gov.in).

The State Organ and Tissue Transplant Organization (SOTTO) representatives, Dr Elias Sharma, Nodal Officer, Dr Sanjeev Puri, Joint Director and Sh Irfan Ahmed Lone, Transplant Coordinator, visited

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

## Ensure functional video conferencing system in Jammu court for Yasin Malik's trial: SC

JINNEWSERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JAN 20

The Supreme Court of India on Monday directed the Registrar General of the Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh High Court to ensure that proper video-conferencing (VC) facilities are available in a Jammu court for the trial of separatist leader Yasin Malik, who is currently in Tihar Jail.

The direction, according to details obtained by the news agency, came after the trial judge report-



ed that the VC system in the Jammu court was not functioning properly.

The Bench, comprising Justices Abhay S Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan, ordered the Registrar General to take

immediate steps to install a reliable VC system to facilitate hearings through video conference.

The system must allow effective cross-examination of witnesses, the Court specified. The Registrar General was further instructed to submit a report by February 17, detailing the improvements made and the installation of the new system, with an expert assigned to assess its functionality. The matter will be heard again on February 21.

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

## Inter-ministerial team arrives in Rajouri to investigate mysterious deaths in Budhal village

JINNEWSERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JAN 20

A high-level inter-ministerial team formed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah has arrived in Budhal village, Rajouri, to investigate the mysterious deaths that have claimed 17 lives over the past 50 days.

An official told the news agency that the team was accompanied by experts from some of the most reputed institutions in the country. The team interacted with locals and officials and collected various samples for comprehensive analysis.

The investigation team included experts from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers and the Ministry of Water Resources. Specialists from animal husbandry, food safety, and forensic science laboratories were also present.



The team was supported by Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, SSP Rajouri, and other senior officials. The experts' primary objective is to understand the causative factors behind the deaths and manage the situation effectively.

J&K Health Minister Sakina Itoo said no virus or infection has been identified as the cause of the deaths.

She said samples analysed at premier laboratories revealed the presence of neurotoxins, which have caused brain damage. The government

has sent these samples for broader investigations to determine the specific toxin responsible, as there are over 800 potential poisons under consideration.

A local water spring, used by around 15 families—including three directly affected families—was sealed after traces of pesticides and insecticides were found in the water.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday directed the formation of the inter-ministerial team after three incidents of unexplained deaths were reported in the village.

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

## J&K Bank reports 26.3% rise in net profit at 531.5 Cr

JINNEWSERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JAN 20

Jammu and Kashmir Bank today reported a 26.3% year-on-year (YoY) rise in

net profit at Rs 531.5 crore for the third quarter that ended December 31, 2024.

In the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal, Jammu and Kashmir

Bank posted a net profit of Rs 421 crore

Net interest income (NII), which is the difference between the interest income a bank earns

from its lending activities

and the interest it pays to depositors, was up 17.8%, coming at Rs 1,508.6 crore against Rs 1,280.5 crore in the corresponding quarter

of FY24.

According to the Associated News Bureau, the gross non-performing asset (NPA) stood at

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

## 1330 schools in JK with 31,000 enrolment run by 'single teachers'

JINNEWSERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JAN 20

In Jammu and Kashmir more than 31,000 students are enrolled in those schools that function with a single teacher posted or deployed—thus raising a question on quality of the education in educational institutes.

The updated official figures reveal that in Jammu and Kashmir, '31,054 students were enrolled' in those educational institutes wherein only one teacher was posted or deployed.

According to the recent official figures, more than



1300 schools in Jammu and Kashmir were those institutes that were functioning with only a single teacher.

The news agency has learnt that "At least 1330 schools in Jammu and Kashmir were functioning with single teachers."

Principal Secretary, School Education Department was not available to comment on the issue. Besides, Project Director of Jammu and Kashmir Samagra Shiksha could not answer the repeated calls from KNO.

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

## Security beefed up ahead of Republic Day in Jammu region

JINNEWSERVICE  
JAMMU, JAN 20

Security has been beefed up in Jammu ahead of Republic Day celebrations, with the police making the M A Stadium, the main venue of the function, out of bounds for public as a precautionary measure.

The security wing of the Jammu and Kashmir Police has taken control of the stadium, where Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha will preside over the Republic Day function with Chief Minister Omar Abdullah as the chief guest.

"The security has been



beefed up ahead of Republic Day. The security wing of police has taken charge of the main venue," a senior police official said.

Officials said that the venue has been restricted to the general public as a security measure. Sanitization of the main venue

and its surrounding areas has been completed, they added.

Station house officers and sub-divisional officers have been directed to conduct checks in their respective areas and maintain round-the-clock

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

## 125 SPs elevated, get Police Selection Grade II

JINNEWSERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JAN 20

The Jammu and Kashmir Government on Monday accorded sanction to the promotion of 125 JKPS officers to the grade of Superintendent of Police Selection Grade (II).

An order a copy of which lies with the news agency reads: "In terms of J&K Police (Gazetted) Service Recruitment Rules 2024 notified vide SO 500 of 2024 dated 10/10/2024 and as recommended by the Selection Committee-I, sanction is hereby accorded to the promotion of 125 officers in the Superintendent of

Police Selection Grade (II) (Level 12 (78800-209200) of the Pay Matrix) w.e.f 24/12/2024."

The officers are: Kulbir Singh (JKPS: 1999), Mohammad Arif Rishu (JKPS: 1999), Shailender Singh (JKPS: 1999), Dalip Kumar (JKPS: 1999), Abdul Waheed Shah (JKPS: 1999), Javid Hassan Bhat (JKPS: 1999), Benam Toshi (JKPS: 1999), Showkat Hussain Shah (JKPS: 1999), Joginder Singh (JKPS: 1999), Mehmood Ahmad (JKPS: 1999), Shamsher Hussain (JKPS: 1999), Ashok Kumar Sharma (JKPS: 1999), Stenzin

**CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4**

## Arrangements for Republic Day-2025 celebrations finalized at Kupwara

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
KUPWARA, JANUARY 20

In order to ensure proper arrangements for ensuing Republic Day (RD) celebration in district Kupwara, Deputy Commissioner (DC), Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today convened a meeting of all concerned officers, here and finalized the arrangements.

Speaking at the occasion, the DC stressed upon the officers to ensure hassle-free arrangements for smooth conduct of the national event. She said all efforts shall be made to make the celebratory function more attractive and informative.

She also stressed the need for maintaining protocol in seating arrangement, and also issued directions to the police department for taking



proper protocol of the National Flag and security arrangements.

The DC gave directions that Republic Day celebration functions shall be held at Sub divisional,

Tehsil and Block level with same fervour and enthusiasm.

Earlier, ADC Kupwara, M Rouf Rehman briefed the meeting about the programme and responsi-

bilities of each officer and informed that the main function of the Republic Day will be held at District Police Lines (DPL) Kupwara, where National Flag will be hoisted and the VIP will take salute on the March Past.

The DC took segment wise review of all arrangements including power supply, water, sanitation, seating arrangements, and directed the concerned departments to ensure these arrangements.

The DC also directed Officers to ensure their presence including staff in the Republic Day functions.

SSP Kupwara, Ghulam Jeelani; ADC Kupwara, M Rouf Rehman, besides, District and Sectoral Officers and senior officers of BSF, CRPF and Police were present in the meeting.

## Principal Secretary Culture inaugurates 5 day Women Painters Exhibition

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JANUARY 20

Principal Secretary Culture, Suresh Kumar Gupta, today inaugurated a 5 day All Women Painters Exhibition at Kala Kendra in presence of a galaxy of artists, painters and visual art experts.

The event, organised by the Jammu and Kashmir Academy of Art, Culture, and Languages (JKAACL), is being hosted across all three galleries of Kala Kendra.

Speaking on the occasion, Suresh Kumar emphasised the significant role of women in welfare and development of the society. He highlighted how the exhibition reflects their inner hopes, thoughts on beauty and connection with nature. He appreciated the vibrant



visual art scene of Jammu and commended JKAACL for organising this purposeful event in heart of the city.

Gupta urged the budding artists to take advantage of Academy's schemes and utilise Kala Kendra as a platform to explore and express their creative talents.

Secretary JKAACL, Harvinder Kour, stated that the exhibition aims to

exclusively project the art and creativity of women. She announced that the Academy is planning more such events to cover areas previously overlooked, ensuring broader outreach and representation.

Chief Editor JKAACL, Dr. Javid Rahi, informed the gathering that the exhibition featured 30 artworks including 12 created during a recently concluded women's camp at

Kala Kendra. Prominent dignitaries present at the event included Padma Balwant Thakur, Dr. Lalit Gupta, O.P. Vidhayrathi, Sangeeta Sharma, Yung S. Verman, Rohit Verma, Rakesh Sharma and Inder Singh. Besides, women painters including Anjali Bharti, Mahua Gupta, Shruti Sharma, Nidhi Jain, Isha Sharma, Mania Kapoor, Ifra Jan, Snobor Jilani, Sabina Khan, Renu, Retika and Preeti Sharma also graced the occasion.

The exhibition was curated by Irshad Tantry, Exhibition Officer while Popinder Singh Paras, Editor (Punjabi), JKAACL, presented vote of thanks.

## RDD organises workshop on Awaas Plus 2.0 Survey at Udhampur

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
UDHAMPUR, JANUARY 20

The Rural Development Department and Panchayati Raj Udhampur organized a one-day workshop cum training programme on the Awaas Plus 2.0 survey here at Conference Hall DC Office Complex.

Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai presided as the chief guest and formally inaugurated the workshop. The event was attended by Additional District Development Commissioner Rajinder Singh, Assistant Commissioner Development Dr. Ranjeet Singh Kotwal, Block Development Officers and other officers and field functionaries of RDD who are deputed as surveyors in all 236 Panchayats of District Udhampur.



At the outset, ACD Dr. Ranjeet Singh Kotwal outlined the major objective of the training programme. He emphasized that the training was organized to equip the registered surveyors with the knowledge and skills required to conduct the survey using the Awaas Plus Mobile Application, ensuring Aadhaar-authenticated surveys. He

apprised the Deputy Commissioner that the Awaas Plus 2.0 survey is a critical component for the effective implementation of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Gramin, aiming to identify and include all the eligible households for housing benefits under the scheme.

During the training program, Master trainers imparted detailed

training to the participants, emphasising the importance of Aadhaar authentication and adherence to SOPs and exclusion processes.

While addressing the workshop, Deputy Commissioner stressed upon the importance of conducting fair, transparent and error-free surveys in strict adherence to the MoRD guidelines and SOPs. She directed the surveyors to adhere to the prescribed timelines and ensure the inclusion of all eligible households while maintaining accuracy and diligence in their work.

The training concluded with a questionnaire session where detailed healthy discussions were done and doubts were cleared thereby ensuring positive outcomes.

## Desist from selling machine-made items in garb of Kashmir Handicrafts: Dept warns showroom owners

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 20

Handicrafts and Handloom Department, Kashmir today warned showroom owners dealing with hand-made craft products to desist from selling machine-made items in the garb of genuine hand-made products, failing which strict action under the ambit of Tourist Trade and Quality Control Acts shall be initiated.

In a press statement issued here today, a spokesperson from the Handicrafts and Hand-

loom Department, stated that several complaints have been received by the department wherein machine-made Turkish carpets have been sold to tourists and other buyers in the name of Kashmir hand-knotted carpets, thus bringing a bad name to the rich heritage of Kashmir. "Acting swiftly, several showrooms are being inspected and unlabelled machine-made products confiscated," he said.

The spokesman further stated that the Central Inspection Squad from the Quality Control wing

of the Department has been directed to intensify inspections of various showrooms in Srinagar City Centre and en route health resorts of Gulmarg and Pahalgam, besides other locations to crack-down on traders engaged in sale of counterfeit products, branded as hand-made Kashmir Art.

In order to promote sale of exquisite hand-made products, the spokesperson urged the stakeholders to approach the Handicrafts & Handloom Department for GI tagging, testing and certification of

their products at CDI & IICT, reaching out to the customer satisfaction and safeguarding rich heritage of Kashmir.

"The department has worked out a plan to significantly increase the capacity of testing and certification of hand-made products especially at Pashmina Testing and Quality Certification Centre at CDI," he said, adding that various IEC campaigns are currently running at local as well as national level to motivate the customers to insist upon buying labelled hand-made products.

## DC Doda launches "Bhellessa Meri Jaan" Song celebrating local culture



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
DODA, JANUARY 20

The official launch of the song "Bhellessa Meri Jaan," a beautiful tribute to the culture and beauty of Bhellessa, took place today at the Mini Conference Hall, DC Office Complex Doda. The event was graced by the Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh, District Information Officer Nasir Ahmed Khan and renowned Bollywood personality Raja Sarfaraz Ahmed Batt, director, actor, and writer. Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh expressed immense pride in Doda's cultural diversity

and praised the song as a beautiful reflection of the region's scenic beauty and rich traditions. He highlighted the importance of supporting local artists and urged the youth of Doda to be inspired by such initiatives. "Songs like 'Bhellessa Meri Jaan' bridge the gap between tradition and modernity, preserving our heritage while connecting with a wider audience," he said.

District Information Officer Nasir Ahmed Khan also addressed the gathering, emphasizing the collaboration between local artists, the administration, and media professionals to promote

Doda's unique culture. "This song showcases not only the picturesque landscapes of Bhellessa but also the deep-rooted traditions that define our identity," he remarked. He encouraged everyone to continue supporting local talent and to take pride in preserving their cultural heritage. Raja Sarfaraz Ahmed Batt, who was instrumental in the song's production, lauded the efforts of the administration in bringing local talent into the limelight. He said, "This song not only reflects the beauty of Bhellessa but also celebrates the vibrant spirit

of its people. It is a perfect example of how art can connect generations and bring communities together." He also urged the youth to embrace their cultural roots and stay motivated in their artistic pursuits.

The event was attended by civil society members, media personnel, and artists, all of whom celebrated the launch of the song, which stands as a symbol of Doda's cultural pride. The event concluded with an interactive session where Raja Sarfaraz encouraged budding artists to continue working hard and pursuing their dreams.

## Kishtwar Administration finalises arrangements for R-Day celebration



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
KISHTWAR, JANUARY 20

The Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kishtwar, Pawan Kotwal chaired a meeting today with line departments and other stakeholders in the Conference Hall of the DC Office Complex to finalise arrangements for the upcoming Republic Day 2025 celebrations.

During the meeting, it was confirmed that the main event would take place at Chowgan Kishtwar/Mini Secretariat DC Office Complex, depending on weather conditions, while local celebrations would be organized at the Sub-Division, Block and Tehsil levels.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner instructed district department heads to ensure their attendance, along with their staff, at Republic Day functions at both the district headquarters and at the SDM, Tehsil, and Block levels. Discussions

covered various aspects of the celebration, including flag hoisting, the march-past, cultural programs, seating arrangements, stage setup, venue preparation, and catering for refreshments.

It was also informed that the day would begin with the playing of Shehnai Vadan and special directions were given to concerned officers for Shehnai Vadan.

The Police Authorities were instructed to implement stringent security measures to ensure safety and smooth conduct of the event.

Further, the concerned departments were directed to make provisions for drinking water, power supply, medical facilities, sanitation, transport, and traffic management, illumination of government buildings, deployment of fire tenders, seating arrangements, and the distribution of invitations.

The ADC also reviewed the progress of the vari-

ous committees formed to oversee the arrangements.

Senior officers from civil and police administrations, along with other stakeholders, contributed valuable suggestions to ensure the successful execution of Republic Day celebrations in the district.

The meeting was attended by SSP Kishtwar Javed Iqbal, PO ICDS Rishi Kumar Sharma, CPO Kishtwar Shahnawaz Bali, ACD Kishtwar Phulail Singh, DIO Kishtwar Dr. Kuldeep Kumar, Tehsildar Kishtwar Nirbhay Sharma, AD FCS&CA Kishtwar Shafiq Ali Keen, ALC Kishtwar, EO MC Kishtwar, CAO Kishtwar, CEO Kishtwar, ExEn Jal Shakti, ExEn PWD R&B, ExEnJPDCI Kishtwar, and other district officers, as well as officers from CRPF/CISF, representatives from various departments, educational institutions, and representatives from Power Projects.

## Ex-gratia relief under J&K Road Accident Victim Fund-2022 provided to NoKs of victims at Kupwara

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
KUPWARA, JANUARY 20

Under J&K Road Accident Victim Fund-2022, Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC), Kupwara, M Rouf Rehman today handed over a cheque of Rs.1 lakh as ex-gratia relief to the Next of Kin (NoK) of deceased person who died in a road accident at National Highway Matipora Drugmulla.

The objective of J&K Road Accident Victim Fund 2022 is to provide immediate succor to the dependents/ legal heirs of the persons killed/ injured in road accidents in passenger cum private vehicles.

Earlier last week, the District Level Committee headed by Deputy Commissioner Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan sanctioned the ex-gratia relief in favour of the NoK from Kalaroose who lost their son in a road accident.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner stressed upon the committee members to ensure speedy disposal of the cases relating to death/injury in road accidents so that the dependents are provided compensation under the J&K Road Accident Victim Fund rules.

ARTO Kupwara was present on the occasion.

## DC reviews implementation of PM Vishwakarma Scheme in Poonch District

**JINNEWS SERVICE**  
POONCH, JANUARY 20

Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Vikas Kundal convened a meeting today to assess the implementation of the PM Vishwakarma scheme in the district.

This initiative focuses on providing essential training, modern tools, and market linkages to empower artisans.

During the meeting, General Manager of the District Industries Centre, Khalid Hussain Wafa, provided a comprehensive overview of the scheme, detailing its eligibility criteria, objectives, recognition processes, skilling opportunities, credit support, and marketing assistance available for beneficiaries. The Deputy



Commissioner inquired about the approval status of applications under the Vishwakarma Scheme and urged officers to expedite the processing of applications to ensure timely benefits for the community. He stressed the importance

of prompt action in clearing any outstanding applications across various trades.

The Deputy Commissioner also took the opportunity to meet with beneficiaries, commending them for successfully completing their training sessions in different trades. He encouraged them to leverage the benefits of their training and to motivate more artisans to register for the scheme to maximize its impact.

The meeting was attended by PO ICDS, General Manager DIC, ACR, ACP, LDM, Principal Polytechnic College Poonch, CEO Municipality Poonch, Superintendent ITI Poonch, SKT. BDO Poonch, besides other concerned officers were present.

## DC finalises arrangements for Republic Day celebrations at Doda

**JINNEWS SERVICE**  
DODA, JANUARY 20

Deputy Commissioner of Doda, Harvinder Singh on Monday chaired a meeting here at the DC Office Complex to finalize the arrangements for Republic Day 2025 celebrations.

The meeting was attended by ADDC Pran Singh; ADC Sudershan Kumar; ASP Headquarters Shakeel Ahmed Bhatt; ACR Sunil Bhutyal; ACD Manoj Kumar and other officers.

A virtual session was also conducted with SDMs and Tehsildars to review preparations across Tehsils and Subdivisions. The meeting followed the previous preparatory discussion, focusing on ensuring a seamless and vibrant celebration of the national event.

The main discussions centered on the arrangement of the stage, stage decoration, sanitation around the Sports Stadium and the road leading to the venue.

Additional plans were formulated for the illumination of the town and government buildings with tri-colour lights, playing patriotic songs in vehicles, and security arrangements. The DC



also interacted with the SDMs virtually to review the preparations regarding the celebration.

The discussions revolved around finalizing the venue arrangements at the Sports Stadium, which will host the district-level function.

The Deputy Commissioner reviewed the progress of preparations, including security arrangements with ASP Shakeel Ahmed Bhatt and directed that patriotic songs be played in decorated vehicles across the town to create an atmosphere of national pride.

Key directives were issued to departments for stage construction, drainage upgrades, and the installation of Kota stone at the venue by the PWD.

The Municipal Committee was tasked with beautifying the town and ensuring cleanliness, while the Social Forestry Department was instructed to plant trees at prominent locations to enhance the environment. He urged a plantation drive at Ganpat Bridge, Doda area.

Furthermore, the DC emphasized community participation, directing the ACD to ensure the hoisting of the National Flag at every Panchayat to symbolize inclusivity and patriotism. The PDD was asked to provide an uninterrupted power supply and illuminate key government buildings, bridges, and structures. The cultural segment was a focal point of discussion, with the ADDC directed to

highlight local traditions and programs, including a special showcase of the Holistic Agriculture Development Programme (HADP). The Education and Youth Services Departments were tasked with engaging schools and colleges in the parade and cultural performances. The DC also held detailed discussions with the Social Welfare Officer regarding costumes and other requirements for cultural activities.

The security and logistical arrangements were thoroughly reviewed, with SSP Doda assuring comprehensive security measures, effective traffic management and designated parking zones. Medical teams were directed to remain on standby for emergencies.

Discussions also included the distribution of invitation cards, finalizing the event schedule, and planning the March Past parade. Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh stressed the importance of flawless coordination among all departments to ensure the success of the event and urged officials to work collectively to celebrate Republic Day 2025 with patriotic fervor.

## Director Agriculture Jammu flags off farmers' Training cum Exposure tour to Punjab Agriculture University



**JINNEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JANUARY 20

A group of 55 farmers and entrepreneurs from Jammu, Samba, Kathua and Udhampur Districts was flagged off by Director Agriculture Jammu, S. Arvinder Singh Reen here from the Directorate of Agriculture, Krishi Bhawan on Training cum Exposure visit outside UT. The five-day visit, scheduled from 20th to 24th January 2025, to Punjab Agriculture University (PAU) Ludhiana has been arranged under HADP 2024-25, Project no. 01, Development of Seed and Seed Multiplication Chain.

The Director Agriculture Jammu, while interacting with the farmers, said that the training cum

exposure visit is being organized to acquaint the farmers and entrepreneurs with different aspects of Development of Seed and Seed Multiplication Chain. "Seed multiplication is essential because it ensures that the genetic purity of the seed is maintained as it transitions from breeder to farmer. This process guarantees that the variety performs as expected, enhancing both yield and quality," he maintained.

Director A.S Reen encouraged the farmers and entrepreneurs to actively engage with the scientists and researchers during their visit to PAU Ludhiana. He further asked the farmers to utilize the technology in their fields after learning from such training and

also share it with fellow farmers in their respective communities.

Joint Director Agriculture Extension/SLUB, Satish Sharma stressed the importance of applying the newly acquired skills and technologies in their agricultural practices, which can significantly contribute to improving farm productivity and profitability.

Agriculture Chemist Jammu, Dr. Aman Jyoti Sharma, SMS-RL Dharmesh Vaid, and other officers from the office of the Joint Director Agriculture (Extension) Jammu were present on the occasion. Five officers are also accompanying the farmers for the training cum Exposure Visit to Punjab Agriculture University (PAU) Ludhiana.

## GDC Vijaypur hosts Poetry Recitation to commemorate Republic Day

**JINNEWS SERVICE**  
SAMBA, JANUARY 20

Department of Dogri Government Degree College Vijaypur, in collaboration with Department of Hindi, organised a poetry recitation activity to commemorate 'Republic Day 2025'.

The aim of organizing poetry recitation was to educate students regarding the importance of gaining independence, freedom and the constitution of our country. Republic Day is celebrated as a national event commemorating the adoption of the Constitution of India, and the country's transition to a republic which came into effect on 26 January 1950. Students of Dogri and Hindi participated actively in the event with great enthusiasm, fervor and zeal.

The event commenced with the welcome address by Dr. Manoj Heer (HOD Dogri) delivering an insightful speech, sharing valuable thoughts on Republic Day with the participants. Participating students through their patriotic poems shed light on how the constitution came into effect in 1950 after gaining independence in 1947. Proceedings of the event were also carried out by Dr. Manoj Heer.

The event was conducted under the guidance of Dr. Vandana Gupta, Principal of the College. Speaking on the occasion, she congratulated the organizers for hosting an event highlighting the importance of celebrating the days of National importance.

The event was organized with the full support of the senior faculty members- Prof. Mamta Gupta (HOD Commerce), Dr. Anoop Kumar Bhagat (HOD Sociology) Prof. Ritu Bhagat (HOD Education). The whole event was coordinated by Prof. Poonam Kundan (HOD Environmental Science), Dr. Naseem Chowdhary (NSS PO and HOD English) and Dr. Manoj Heer (HOD Dogri). The event was co-ordinated by Dr. Gunjeet Mahiwal (Lecturer Education), Prof. Sonia Devi (Lecturer Hindi), Dr. Nain Singh (Lecturer Hindi) and Dr. Indu Koul (Lecturer English).

## NCORD meeting reviews drug control measures in Doda

**JINNEWS SERVICE**  
DODA, JANUARY 20

A meeting of the Narco Coordination Centre (NCORD) was held today here at the DC Office Complex, under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Harvinder Singh.

The meeting brought together officials from law enforcement agencies, health departments, and other stakeholders to strategize efforts to combat drug abuse and ensure a drug-free society. The DC emphasized the urgency of combating the menace of drug addiction and outlined a multi-pronged approach to tackle the issue effectively.

The meeting decided to strengthen inter-departmental coordination under the NCORD framework to disrupt drug trafficking networks and reduce the prevalence of drug abuse in the district. Officials were directed to enhance surveillance in



vulnerable areas, intensify checks on drug peddlers, and establish a robust information-sharing mechanism among law enforcement agencies. The DC highlighted the importance of targeted actions against offenders and ensuring the accountability of all stakeholders in the fight against narcotics.

To engage the community, the administration will organize awareness campaigns in schools, colleges, and communities, educating the youth about the dangers of drug addiction. Rehabilitation programs for individuals affected by drug abuse were also prioritized, with a focus on reintegrating them into society through counseling and

skill development. The DC also encouraged active community participation, urging parents, teachers, and local leaders to contribute to preventive measures.

The Deputy Commissioner reiterated that addressing the issue of drug abuse is not just a legal responsibility but also a moral obligation. He called upon all stakeholders to work collectively toward a healthier and safer society, emphasizing that the well-being and future of the youth depend on eliminating the scourge of drugs. This meeting demonstrated the administration's firm resolve to combat drug abuse and create a secure environment for the people of Doda.

## Sakeena Ito reviews performance, functioning of SKIMS, Soura

**JINNEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JANUARY 20

Minister for Health and Medical Education, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Ito, today chaired a meeting at Civil Secretariat to review the performance and functioning of Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), Soura.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Health and Medical Education, Dr. Syed Abid Rasheed Shah, Director SKIMS, Dr. Ashraf Ganai; Director General Budget, Director Finance Health and Medical Education, Medical Superintendent SKIMS and other senior officers of Health and Medical Education department and SKIMS Soura.

Addressing the officers, Sakeena Ito emphasized the critical role of SKIMS in delivering specialized medical care not only to the people of Kash-



mir valley but also to patients from neighbouring regions. She outlined that the contribution of SKIMS is unmatched for society. "SKIMS is the cornerstone of our healthcare system and its performance directly impacts the well-being of thousands of people on regular basis", the Minister stated.

She highlighted the importance of maintaining high standards in patient care, medical education and research at this prestigious institution. "We must work collectively to

ensure that the institute continues to work with its full potential in delivering advanced and quality medicare to our people", Sakeena said.

While reviewing the current state of infrastructure at SKIMS, including inpatient and outpatient facilities, diagnostic centers as well as emergency services, the Minister urged the administration to expedite the works on ongoing projects aimed at modernizing facilities and ensuring patient comfort at the institute. She also asked them for deconges-

tion of emergency ward so that the patients are treated effectively.

Addressing the issue of manpower and staffing shortage, Sakeena Ito asked the Director SKIMS to recruit the necessary paramedics and other medical professionals for key departments on contract basis till regular recruitments are made. She asked the SKIMS administration to maintain due transparency during the entire process of recruitment.

Reviewing the financial and resource allocation of

the institute, Sakeena Ito called upon the SKIMS administration to maintain due transparency and accountability while executing different works. She asked them for timely update of expenditure on BEAMS portal in coordination with the Finance department. During the meeting, Director SKIMS gave a detailed presentation informing the meeting about various interventions being made for improving patient care at this prestigious institution. He informed the meeting that two major achievements will be accomplished by the institute this year with the start of Liver transplant and Neonatal/Paediatric cardiac surgery. He further informed that the institute caters to more than 260 patient admissions on daily basis besides it had more than 80% bed occupancy during the previous year.

## DC Samba inspects progress of work on Bari Brahmana to Ghagwal NHW Stretch

**JINNEWS SERVICE**  
SAMBA, JANUARY 20

Deputy Commissioner Samba Rajesh Sharma conducted a fortnightly inspection of the National Highway stretch from Bari Brahmana to Ghagwal to review ongoing construction works and ensure smooth traffic flow for public convenience. He was accompanied by SDMs, Tehsildars, Traffic Police officials, and officers from the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI).

The DC directed the executing agencies to expedite the pace of work while prioritizing measures to prevent public inconvenience. He stressed the importance of maintaining regular traffic flow during construction activities and instructed the agencies to fill potholes and install



proper signboards at diversions.

During the inspection, the progress of flyover bridge construction at key locations was assessed, and the agencies were asked to adhere to deadlines. The Deputy Commissioner formed Sub-Division level committees led by concerned officers to monitor construction progress and address

issues faced by the public or the construction companies.

The DC reiterated that the administration's primary goal is to ensure that commuters face no inconvenience and traffic movement remains uninterrupted. He urged all stakeholders to work collaboratively for the timely completion of the projects.

# Godawari Electric Motors unveils two new e-scooters and launches an e-auto at Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025, promising segment-specific solutions

## Announces the launch of the 'EbluCare' app to enhance customer convenience

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, JAN 18

Godawari Electric Motors Pvt. Ltd., a leading electric vehicle manufacturer, today unveiled new additions to its product portfolio at the Bharat Mobility Global Show 2025. The company unveiled the Eblu Feo Z, Eblu Feo DX, and launched the Eblu Rozee ECO, in line with the company's continued commitment to sustainable mobility solutions across different segments of the market. The Eblu Rozee ECO is priced at INR 2,95,999/- (ex-showroom).

The new line-up includes two electric scooters and one passenger auto, each designed to address specific market needs. The Eblu Feo Z is engineered as a low-speed scooter ideal for short urban commutes, while the Eblu Feo DX stands out with its superior performance capabilities and extended range of up to 150 km per charge. The Eblu Rozee ECO, a three-wheeler (LSM category), complements the range with its focus on last-mile connectivity and commercial applications.

To improve customer convenience, the com-

pany also announced the release of the EbluCare app. An innovative smartphone app called EbluCare has been designed to managing electric vehicles (EVs) easier. The app provides EV owners with a smooth experience by emphasizing user ease and connectivity. Both the Google Play Store and the iOS App Store will offer the app for download.

Commenting on the development, Mr. Hyder Khan, Director and CEO, Godawari Electric Motors, said, "The unveiling of these three new products marks a significant milestone in our journey towards revolutionizing India's electric mobility landscape. Our R&D team has worked tirelessly to develop vehicles that not only meet the evolving needs of Indian consumers but also align with our nation's sustainability goals. With features like regenerative braking, advanced battery management systems, and superior build quality, these vehicles represent the future of electric mobility in India."

Mr. Khan further added that, the launch of the



EbluCare app underscores our commitment to enhancing customer convenience by providing seamless access to essential services and information at their fingertips."

**Eblu Feo DX: The Next-Gen Ride**

Eblu Feo DX is a premium electric scooter featuring a powerful 5.0 KW peak power motor, delivering a peak torque of 140 Nm. Offering a top speed of 80 kmph and a range of 150 km, the scooter supports an 11-degree gradient. It comes with three driving modes (Economy/Normal/Power), a fully loaded 7-inch TFT screen with

Bluetooth connectivity. The scooter boasts a 28-liter boot space and its 4.2 kW battery can be fully charged in just 3.5 hours using its 60V 20 Amp home charger.

**Eblu Feo Z: Family Vehicle with best-in-class reliability**

Eblu Feo Z is a reliable electric scooter meant for Indian families, featuring a spacious 25-liter boot space. The vehicle features dual LED lighting along with a detachable LMFP Cylindrical battery system (48V/30Ah), offering a range of 80 km per charge. It comes with a comprehensive warranty package of 3 years/30,000 km on the vehicle and an impressive 5 years/50,000 km on the battery.

**Eblu Rozee ECO: A High-Performance Partner**

A robust and value-for-money three-wheeler equipped with a 150 Ah Li-ion battery, Eblu Rozee ECO delivers a range of over 120 km on a single charge. It features a strong steel skeletal frame, hydraulic brakes on all wheels, and comfortable seating for a driver plus three passengers. The vehicle's power-packed

battery of 7.8 kWh gets fully charged in a mere 3.5 hours with its 58.4V 40 Amp charger, ensuring reliable performance in varied conditions.

**EbluCare App Features:**  
**Easy Access:** Log in effortlessly using your registered mobile number or chassis number to access comprehensive vehicle details.

**Ride Tracking & Navigation:** Enjoy real-time ride tracking and turn-by-turn navigation to enhance your driving experience.

**Battery Monitoring:** Stay informed with real-time battery status updates, ensuring you're always prepared for your journey.

**Service Management:** Book service appointments, review your service history, and stay on top of maintenance schedules with ease.

**Timely Notifications:** Receive important alerts and exclusive offers directly in the app, keeping you informed and engaged.

**Product and Warranty Details:** Access detailed product information and warranty coverage at your fingertips.

**Feedback Section:** Share your experiences and suggestions through the app's intuitive feedback feature,

helping us improve your journey.

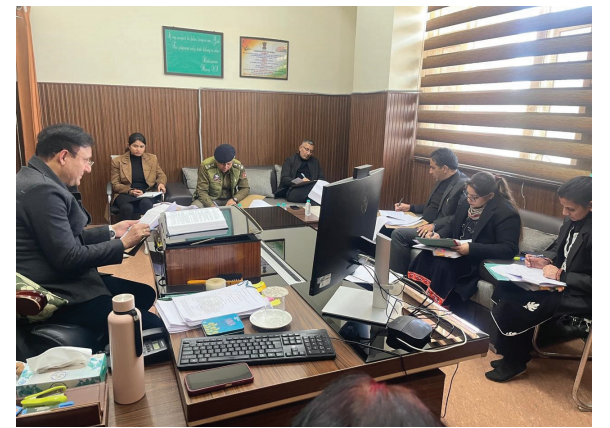
The company, which operates through a network of 83 dealerships across India, has announced plans to launch the e-scooters in the upcoming quarter of 2025. The extensive dealership network ensures strong after-sales support and service accessibility for customers nationwide.

All three products showcase the company's focus on practical features such as spacious storage options, ergonomic design elements, safety and value for money.

About Godawari Electric Motors:

Godawari Electric Motors, the Eblu electric vehicle range maker, is dedicated to empowering millions through self-employment opportunities while significantly reducing the nation's carbon footprint with sophisticated e-mobility technologies. Established in 2022 and headquartered in Raipur, the company promises a clean and pollution-free future by providing a diverse range of electric two- and three-wheelers. For additional information, please visit <https://www.geml.in>

## Chairman DLSA Samba chaired UTRC meeting



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
SAMBA, JAN 20

District Legal Services Authority, Samba as per the directions of National Legal Services Authority conducted first Under-trial Review Committee meeting as per Schedule which was launched by National Legal Services Authority for conducting UTRC meeting for the year 2025. The main objective of launch of this Schedule by NALSA is to enhance the efficacy and impact of the UTRC meetings by establishing a fixed quarterly schedule for UTRC meetings for the year 2025.

The meeting was chaired by Pr. District & Sessions Judge-cum-Chairman DLSA, Samba Sh. Ravinder Nath Wattal, with the members of Under Trial Review Committee (UTRC) Samba.

In the meeting, the Committee reviewed cases of eligible UTPs/Prisoners shortlisted

by the Secretary, DLSA Samba for consideration. The Committee considered 18 cases of UTPs/Prisoners out of which 3 Cases were recommended for release and 1 were recommended to concerned Court for appropriate action.

The meeting was attended by Mr. Sandeep Singh Sen, Secretary District Legal Services Authority, Samba, Mr. Rajesh Sharma, Deputy Commissioner Samba, Mr. G. R. Bhardwaj, Addl. SP on behalf of Senior Superintendent of Police Samba. Besides these, Sh. Veerinder Bhat Sr. Superintendent, Central Jail Kot Bhalwal, Sh. Ram Avtar, Assistant Superintendent on behalf of Superintendent of Jail Kathua and Sh. Harish Kotwal, Superintendent District Jail Amphala, Jammu joined the meeting through Virtual mode and also Legal Aid Defense Counsels attended the meeting.

## FROM THE PAGE 1...

### Trump takes oath...

Usha Vance and some members of the cabinet. Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Amazon's Jeff Bezos, Apple's Tim Cook, Tesla and Space X's Elon Musk, and Google's Sundar Pichai also attended the swearing-in ceremony.

Former President Bill Clinton and his wife Hillary Clinton, former President George W Bush and his wife Laura Bush, and former President Barack Obama minus his wife Michelle Obama attended the oath-taking ceremony as is the tradition, which was broken by President Trump who skipped Biden's inauguration in 2021.

### 2025's first...

The Indian Army's Chinar Corps paid rich tributes to Swr Pangala Kartheek for his "supreme sacrifice". In a post on social media platform X, Chinar Corps said: "All ranks of the Chinar Corps salute the supreme sacrifice of Braveheart Swr Pangala Kartheek, who laid down his life in the line of duty. Chinar Warriors salute his immense valour and sacrifice, express deepest condolences, and stand in solidarity with the bereaved family."

J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha also paid homage to the martyred soldier. "I salute the supreme sacrifice of our Army braveheart Swr Pangala Kartheek. His valour and sacrifice will never be forgotten. The entire nation stands firmly with the family of the martyr in this hour of grief." KNO

### BJP leader and...

Manhas, a former president of the Jammu and Kashmir unit of BJP, was sick for the past nearly six months and breathed his last at his Toph Sherkhani residence in Jammu late this afternoon, BJP's national executive member Ravinder Raina said.

Paying rich tributes to Manhas, Raina said he was a bold voice of Jammu and Kashmir who represented the people in the Rajya Sabha for five years from 2015.

"He was a disciplined soldier of BJP and his death is an irreparable loss to the party and the community," Raina said.

People will always remember his contribution to their welfare, Raina said.

### Ensure functional...

The Court was addressing an appeal filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) against a Jammu trial court order that had called for Malik's physical presence in court for cross-examination in two cases.

These cases involve the killing of four Indian Air Force personnel and the abduction of Rubaiya Sayeed, the daughter of former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mufti Mohammad Sayeed, in 1989. In April 2023, the Supreme Court had stayed the trial court's order, which sought Malik's physical presence in Jammu.

The CBI argued that transporting Malik from Tihar Jail to Jammu posed security risks. Malik has been convicted in a case under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) after pleading guilty to the charges. In a previous hearing, the Supreme Court had suggested setting up a temporary courtroom in Tihar Jail to allow physical cross-examination of Malik, as a fully functional courtroom with VC facilities already exists at the jail. At the current hearing, Solicitor General Tushar

Mehta informed the Court that Malik was refusing to appear via VC. However, the trial judge had reported that the VC system in Jammu was not functioning properly. The Supreme Court ordered an inspection of the VC facilities in both the Jammu court and Tihar Jail, directing the Registrar in charge of IT at the Delhi High Court to ensure that the facilities in Tihar were adequate for the trial. KNO

### J&K Bank reports...

4.08% in the December quarter against 3.95% in the September quarter. Net NPA came at 0.94% against 0.85% quarter-on-quarter. In monetary terms, gross NPA stood at Rs 4,041 crore against Rs 3,916.3 crore quarter-on-quarter, whereas net NPA came at Rs 898 crore against Rs 813.4 crore quarter-on-quarter.

This month, Jammu & Kashmir Bank reported an 8.56% year-on-year increase in total business for the third quarter, reaching Rs 2.37 lakh crore. The bank's total deposits grew by 9.65% year-on-year to Rs 1.41 lakh crore, while gross advances rose 5.89% year-on-year to Rs 99,134 crore.

CASA (current account savings account) deposits recorded a modest 4.39% year-on-year growth, amounting to Rs 67,888 crore. However, the CASA ratio declined to 48.17%, compared to 50.59% a year earlier and 48.6% in the previous quarter. Gross investments saw a robust 26.97% year-on-year rise, totalling Rs 41,394.3 crore. (ANB)

### Inter-ministerial team...

Meanwhile, the Jammu & Kashmir Police have established an 11-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the matter.

Locals expressed dissatisfaction with the government's initial response, accusing authorities of being casual until multiple deaths occurred.

Speaking to KNO, MLA Budhal Javed Iqbal Choudhary said the government initially believed the first death was due to food poisoning and only took the situation seriously after the second fatality.

"Three related families suffered the most as they lost a majority of their members," he said Choudhary said. He assured residents that the government is now fully engaged in the investigation.

The MLA said no new illnesses have been reported in the village, and the situation is under control. He urged locals to remain patient while investigations continue.

The government has pledged to expedite the process and determine the cause of these deaths as quickly as possible. KNO

### 1330 schools in...

President of Private School Association of Jammu and Kashmir (PSAJK) G N Var informed KNO that "In more than 5400 private schools in Jammu and Kashmir, we have a Pupil Teacher Ratio of 1:20. Besides, in every school, we have a minimum of seven teachers in each private school."

On asking about the closure of any private schools owing to low or zero student enrolment, Var said, "Right from the very inception, not even a single private school has remained with zero student enrolment. However, because of government restriction, intimidation and harassment by way of imposing filing of NOCs and other documents, some private schools may have got closed

due to the government restriction."

On Saturday, KNO reported that the updated official figures reveal that in Jammu and Kashmir, at least 119 schools were functioning in the region with no student enrolled in the institution.

The figures have revealed that at least 238 teachers were posted or deployed in the schools wherein no student was enrolled.

It also states that on an average at least seven teachers were posted or deployed in schools of Jammu and Kashmir.

In 2024, KNO first broke the news of closure of over 4400 government run schools owing to 'zero or extremely low' enrollment of students.

In July-2024, the news agency reported that there were a total of 23,117 government run schools in Jammu and Kashmir out of which 4394 have been deleted from the UDISE data. KNO

### Security beefed...

vigilance to ensure incident-free Republic Day celebrations.

Lieutenant Governor Sinha will preside over and take the salute at the main function at M A Stadium in Jammu. Chief Minister Abdullah will be the chief guest at the event.

Deputy Chief Minister Surinder Choudhary and Cabinet ministers Javid Ahmad Dar, Sakina Itto, Satish Sharma, and Javed Rana will take the salute at functions in Srinagar, Baramulla, Anantnag, Kathua, and Udhampur districts, respectively, as per an order issued by the General Administration Department.

In the remaining 14 districts, respective District Development Council (DDC) chairpersons will take the salute at the main functions to be held at the district headquarters.

The security forces have intensified checking of vehicles and pedestrians across several parts of the Jammu region, particularly in border areas, the officials said.

'Nakas' and mobile vehicle checkpoints (MVCP) have been set up at intersections within the city, and its entry and exit points, they added.

Police and CRPF personnel have been deployed in key areas, the officials said.

Security arrangements across the Jammu region have been bolstered, with personnel from the Army, BSF, CRPF, police, and village defence guards (VDGs) maintaining heightened vigilance along the International Border (IB), Line of Control (LoC), and in sensitive hinterland areas of various hilly and border districts.

Patrolling along the IB and LoC by the BSF and Army has been intensified, while border police units and members of VDGs have been activated to prevent any infiltration attempts. (AGENCIES)

### 125 SPs elevated...

Nurboo (JKPS: 1999), Randeep Kumar (JKPS: 1999), Pawan Kumar Parihar (JKPS: 1999), Wasim Qadri (JKPS:2001), Atul Sharma (JKPS:2001), Harmeet Singh Mehta (JKPS:2001), Shiv Deep Singh Jamwal (JKPS:2001), Rohit Baskotra (JKPS:2001), Yougal Kumar (JKPS:2001), Shabir Nawab (JKPS:2001), Manjit Kour (JKPS:2001), Arun Gupta (JKPS:2001), Randhir Singh (JKPS:2001), Virinder Singh (JKPS:2001), Sandeep Kumar Mehta (JKPS:2001), Sheikh Zulfiqar Azad (JKPS:2001), Amit Gupta (JKPS:2001), Mohd Majid Malik (JKPS:2001), Monika Sagar (JKPS:2001), Tahir

Saleem Khan (JKPS:2001), Manzoor Ahmad Mir (JKPS:2001), Javid Iqbal (JKPS:2001), Amarjit Singh (JKPS:2001), Mohd Zaid (JKPS:2001), Ravinder Paul Singh (JKPS:2001), Khali Ahmad Poswal (JKPS:2001), Liaqat Ali (JKPS:2001), Rakesh Kumar (JKPS:2001), Girdhari Lal, (JKPS:2001), Ramesh Chander Kotwal (JKPS:2001), Mohd Rashid (JKPS:2001), Jameel Ahmad (JKPS:2001), Vinay Kumar (JKPS:2001), Javid Ahmad Dar (JKPS:2001), Sunil Raj (JKPS:2001), Sanjay Kumar Bhagat (JKPS:2001), Abdul Hakim Munshi (JKPS:2001), Sukhdev Raj (JKPS:2001), Gh. Jeelani Wani (JKPS:2001), Amit Bhasin (JKPS:2001), Sanjay Singh Rana (JKPS:2001), Abdul Qayoom (JKPS:2001), Shafiq Hussain (JKPS:2001), Rajinder Kumar Katoch (JKPS:2001), Suram Singh (JKPS:2001), Raj Singh (JKPS:2001), Paramvir Singh (JKPS:2001), Manoj Kumar Pandit (JKPS:2001), Dr. S. D. Choudhary (JKPS:2001), Tanveer Jeelani (JKPS:2002), Mohd. Fiesel Qureshi (JKPS:2002), Sanjay Sharma (JKPS:2002), Paramjeet Singh (JKPS:2002), Nasir Ahmed (JKPS:2002), Dushant Sharma (JKPS:2002), Al-Tahir Geelani (JKPS:2002), Kulwant Singh Jasrotia (JKPS:2002), Mohd. Aftab Mir (JKPS:2002), Muneer Ahmed (JKPS:2003) Naresh Singh Jamwal (JKPS:2003), Muzaffar Ahmad Shah (JKPS:2004), Master Popsy (JKPS:2004), Rammish Gupta (JKPS:2004), Sajad Ahmad Shah (JKPS:2004), Azhar Bashir Baba (JKPS:2004), Raja Adil Hamid Ganaie (JKPS:2004), Arif Amin Shah (JKPS:2004), Sajad Khalique Bhat (JKPS:2004), Suresh Kumar (JKPS:2004), Sumir Kotwal (JKPS:2004), Peerzada Naveed (JKPS:2004), Mamta Sharma (JKPS:2004), Shahzad Ahmad Salaria (JKPS:2004), Dawood Ayoub (JKPS:2004), Stenzin Losal (JKPS:2004), Aijaz Ahmad Zargar (JKPS:2004), Perbeet Singh (JKPS:2004), Tahir Ashraf Bhatti (JKPS:2004), Mushtaq Ahmad (JKPS:2004), Farooq Qesor Malik (JKPS:2004), Naresh Singh (JKPS:2004), Surjeet Kumar Bhagat (JKPS:2004), Aftab Ahmed Sheikh (JKPS:2004), Raj Kumar (JKPS:2004), Sheikh Faisal Qayoom (JKPS:2004), Khalid Amin (JKPS:2004), Sanjay Kumar Parihar (JKPS:2004), Mubbasher Hussain (JKPS:2004), Ifroz Ahmad (JKPS:2004), ushim Ahmad (JKPS:2004), Rajinder Singh (JKPS:2004), Arun Kumar (JKPS:2004), Mohd Anwar-ul-Haq (JKPS:2004), Shaheen Wahid (JKPS:2004), Sonam Dechen (JKPS:2004), Masroor Ahmad Mir (JKPS:2004), Mohd Ibrahim (JKPS:2007), Gurmeet Singh (JKPS:2007), Rasheeq Ahmad (JKPS:2007), Zahoor Ahmed Wani (JKPS:2008), Ayaz Ahmad Sheikh (JKPS:2008), Vivek Shekhar Sharma (JKPS:2008), Amran Farooq (JKPS:2008), Bharat Bhushan Sharma (JKPS:2008), Zulafqar Ahmad (JKPS:2008), Vipan Chandran (JKPS:2008), Deepak Digra (JKPS:2008), Rahul Charak (JKPS:2008), Feroz Ahmad (JKPS:2008), Irshad Hussain Rather (JKPS:2008), Shakeel Rehman Bhat (JKPS:2008), Tanweer Ahmad Dar (JKPS:2008) and Safdar Hamid Hassan (JKPS:2008). KNO

### LG takes pledge...

Raj Bhawan and handed over the pledge certificate to the Lieutenant Governor.

Sandeep Jain, President and Monika Jain, General Secretary of Bharatiya Jain Sangathan, J&K were also present.

Earlier, the Lieutenant Governor has expressed his willingness for organ donation during a programme organised by Bharatiya Jain Sansthan, yesterday on 19th January. KNO

## DC Kishtwar reviews security scenario of Hydroelectric Power Projects

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
KISHTWAR, JANUARY 20

Deputy Commissioner Kishtwar Rajesh Kumar Shavan reviewed the security aspects of upcoming hydroelectric power projects in the district, here at a meeting.

The meeting was attended by SSP Javaid Iqbal, senior officials and representatives of hydroelectric project authorities.

The SSP provided an overview of the current security arrangements and assured that adequate deployments are in place to ensure the safety of the projects and personnel.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasised that security and safety of these assets must remain the top priority. He directed all stakeholders to maintain constant vigil and coordination to prevent any untoward incidents and assure that no unauthorised person is



allowed to enter the project sites.

Representatives from the hydroelectric power project authorities also apprised the Deputy Commissioner about various challenges and operational requirements. A detailed discussion was held to address these issues promptly to ensure smooth functioning and project timelines.

The Deputy Commissioner assured full support from the district administration and directed all

concerned departments to resolve all pending issues in a time-bound manner. He said that all vehicles of the projects must have all required documents and not indulge into overloading /overspeed in any manner.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to foster seamless coordination among all stakeholders for the successful execution of these vital projects. The DC said that he will have regular such reviews.

## DC Baramulla convenes meeting of District Tuberculosis Forum

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
BARAMULLA, JANUARY 20

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, today chaired a meeting of the District Tuberculosis (TB) Forum Baramulla to bolster the fight against tuberculosis (TB) and achieve the ambitious goal of its elimination by 2025, as envisaged under the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP).

During the meeting, the DC emphasized the critical need for intensifying awareness campaigns to educate the public about TB, its symptoms, and the importance of timely treatment.

Minga Sherpa highlighted that social stigma surrounding the disease remains a significant barrier



to achieving its eradication, and to address this, he directed the Health Department to launch targeted campaigns across the district, particularly in rural and remote areas.

The DC further stressed the importance of early detection and timely intervention in preventing the spread of TB and called for strengthening diagnostic facilities and ensuring their accessibility at the grassroots level.

He underlined the importance of collaborative efforts in tackling TB

and urged for the involvement of community leaders to play an active role in breaking the stigma associated with the disease and supporting patients throughout their treatment journey.

Minga Sherpa further stressed the importance of ensuring the well-being of TB patients through nutritional and financial support by leveraging the Nikshay Poshan Yojana, which provides financial assistance to TB patients, and stressed the need for its seamless execution.

## Ramban: Woman entrepreneur establishes Rural Business Services Hub by availing HADP

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
RAMBAN, JANUARY 20



The District Administration Ramban, under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, continues its efforts to promote Holistic Agriculture Development Program (HADP) to explore the huge potential of job opportunities for the rural youth in agriculture and allied sector activities.

In a significant development, a Rural Business Services Hub was inaugurated today at Maitra.

The inaugural function was graced by Chairperson District Development Council (DDC) Dr. Shamsad Shan; MLA Ramban, Arjun Singh Raju; Deputy Commissioner, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary; Senior Superintendent of Police, Kulbir Singh; and Assistant Commissioner Revenue, S. Harpal Singh, Chief Agriculture Officer, Ram Gopal Sharma, AGMO Horticulture P&M Raju Zutshi.

The private agro-related facility 'Zaheeda Agro Trading Co', established under HADP and sponsored by the Department of Planning and Marketing (P&M), Jammu and Kashmir Government, is designed to promote rural entrepreneurship. It aims

to provide comprehensive agro-based business and services to the farming community at a single point.

Speaking at the event, the Chairperson and other guests highlighted the importance of such initiatives in empowering rural communities, enhancing farmers' income and advancing holistic agricultural development across the district.

The Chairperson lauded the collaborative efforts of the government and private stakeholders in establishing the hub and encouraged farmers to utilize the services offered effectively.

They also reiterated the commitment of the Government for strengthening the agricultural sector and creating employment opportunities for the youth. The facility is expected to bolster agricultural operations and contribute to the socio-economic development of Ramban's rural areas, marking a crucial step toward a self-reliant farming community. Prominent citizens, officials from the HADP implementing Departments, Farmers and local entrepreneurs also attended the event, showcasing their support for this transformative initiative.

## SDM Zainapora finalises arrangements for Republic Day celebrations

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SHOPIAN, JANUARY 20

Sub Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Zainapora, Jahanger Ahmad today held a meeting to finalize the preparations for Republic Day celebrations at the sub-division headquarters. SDM took review of all required arrangements with stakeholders, and instructed for impactful celebrations in the sub-division.

The venue for the Republic Day celebration will be Govt Saqib Mohi ud



din memorial Degree College Zainapora.

He extended an invitation to citizens to participate in the celebration of this national event at the venue.

The meeting was attended by representatives from all departments and law enforcement agencies, ensuring a coordinated effort to make the event a success.

## DC Poonch visits Sports Stadium to inspect overall arrangements for Republic Day Celebration 2025

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
POONCH, JANUARY 20

Deputy Commissioner Poonch, Vikas Kundal today conducted a detailed inspection of the sports stadium to ensure foolproof arrangements for the Republic Day Celebration function. He was accompanied by SSP Poonch Shafket Hussain, ADC Poonch Tahir Mustafa Malik, besides various executive engineers & district officials.

During the inspection, the Deputy Commissioner assessed critical preparations, including barricading, pavilion decoration, ground leveling, seating arrangements etc. He also observed rehearsals being carried out by school contingents and the Jammu and Kashmir Police (JKP).



Emphasizing the importance of timely arrangements, the Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned executive engineers and officials to

finalize preparations well ahead of the Republic Day celebrations to ensure a smooth and successful event.

## DLC meeting under Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram held at Shopian

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SHOPIAN, JANUARY 20

A District Level Committee (DLC) meeting under the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJKV) was today held at Shopian with an aim to formulate a comprehensive plan under the scheme.

The meeting was chaired by Deputy Commissioner (DC) Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar.

The PMJKV scheme aims to improve the socio-economic conditions of minority communities by providing them with basic amenities like education, health, infrastructure, skill development and employment opportunities for the youth. The committee



discussed various aspects of the scheme, including interventions required in education, health, infrastructure development and skill development sectors in the district.

Model Drug de-addiction centre, Integrated Skilling centre with smart classrooms for men and women, Smart Boards for Classrooms, Augmentation of Sports Fields, Mobile Medical Facility on Mughal Road, establishment of Health Centres, Gym cum Yoga cum Wellness Centres among

other development interventions were some of the projects approved to be incorporated in the Plan under preparation.

During the meeting, the DC further instructed for sector wise, comprehensive plan formulation under the scheme for holistic development of the socio-economic parameters of the district.

The meeting was attended by various district officers of the departments and representatives of NGOs working in the district.

## DC Srinagar chairs DLIC meeting



**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 20

A meeting of District Level Implementation Committee on Mission Youth schemes was Monday convened under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr. Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat to review the execution of Mission Youth schemes including Mumkin, Tejaswini and Spurring Entrepreneurship Initiative (SEI) in the District. During the meeting, a total of 34 cases were approved under various Mission Youth schemes including 16 cases under SEI scheme, 14 cases under Mumkin scheme and 04 cases under Tejaswini scheme to provide self-employment to aspiring entrepreneurs.

The Divisional Commissioner further directed to hand over the projects to the concerned authorities for its operations. The Div Com also took stock of the progress made in the development of Transport Nagar Jammu and directed to expedite the work. He issued instructions to the concerned officials of the executing agency for completing all the works at the earliest while ensuring the quality standards.

district to go an extra mile and show empathy towards the unemployed youth in guiding them towards the path of prosperity and self-sufficiency through various Government sponsored self-employment schemes tailored in accordance to their entrepreneurial aspirations.

Speaking on the occasion, the DC/Chairman DLIC highlighted the importance of these self-employment initiatives in fostering youth empowerment within the district. He stressed on giving wide publicity to these schemes so that maximum unemployed youth can avail benefits.

The Chairman DLIC impressed upon all the stakeholders to create an enabling environment through Government sponsored schemes, where youth can think beyond Government jobs and opt for gainful self-employment.

While expressing his displeasure over poor performance of certain banks by rejecting the cases approved by DLIC, the DC advised the banks operating in

## Nikshay Poshan Yojana: DC Srinagar hands-over Rs 2.31 Lakh Cheque for nutritional support to TB patients

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 20

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar/ Chairman District Red Cross Society, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din Bhat Monday handed over a cheque amounting Rs 2.31 lakh from the Red Cross Society to the Chief Medical Officer Srinagar here in his Office chamber for providing nutritional support to Tuberculosis (TB) patients aiding in their faster recovery under the Nikshay Poshan Yojana.

## Div Com Jammu reviews progress of work on JMRDA projects

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JANUARY 20

Divisional Commissioner Jammu, who is also Additional Chief Executive Officer Jammu Metropolitan Region Development Authority, Ramesh Kumar on Monday reviewed the progress of the works/projects being executed in Jammu, Samba and Kathua districts.

Deputy Commissioners Samba and Kathua, Vice Chairman Jammu Devel-

opment Authority, Chief Engineer, SE and Xens of PWD (R&B) attended the meeting. The Div Com took appraisal of the current status of the projects coming up in Vijaypur, Hiranagar and Transport Nagar Jammu.

It was informed that the final work of the projects, wherever remaining, shall be completed by March 15, 2025. The Divisional Commissioner directed the concerned officials to maintain quality standards in the exe-

cutation of the overall works. The Divisional Commissioner further directed to hand over the projects to the concerned authorities for its operations. The Div Com also took stock of the progress made in the development of Transport Nagar Jammu and directed to expedite the work. He issued instructions to the concerned officials of the executing agency for completing all the works at the earliest while ensuring the quality standards.

**IN THE COURT OF AUTHORIZED OFFICER, JAMMU FOREST DIVISION**  
**JAMMU**

In the Matter of :- UT of J&K Through Range Officer, Jammu  
V/s  
1. Naresh Kumar S/o Suraj Mani R/o Showa Ranjan.  
2. Amanat Ali S/o Sh. Jamaal Din R/o Khui Pangali.  
3. Mohd Latif S/o Mohd Gafoor R/o Showa Ranjan.

And  
In the Matter Of:- Confiscation proceedings of seized Mahindra Bolero bearing registration no. JK11A-5262 alongwith 24 numbers of illicit felled Khairwood billets.

**ORDER**  
**DATED: 04.01.2025**

Whereas, on 04.01.2025, the applicant, Sh. Surinder Singh Chib, Range Officer Jammu, and the concerned field staff were present in court; however, the non-applicants failed to appear.

In the interest of justice, another opportunity is granted to the non-applicants to be heard and show cause as to why the aforesaid seized vehicle, along with the Khairwood, should not be confiscated. Accordingly, the non-applicants are directed to appear in person or through an authorized counsel on 25.01.2025 before the Court of the Authorized Officer, along with any documentary evidence, if available, pertaining to this case.

Failure to appear will result in the case being decided on its merits. Furthermore, on this date, both parties will have the right to cross-examine each other.

No:AO/JFD/ 4088-91  
Dt: 17.01.2025

(Authorised Officer)  
Divisional Forest Officer  
Jammu Forest Division  
Jammu

DIP/J-9354/24  
Date: 20-1-24

## EDITORIAL

## J&amp;K Congress at crossroads

The Congress party finds itself at a critical juncture in Jammu and Kashmir's political landscape, as internal dissent mounts over its alliance with the National Conference (NC). The decision to enter into a pre-poll alliance with the NC ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections was a calculated gamble. By sidelining the People's Democratic Party (PDP) despite its inclusion in the INDIA bloc, Congress sought to maximize its electoral fortunes in collaboration with the NC. However, the results have been less than promising, and now, the alliance's future hangs in the balance. During his recent visit to New Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee (JKPCC) chief Tariq Hameed Karra conveyed to the party high command the growing sentiment among Congress leaders to sever ties with the NC. There have been reports indicating widespread dissatisfaction within the party, fueled by accusations of betrayal and undermining by the NC during the Assembly elections. Notably, former JKPCC president Vikar Rasool Wani has been vocal about ending the coalition, citing incidents where NC fielded proxy candidates and disrupted Congress's prospects in its strongholds. The electoral outcomes speak volumes. While the alliance enabled Congress to win six seats in the 2024 Assembly elections, it failed to secure even a single seat in the Lok Sabha elections. Meanwhile, the NC, after securing 42 Assembly seats, bypassed Congress to form a majority government with the support of Independent MLAs. Such moves have left Congress leaders feeling sidelined and disillusioned. The regions of Chenab and the border districts, traditionally Congress bastions, have particularly borne the brunt of this strained partnership. In places like Thanamandi and Surankote, rebel NC candidates defeated Congress nominees, further fueling resentment. For many Congress leaders, this alliance has come at a steep cost, eroding the party's credibility and diminishing its electoral prospects. However, the decision to end the alliance is not one to be taken lightly. The Congress high command is rightly cautious, recognizing the complexity of the political terrain in Jammu and Kashmir. The region's unique dynamics demand a careful weighing of all pros and cons before making any move that could have far-reaching consequences for both the party and the state's political future. While some argue that severing ties with the NC could provide Congress with the opportunity to rebuild its base and reclaim its identity, others fear that going solo might weaken its standing in the short term. The high command's decision, expected after the Delhi Assembly polls, will have significant implications not just for the party's trajectory in Jammu and Kashmir but also for the broader coalition politics within the INDIA bloc. At its core, the situation underscores the fragile nature of political alliances in a region as volatile and politically sensitive as Jammu and Kashmir. It also highlights the challenges Congress faces in balancing local aspirations with national strategies. As the party deliberates its next steps, it must prioritize strengthening its grassroots presence and restoring the trust of its cadre and voters. Only then can Congress hope to navigate this crossroads and reclaim its relevance in the region's complex political matrix.

## LPG subsidies: Give it to the poor and needy

UTTAM GUPTA

During the current financial year (FY) 2024-25, the state-owned Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) are expected to incur an under-recovery of Rs 19,550 crore, Rs 10,400 crore and Rs 10,570 crore respectively on sales of LPG to household consumers. To make up for this loss totalling Rs 40,500 crore, the Union Government is likely to provide a subsidy of Rs 35,000 crore. In the Budget for 2025-26, to be presented on February 1, 2025, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will make a provision of Rs 10,000 crore in the revised estimate (RE) for the current FY and the remaining Rs 25,000 crore in the budget estimate (BE) for 2025-26.

The under-recovery arose because these corporations sold LPG for Rs 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder against the cost of supplying at the retail point being higher. The cost is calculated as the refinery-gate price or RGP (taken as import parity price or IPP and export parity price or EPP in the ratio of 80:20) plus freight, marketing costs, marketing margin, dealers' commission, and taxes and duties. During the current FY, the cost is Rs 1043 per cylinder, and the loss is Rs 240 per cylinder which on total sales of 169 crore cylinders would be Rs 40,500 crore. Modi

government had stopped giving subsidies on LPG during FY 2021-22. Then, how come, it continues to make huge payments from the budget? LPG is an environment and human-friendly fuel that meets the needs of millions of households (HHs).

Subsidy on LPG ought to be given only to those HHs who are poor. The government also needs to track the income status of the beneficiaries and withdraw support from those who become better off and can pay cost-based prices. Ignoring these cardinal principles, the subsidy was given to anyone who had an LPG connection. It went to all and sundry including the rich. The poor who alone should have got it sat at the bottom. According to the Economic Survey (2015-16), only 0.07 per cent of LPG subsidies in rural areas went to a fifth of the poorest households. In urban areas, the poorest fifth got only 8.2 per cent.

A lot of subsidies went to fake beneficiaries or the diversion of stocks (albeit subsidised) of LPG cylinders to hotels, restaurants, and other commercial users. Despite lacking sound justification, sheer populism drove politicians to give subsidies to all and sundry. They found ways to give it without taking the burden on the Centre's balance sheet. Initially, the subsidy on LPG (besides petrol and diesel) was cross-funded/subsidised by charging more on the sale of other products such as fuel oil, naphtha, ATF,



etc. hence, no burden on the budget. In 2002-03, the Vajpayee-led NDA government ended the above system and decided to give subsidies on these products directly from the budget with the intent to eventually disband them. But, that was not to be.

The UPA government which took charge in 2004, even while continuing with subsidised sales, used disingenuous methods such as the issue of oil bonds to IOCL/BPCL/HPCL (instead of losses incurred by them due to selling these products at below-cost prices), and sale of domestic crude oil by stated owned upstream oil and gas companies viz. Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Oil India Limited (OIL), etc. at a discounted price to these fuel refiners-cum-retailers.

In June 2010, petrol was decontrolled followed by diesel in November 2014. As for LPG, the Kelkar Committee recommended the removal of 25 per cent of the subsidy in 2012-13 and 75 per cent in the following two years.

Modi Government which took charge in May 2014, started acting on it but in a calibrated manner. On January 1, 2015, it launched a direct benefit transfer (DBT) of subsidy. Under DBT, oil PSUs deliver the cylinder to the beneficiaries at a full cost-based price and follow it up by depositing a subsidy in the beneficiary's account.

In turn, they claim reimbursement of the subsidy amount from the Centre. This helped in eliminating fake beneficiaries and curbing misuse that was inherent in the erstwhile system wherein subsidy was embedded in the price. But, the government couldn't muster the courage to trim the number of beneficiary HHs sans Modi requesting the rich to give up on their own.

The FY 2020-21 was a boon, viewed from a subsidy angle. In that year, there was a steep decline in international prices (due to the COVID-19 pandemic) leading to a fall in the cost of supplying an LPG cylinder to a low of Rs 600; hence, it could be

given to all HHs at Rs 600 requiring no subsidy support. The BE of Rs 36,000 crore for that year was used largely to clear past dues of oil PSUs and provide free gas connections under the Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY). During 2021-22 when the international price rose due to waning COVID and demand revival, the cost of LPG zoomed to over Rs 900 per cylinder.

This prompted the government to give subsidies but only to the PMUY beneficiaries. They were 9.6 crore out of a total of 33 crore HHs. It spent Rs 14,000 crore during that year. During 2022-23, it spent Rs 9,170 crore. But, this doesn't tell the full story. From June 2020 to June 2022, the government had asked the three fuel retailers namely IOCL/BPCL/HPCL to sell LPG at a price below cost and gave them a one-time grant of Rs 22,000 crore to compensate for the losses incurred in 2021-22 and 2022-23 (against under-recovery of Rs 28,250 crore).

This was nothing but subsidy (albeit 'hidden') given to all and sundry, and not just PMUY beneficiaries. In the Budget for 2023-24, it kept the BE for LPG subsidy at Rs 2,257 crore. As in the previous two years, that allocation was meant to cover subsidy to PMUY beneficiary HHs @ Rs 200 per cylinder for up to 12 refills per year. However, to benefit all the 33 crore HHs, on August 29, 2023, the Union Cabi-

net approved a reduction in the price by Rs 200 per cylinder effective from August 30, 2023, thereby enabling the PSU retailers to sell it at Rs 903 per cylinder (Delhi). Taking 4 fills per HH, @Rs 200 per cylinder, the annual burden comes to Rs 26,400 crore (200x4x33).

Since the decision was effective from August 30, 2023, for the remaining seven months of FY 2023-24, the outgo would be around Rs 15,300 crore. On March 9, 2024, the fuel retailers namely IOCL/BPCL/HPCL were asked to cut the price by another Rs 100 per cylinder (courtesy, of general elections) to Rs 803.

During the current FY 2024-25, the price has remained unchanged despite the cost remaining at an elevated level. The under-recovery for 2023-24 and 2024-25 thus comes to over Rs 40,000 crore of which the Centre now wants to reimburse Rs 35,000 crore. This and the earlier payment of Rs 22,000 crore for loss incurred by IOCL/BPCL/HPCL during 2021-22 and 2022-23 could have been avoided if only it had stuck to its earlier stance of restricting LPG subsidy only to the poor HHs and keeping it transparent. But, this is unthinkable in the current political climate wherein all decisions based on sound economic logic are hamstrung by populism.

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

## A Reunion of Hearts, Minds and the Divine

RAVI VALLURI

Three decades ago, we were perhaps merely a group of motley friends and acquaintances. We were a bunch of strapping youngsters and petite women who had flowered from their teens, all tutees in an estimable institution. Three decades back we professed and cherished a heterogeneity of political ideologies spanning the left, right and center spectrums, in an era of a controlled economy and what also was the pre-globalisation era. This was a generation ago. Meanwhile, the Soviet economy crumbled and disintegrated, the Berlin Wall collapsed and diverse countries

swiftly embraced consumerism and capitalism. A talismanic Zuckerberg bought a contrivance called WhatsApp from Jan Koum. All the technology and gadgets have provided seamless connectivity and people across the globe have been moored, and so it was with us. In a trice, we were all trussed up through WhatsApp.

A few months of endless chatting on WhatsApp resulted in a clarion call for a reunion. This was followed by frenetic preparations and a homecoming took place at the opulent Rajputana Sheraton, Jaipur. The assembly and the bonding were indeed amazing. For three days and four nights we were to shed our past baggage and live

another life. The friends of yesteryears conducted themselves as a group of children rediscovering their roots. This is purely a physical pining. The geometry and architecture of the human mind are unmindful, unsuspecting and unaware of the exalted, elevated and lofty state it is capable of. This is the pining and longing for the Divine. The same longing that Radha Arjuna or Sudama possessed for Lord Krishna. This is true of all religions, faiths and spiritual masters. Like Yusuf, Dawud, Sulayman, and Ibrahim beckoned Allah. Akin to what the apostles, and more recently, Saint Teresa felt for Jesus or Ananda for Buddha. This is divine love without any

attachments and entanglements. This is not an emotion of craving but that of five Es. What are these five Es? The devotee, seeker and devout are subsumed with exhilaration, ecstasy, euphoria, elation, exultation and ebullience. This is the authentic and genuine pining for the Divine. It is a meditative state in which the seeker or the disciple basks in the glory of the Master and utters his name with the doctrine of the three Cs: credence, confidence, and conviction.

Yes, the enlightened Buddha does say nothing is permanent in life, and impermanence is the only constant factor. However, the heart and mind aching for the

Divine is voracious. It transcends all boundaries and frontiers. Feelings and emotions encompass the human mind with constructive and efficacious thoughts, where it becomes intrepid to scale and surmount any misadventure. To elaborate further, Gurudev Sri Sri Ravi Shankar poses a teaser, "Do we give quality time to the Divine?" He goes on to add, that we do that only after partying hard, watching some tantalizing movies and entertaining guests. The remainder or balance of our time is set aside by the mind to pine for the Divine. The universe thus showers upon us only that quantum of benediction and bounty, depending upon our tapas or the tractive

effort of the mind. However, through methodical and punctilious practice of techniques like yoga, pranayama, meditation and the unique rhythmic breathing technique of Sudarshan Kriya, the mind can achieve the state of continuous communion with the Divine by remaining in the present moment. So, what happened to the group that met after thirty years? They are in abiding and sustained touch. Perhaps a dash of spiritual sparkle is required to cement the bonding from within and without.

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

## The silent epidemic: The untold story of gender inequality against men in India

KAJLEEN KAUR

Indian society has always been dominated by patriarchy and gender inequality against women. However, the two recent suicides of a techie and a head constable, both alleging extortion and harassment by their estranged wives and families, point to a highly skewed, female-oriented and obsolete legal framework. Gender inequality largely remains a half-told story, deprived of the male counterpart.

The legal system in India favours women with the dowry laws in India being specifically highly discriminatory. As per section 113B of the Indian Evidence Act, 1872 (now Bhartiya Saksham Adhyan, 2023) if a married woman commits suicide within 7 years of marriage, it is assumed that the husband or his family abetted

suicide, while the same does not apply to women. Marriage litigation experts claim that when women file complaints against their husbands and families, the dynamics of abuse and unclear documentation frequently make these cases highly complex and a woman's statement is usually considered at face value, creating a significant imbalance in the legal process.

Additionally, females also get a preference in the custody of children especially in younger ages below 5 years, in most divorce cases, as per the Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act, 1956. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) 2022 data, men accounted for 1,22,724 suicides out of a total of 1,70,896.

This is 71.81 per cent of all suicides. The data also highlights that a man commits suicide every 4.45



minutes while a woman every 9 minutes. Moreover, the rate of suicide among married men is three times that of married women. In 2021 as many as 81,063 married men committed suicide while

the women's figure stood at 28,660.

Family problems and marriage-related issues were the leading causes of suicide in metropolitan cities, accounting for 32.5 per cent of the cases.

Gender inequality towards men finds limited discussions both culturally and in academic research, not just in India but globally. However, a closer look at the facts reveals a biased feminist societal structure

predominantly.

According to the founder of a Delhi-based organisation, Purush Ayog, society stereotypes assume that 'males cannot be victims', which leads to ignorance and neglect of the

issues facing them. A study by Stoet and Geary, 2019 for 134 countries claimed that men were more disadvantaged in 91 (68 per cent) countries than women. They argued that the Global Gender Gap was flawed, due to lopsided measuring techniques, which did not include situations where men are disadvantaged, due to the absence of literature.

Another study in France found that discrimination against men in female-dominated workplaces is more prevalent than discrimination against women in male-dominated workplaces. Similar examples of reverse sexism, with anti-male prejudice are vastly prevalent, but ironically barely quoted.

The mental health research is also focussed on women, and scholars warn of the problems faced by men as a 'silent epidemic'. In the legal

framework, the female culprits are less likely to have longer and more stringent imprisonment for similar crimes.

Women's liberalisation and empowerment are necessary for a progressive social structure and developed economy. Still, a gender-equal status should not be thrived at the cost of male exploitation.

In modern-day society, with evolving gender roles and relationships; better education and awareness; and a feminism gaining force, balanced matrimonial laws are more pertinent than ever. The government must consider amending marriage laws to include prenuptial agreements to address financial complexities, disputes, and legal rights.

(The author is assistant professor at Sri Guru Gobind Singh College of Commerce, University of Delhi; views are personal)

# Ex-CPFWA urges Govt to redress long-standing grievances of Central Paramilitary Forces

J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JAN 20

Ex-Central Paramilitary Forces Welfare Association, Jammu and Kashmir Unit urged the Central Government to redress the long-standing grievances and demands of Central Paramilitary Forces on priority.

Addressing a press conference here today, V.K. Sharma (Retd. DIG) and Harinder Mahajan highlighted the ongoing issues faced by CPMF personnel, including disparities in their treatment compared to the Army.

"One of the major points raised during the conference was the discrimination faced by CPMF personnel since 2014, particularly with respect to their rights and benefits.

"The CPMF personnel have not been granted One Rank One Pension (OROP), a benefit that was extend-

ed to the Indian Army, despite serving in similar high-risk conditions and facing similar challenges," they said adding that unlike their counterparts in the Indian Army, CPMF personnel have not received adequate pension hikes, further deepening the disparity in their financial treatment after retirement.

They expressed concerns over the lack of comprehensive medical facilities for CPMF personnel.

While the Indian Army enjoys robust medical support, paramilitary forces are not provided with the same level of care, they said.

Raising the issue of Martyr's status, they said, CPMF personnel who lose their lives in the line of duty do not receive the same recognition and benefits as soldiers of the Indian Army, which the association feels is unfair

and Kashmir, Chhattisgarh, and the North-Eastern states are among the areas where CPMF personnel are most active, yet their services are often overlooked, they said.

V.K. Sharma, while addressing the press, emphasized that since 2014, the central government has treated CPMF



personnel in a "step-motherly" manner. Despite their tireless work, including maintaining security in sensitive regions, CPMF forces continue to be deprived of the benefits that their counterparts in the Indian Army receive, he said.

In addition to highlighting their own grievances, personnel in a "step-motherly" manner. Despite their tireless work, including maintaining security in sensitive regions, CPMF forces continue to be deprived of the benefits that their counterparts in the Indian Army receive, he said.

personnel in a "step-motherly" manner. Despite their tireless work, including maintaining security in sensitive regions, CPMF forces continue to be deprived of the benefits that their counterparts in the Indian Army receive, he said.

In addition to highlighting their own grievances,

personnel in a "step-motherly" manner. Despite their tireless work, including maintaining security in sensitive regions, CPMF forces continue to be deprived of the benefits that their counterparts in the Indian Army receive, he said.

In addition to highlighting their own grievances,

CPMF representatives expressed deep respect for the farmers who have been fighting for their rights for a prolonged period.

The association criticized the government for not addressing the genuine demands of farmers and acknowledged the ongoing struggles of the farming community.

The CPMF leadership also criticized the higher officials within the CPMF for their lack of responsiveness to the concerns of personnel. The association pointed out that none of the Directors General (DGs) of paramilitary forces have expressed favourable responses to the issues raised by their respective departments.

Furthermore, the association expressed disappointment that Members of Parliament (MPs) from Jammu and Kashmir (UT), including Jugal Kishore Sharma and Dr. Jitendra

Singh (MOS PMO), have not yet raised the issues of CPMF personnel in Parliament. Despite several appeals, no concrete actions have been taken to address the grievances of the forces, they said.

The association urged local Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in Jammu and Kashmir to raise these critical issues in the legislative sessions and seek resolutions from the government.

V.K. Sharma warmly welcomed the setting up of the 8th Pay Commission by the central government, but strongly requested that an active member from the CPMF be included in the commission to ensure that their grievances are heard and addressed.

He also appealed to retired personnel working under various organizations to actively engage with the 8th Pay Commission for the welfare of their

colleagues.

In the first week of February 2025, a delegation from the Ex-Central Paramilitary Forces Welfare Association (J&K UT) will meet Chief Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Omar Abdullah, to present the problems faced by CPMF personnel, he said.

The delegation will be led by Harinder Mahajan, under the guidance of V.K. Sharma. The association hopes that this meeting will lead to a productive dialogue and a resolution to the long-standing issues.

The members of the Ex-Central Paramilitary Forces Welfare Association (J&K UT) are part of the delegation include DK Chauhan General Secretary, CPMF, Harbans Lal Sharma - Vice President, Noor Muhammad - President, District Samba, Surjeet Singh, Naresh Maini, Kirtan Singh and Gurdeep Singh

## Bharti Airtel and Bajaj Finance enter into a strategic partnership to create one of India's Largest Digital Platforms for Financial Services

J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JAN 20

Bharti Airtel, one of India's largest telecom services providers and Bajaj Finance, the country's largest private-sector Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC), today announced a strategic partnership to create one of India's largest digital platforms for financial services and transform last mile delivery.

The one-of-a-kind partnership brings together Airtel's highly engaged customer base of 370 million, 12 lakh+ strong distribution network, and Bajaj Finance's diversified suite of 27 product lines, and distribution heft of 5,000+ branches and 70,000 field agents.

Airtel will initially offer Bajaj Finance's retail finan-

cial products on its Airtel Thanks App for seamless and secure customer experience, and later through its nation-wide network of stores. The combined strength of the companies' digital assets will enable Airtel and Bajaj Finance to significantly deepen penetration of financial products and services.

Gopal Vittal, Vice Chairman and MD, Bharti Airtel, said, "Airtel and Bajaj Finance, two trusted names in this country, have the shared vision of empowering millions of Indians with a diverse portfolio of financial needs. The combined reach, scale and distribution strength of the two companies will serve as the cornerstone of this partnership and help us succeed in the marketplace. We are building Airtel Finance as a strate-



gic asset for the group and will continue to invest in and grow the business. Today, we are trusted by over 1 million customers and our vision is to make Airtel Finance a one-stop shop for all the financial needs of our customers."

Rajeev Jain, Managing Director, Bajaj Finance, said, "India's digital ecosystem has been at the heart of data-driven credit underwriting and financial inclusion. Our partnership with Airtel not only leverages India's digital infrastructure for

inclusive growth but also brings together the expertise and reach of two of India's leading and most-trusted brands. Together with Airtel, we seek to be the financier of choice to India and enable millions to access financial services, even in remote areas. We are excited to join hands with Airtel at a time when Bajaj Finance is harnessing the power of AI to enhance efficiencies and elevate customer experiences."

So far, two products of Bajaj Finance have been piloted on the Airtel

Thanks App. By March, four products of Bajaj Finance will be available to customers on the Airtel Thanks App. These include Gold Loan, Business Loan, a co-branded Insta EMI Card and Personal Loan. Airtel will progressively offer close to 10 financial products of Bajaj Finance within this calendar year.

Airtel customers have the opportunity to apply for the Airtel-Bajaj Finserv Insta EMI card via the Airtel Thanks App and later through its nationwide network of stores. Airtel-Bajaj Finserv EMI

card provides access to a range of offers available to Bajaj Finance customers. Users will benefit from flexible EMI options and payment plans for purchasing various goods, including electronics, furniture and groceries at over 1.5 lakh partner stores across more than 4,000 cities. Additionally, the co-branded card is applicable for e-commerce transactions on multiple platforms. The Airtel Thanks App now also enables customers to secure a gold loan, empowering new-to-credit customers to access finance and integrate with the formal financial system. As part of the partnership, both companies are committed to strong regulatory compliance, data privacy and security, and seamless customer service.

## JMC Commissioner hands over Dogri version PM SVANidhi plates to street vendors



J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JANUARY 20

Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation, Dr. Devansh Yadav today handed over Dogri version PM SVANidhi plates to the street vendors of Gandhi Nagar and Jewel areas at a function held here.

Addressing the gathering, the Commissioner said that PM SVANidhi is a special micro-credit facility launched by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs under Atma Nirbhar Bharat initiative. He asked the Street vendors to come forward and avail the benefits of the scheme which would go a long way in ameliorating their livelihood.

The scheme was launched with the aim to provide financial support to the street vendors through working capital loans, incentivize regular repayment, and to promote digital transaction, the Commissioner said and

assured that the welfare of street vendors would be the top priority.

The Commissioner urged upon vendors not to keep their rehries on footpaths and roads, as this causes inconvenience to pedestrians and contributes to traffic congestion. He encouraged them to install their rehries at designated places within the Municipal jurisdiction to maintain a smooth flow of traffic and public convenience. Earlier, the Commissioner conducted an extensive tour of Gandhi Nagar area to take stock of the pace of developmental activities being carried out in the area. He also visited the Apsara Road and took stock of the parking arrangements put in place there by the JMC.

Among others, Joint Commissioner, (R&E), Deputy Commissioner (South) Lal Chand and other senior officers were also present on the occasion.

## NCC cadets are India's assets, they should strive to realise vision of Viksit Bharat: Raksha Mantri

J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JAN 20

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh has exhorted NCC cadets to strive hard to realise Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of Viksit Bharat by 2047, describing them as the assets of India. Addressing the cadets during his visit to the NCC Republic Day Camp at Delhi Cantt on January 20, 2025, Raksha Mantri stated that the cadets, irrespective of the fields they work in, contribute to nation building through the qualities of 'leadership', 'discipline', 'ambition' and 'patriotism' harnessed in them by NCC. "Prime Minister Modi has taken a pledge to make India a developed country by 2047. He has been an NCC cadet himself. So, if an ex-NCC cadet has seen a dream, it becomes the biggest responsibility of all other cadets to fulfill it. Viksit Bharat does not mean development of a piece of land; it means the progress of 140 crore Indians

who live in unison despite social and cultural diversity. Along with ourselves, we must do something good for society, and soon India will become a developed nation," said Shri Rajnath Singh. Raksha Mantri commended the cadets for their commitment, discipline and love for the nation. He emphasised that what India has been able to achieve as a country is due to the hard work of everyone, especially the youth. "Whenever I meet NCC cadets, I don't just see a cadet in them. I see the reflection of India, which has many bodies but one soul, many branches but one root, many rays but one light. These cadets hail from different regions, speak different languages and follow different customs & traditions, but the one thing which is common in them is 'unity'. Their energy and enthusiasm is proof that India's future is bright," he added.

Shri Rajnath Singh added that many countries became independent



around the same time when India attained freedom. "Only those nations which held on to the values of discipline, integrity & national unity are developing today, while those who did not are in chaos," he said, appreciating NCC for harnessing these qualities that are essential to every individual.

Explaining the true meaning of leadership to the cadets, Raksha Mantri cited Major Sandeep Unnikrishnan's heroic sacrifice during the 26/11 Mumbai attacks which continues to inspire the nation. "Major Unnikrishnan's words to his team 'Don't come here, I will handle them' were not only a testament to his winning attitude & charitable nature,

but also his ability to lead from the front. Such extraordinary moments make an ordinary person a leader. NCC harnesses these qualities," he said. Rajnath Singh called upon the cadets to never stop learning as circumstances keep changing, demanding a new approach and new skill-set each time. He underscored the importance of moulding oneself to the changing times as new problems cannot be solved with an old approach or old skill-set. Keeping the future in mind, skill development should also be the priority, he said. Raksha Mantri urged the cadets to face every challenge with confidence and without the fear of failure, stating that the 'never give up' attitude

is the key to success.

Raksha Mantri concluded his speech by encouraging the cadets to dream big, know their true character and mettle and work diligently to achieve them. Quoting from the famous poem of the former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, 'I', he motivated the cadets to always stay humble and optimistic.

As part of the event, Shri Rajnath Singh reviewed an impressive 'Guard of Honour' by the cadets drawn from all the three wings of NCC. The event also included the 'Investiture Ceremony' where the cadets were awarded with the Raksha Mantri Padak and Commendation Cards for their outstanding performance & dedication to duty. This year, the Raksha Mantri Padak was conferred upon Under Officer Theja VP of Kerala & Lakshadweep Directorate and Senior Under Officer Aryamitra Nath of North Eastern Region Directorate.

The Commendation Cards were presented to

Cadet Dontara Greeshma Andhra Pradesh & Telangana Directorate, Junior Under Officer Abida Afreeen of Jammu Kashmir & Ladakh Directorate, Sergeant Manan Sharma of Maharashtra Directorate and Sergeant Rahul Baghel of Madhya Pradesh & Chhattisgarh Directorate.

The ceremony was followed by an exceptional band display by the NCC cadets of Mizo High School, Aizawl. Raksha Mantri also visited the 'Flag Area' where the cadets from all 17 Directorates showcased vibrant displays on various social issues. In addition, he witnessed the 'Idea & Innovation' display where he was briefed by cadets on the various ingenious projects undertaken by the cadets. Thereafter, Shri Rajnath Singh visited the Pratap Hall for the cultural performances presented by the NCC cadets. DG NCC Lt Gen Gurbirpal Singh and other senior officials of NCC & Ministry of Defence were present on the occasion.

## Shiv Sena demands immediate arrest of accused of rape of minor Dalit girl, condemns police action on protesters

J I NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JAN 20

Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu-Kashmir unit has termed the incident of gang rape of a 14-year-old Dalit girl in Kathua district as a disgusting and shameful incident and has demanded the immediate arrest of the accused and strict legal action.

In a press release issued from the party's state

central office, state chief Manish Sahni said that such a heinous crime is a symbol of gruesome violence against the weakest section of society and it cannot be tolerated under any circumstances.

Sahni has strongly condemned the police for ignoring the family of the victims and the police action against the protesters who were pleading for justice.

# NITI Aayog, Nasscom Foundation to digitally empower one lakh lives in India

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 20

NITI Aayog and Nasscom Foundation on Monday announced their initiative, aligned with the Pradhan Mantri Digital Saksharta Abhiyan, to digitally empowering one lakh lives in India.

The initiative's initial phase focuses on bridging the digital divide by providing digital literacy training and access to essential e-governance services across 60 Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTG) blocks.

The programme will subsequently expand to include all other aspirational blocks. By promoting digital inclusion, this initiative supports the gov-



ernment's vision of Viksit Bharat, fostering inclusive growth and ensuring that no one is left behind in India's digital transformation journey.

The participants will be trained on digital skills encompassing foundational computer skills, cybersecurity, and effective internet usage, enabling participants to confidently

navigate the digital world.

"Technology is the driving force of progress and empowerment in today's world. To achieve that growth, digital literacy becomes crucial in ensuring that India's remotest communities, especially the marginalized PVTGs, have the power to pave the way for sustainable growth and prosperity," said Jyoti

Sharma, Chief Executive Officer, Nasscom Foundation.

"The Aspirational Blocks Programme, in partnership with NITI Aayog, is not just about bridging the digital divide -- it's about deepening democracy and ensuring active participation in shaping the vision of Viksit Bharat," she added.

Building on the success of Nasscom Foundation's Aspirational Districts Programme launched in 2022, focusing on bridging the digital divide across 55 aspirational districts across 23 states through Digital Resource Centres, this initiative continues to demonstrate Nasscom Foundation's commitment to leveraging technology

for social impact, driving progress and empowerment in marginalized regions across India.

According to the Tribal Development Report 2022, the literacy rate among PVTGs is just 47.7 per cent, far below the national average of 77.3 per cent which makes the scenario of digital growth extremely vital in these communities.

To address this disparity, nasscom foundation has extended the initiative from aspirational districts to blocks by focusing on communities including women and youth between the ages of 12 and 60, equipping them with essential digital skills and resources to foster holistic growth and inclusion.

## Rajasthan Speaker complains of chest pain during Patna conference; admitted to hospital

AGENCIES

JAIPUR, JAN 20

Rajasthan Assembly Speaker Vasudev Devnani experienced a sudden health emergency on Monday while attending a conference in Patna.

After complaining of chest pain, he was immediately taken to the Indira Gandhi Institute of Cardiology at the Patna Medical College and Hospital, where he underwent angiography. Doctors have stated that his condition is now stable.

Devnani was in Patna to participate in the two-day 85th All India Presiding Officers' Conference.

During the event, his health unexpectedly took a turn for the worse.

Though his personal assistant assured that Devnani was now doing

well, he did not confirm reports of a heart attack.

According to doctors at PMCH, Devnani was admitted to the hospital's Indira Gandhi Institute of Cardiology and his condition remains stable as of now.

Meanwhile, a team of heart specialists is being dispatched from Jaipur to Patna to assist in Devnani's treatment.

They are travelling via a special plane, following updates received by Chief Minister Bhajanal Sharma and Health Minister Gajendra Singh Khimsar, who have been closely monitoring the situation.

The Health Minister expressed surprise over the incident, noting that Devnani has always been health-conscious, walking 5 kilometers daily

and often advising others to do the same.

He suggested that stress might have played a role, given Devnani's otherwise good health.

He said, "Vasudev Devnani has always been conscious about his health. He walks 5 kms daily and he also keeps advising us to walk. He did not have any such disease; it could be anxiety. I am surprised how a person who is so alert can have heart problems."

Earlier on Monday, the 85th All India Presiding Officers' Conference was inaugurated by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla in Patna.

The All India Presiding Officers' Conference is being attended by Presiding Officers from 56 legislatures across the country.

## ISRO, IN-SPACE showcase advanced space tech at Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 20

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Center (IN-SPACE) on Monday showcased 43 cutting-edge technologies curated for potential applications in the mobility industry at the ongoing Bharat Mobility Global Expo 2025 at Yashobhoomi in Dwarka. A stall set up by ISRO at the venue displayed advanced space technologies, including camera and imaging sensors, temperature and pressure sensors, gyroscopes, accelerometers, noise suppression systems, specialised coatings, and insulation technologies.

By adapting these innovations, the initiative aims to reduce the automotive sector's reliance on imported technologies, fostering self-reliance and innova-

tion under the vision of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

"IN-SPACE will work closely with the automotive industry to facilitate the transfer of technologies developed by ISRO to be adopted by automotive manufacturers," said Dr Rajeev Jyoti, Director-Technical Directorate, IN-SPACE, while speaking at the expo.

"By engaging with the automotive sector, the aim is to demonstrate the potential of ISRO's technologies, which can be further modified and developed locally to meet the specific requirements of the automotive industry. One of the key objectives is to enhance self-reliance in India by developing and manufacturing advanced components like sensors domestically," Jyoti added.

The agency emphasised the importance of translating India's space achievements into broader industrial applications, encour-

aging the automotive industry to adopt space-grade technologies to enhance safety, performance, and sustainability.

The emphasis was also to sustain this momentum through collaborative pilot projects that bridge the gap between research and industry adoption.

At the expo, IN-SPACE and Automotive Component Manufacturers Association (ACMA) also hosted a dedicated session titled "ISRO Technologies for Automotive Sector".

At the session, experts from ISRO centres, including the Space Applications Centre (Ahmedabad), Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre (Thiruvananthapuram), ISRO Inertial Systems Unit (IISU Trivandrum) and the Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre (Thiruvananthapuram) presented how these technologies can be customised for automotive applications.

## Humanitarian crisis: LoP Rahul urges Delhi CM, Centre to address woes of kin, patients at AIIMS

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 20

Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, has written to Delhi Chief Minister Atishi and Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda, highlighting the dire need for improved facilities for patients and their families at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Delhi.

"During my recent visit, I was saddened to see hundreds of patients and their family members huddled on the footpath and in the subway in the bitter winter cold, with only thin blankets to protect them, without drinking water or sanitation facilities.

"Many of these patients travel from across the country, spend their life savings, and wait for months on end for medi-

cal care at India's premier medical institution. I am sure you will agree that no one should face such hardship, especially while already battling serious medical conditions," LoP Rahul Gandhi wrote in the letter.

Describing the condition at AIIMS further, Congress MP Rahul Gandhi said, "I witnessed patients and their families forced to sleep in freezing conditions under the metro station near AIIMS. They have no access to basic amenities such as drinking water or toilets, and the area is surrounded by heaps of garbage. This reflects not only the neglect of these individuals but also the inadequacies in providing affordable and quality healthcare in their home regions."

Emphasising the humanitarian aspect,



LoP Gandhi expressed hope that his letter would prompt immediate action.

"I urge the Chief Minister of Delhi and the Union Health Minister to address this crisis urgently. Additionally, I hope the Central government allocates significant resources in the upcoming budget to strengthen the public healthcare system," he added.

Rahul Gandhi also shed light on the overburdened

state of AIIMS Delhi, calling it a national concern.

"The Government of India should work with the AIIMS leadership, the Government of Delhi and charitable organisations to provide heating, bedding, water and shelter to patients, and expand facilities for accommodation. In addition, reducing the long wait times at each step of treatment, and providing patients information about wait times, would help reduce patients' uncertainty," Rahul Gandhi said.

"As a first step, operationalising the newly established AIIMS facilities across the country should be prioritised to reduce the strain on Delhi AIIMS,"

the former Congress chief recommended.

Furthermore, LoP Gandhi proposed broader reforms in public health-

care infrastructure, saying, "It is crucial to strengthen the healthcare system at all levels -- primary, secondary, and tertiary -- through collaborative efforts with state governments. Central schemes such as Ayushman Bharat should be reviewed and expanded to minimise out-of-pocket expenses for patients by widening eligibility criteria, increasing the number of empanelled hospitals, and covering a broader range of conditions."

In addressing the rising costs of private healthcare, Rahul Gandhi called for detailed scrutiny to ensure affordability and accessibility for the public.

"The sharp increase in private healthcare costs further burdens families and needs urgent examination," Rahul Gandhi stated.

## MUDA SCAM-RELATED PRESS RELEASE BY ED 'POLITICALLY MOTIVATED': SIDDARAMAIAH

AGENCIES

BENGALURU, JAN 20

Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah said that the press release by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) regarding the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) scam is "politically motivated".

Siddaramaiah is accused number one in the MUDA case and the investigation is also being conducted against others who got the illegal allotments done through the MUDA. His wife B.M. Parvathi is the second accused.

Speaking to the media on Monday at the Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru, CM Siddaramaiah reacting to the press release issued by the ED concerning the MUDA scam, stated, "There is no connection between me and the press statement released by the ED."

He further charged that

the BJP had unnecessarily released this press statement through the ED.

Reacting to the allegations of misuse of state funds regarding the MUDA and Valmiki Corporation scams and the accusations of holding a national convention event at Belagavi using state tax money from the state, he said that there is no question of misuse of funds.

Regarding the increasing microfinance scams in the rural areas of Mysuru and Chamaraanagar districts and the harassment faced by the people, he assured that legal action would be taken against the institutions involved in harassing the public through microfinance scams.

CM Siddaramaiah also mentioned that, in commemoration of the centenary of the 1924 Belagavi Congress Session, a public meeting will be held after the unveiling of the

Mahatma Gandhi statue.

In a setback to Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Bangalore Zonal Office provisionally attached 142 immovable properties having an approximate market value of Rs 300 crore under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, in connection with the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) scam.

"The role of ex-MUDA commissioner D.B. Natesh has emerged as instrumental in illegal allotment of compensation sites to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife B.M. Parvathi," said the ED in a statement on January 17.

Searches conducted during the investigation further revealed that a large number of sites, other than 14 sites allotted to Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's wife B.M.

Parvathi, have been illegally allotted by MUDA as compensation to real estate businessmen, who in turn sold these sites at a huge profit and generated huge amount of unaccounted cash.

Petitioner Snehmayi Krishna has alleged that illegal allotments by the MUDA amount to thousands of crores of rupees. The ED said that the profit generated has been laundered and shown as derived from legitimate sources.

"The searches also revealed that sites have been allotted in the name of Benamis/dummy persons of influential persons and real estate businessmen. The incriminating evidence with respect to payment of illegal gratification to then MUDA chairman and MUDA commissioner in the form of immovable property, MUDA sites, cash, etc., were recovered," the ED

stated.

"The attached properties are registered in the name of various individuals who are working as real-estate businessmen and agents," the ED said.

ED initiated an investigation on the basis of an FIR registered by the Lokayuktha Police Mysuru under various sections of IPC, 1860 and the Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 against Siddaramaiah and others.

It is alleged that Siddaramaiah used his political influence to get compensation of 14 sites in the name of his wife B.M. Parvathi in lieu of 3 acres 16 guntas of land acquired by the MUDA.

The land was originally acquired by MUDA for Rs 3.24 lakh. The compensation in the form of 14 sites at the posh Vijayanagar locality in Mysuru is worth approximately Rs 56 crore.

## Akali Dal seeks withdrawal of Z-plus security for Kejriwal's ex-OSD

AGENCIES

CHANDIGARH, JAN 20

Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Bikram Singh Majithia on Monday demanded withdrawal of the Z-plus security cover given to Bibhav Kumar, former Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's OSD as well as Advisor to Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann.

Majithia said: "Forget norms, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) has even thrown morality to the winds by granting Z-plus security cover to a person who was accused of molesting AAP MP Swati Mahiwal."

Asserting that there was no need to provide security cover to Bibhav Kumar, Majithia said "since Bibhav lives in Delhi, his security can be overseen by the Delhi Police. Providing his seven security personnel round the clock is not justified under any circumstances".



Punjab Police to boycott this patently wrong decision.

Responding to Bibhav Kumar's appointment in November last year, BJP National General Secretary Tarun Chugh had launched a scathing attack on Kejriwal and Mann.

His remarks came in response to Maliwal's post on social media platform X, in which she claimed that Kejriwal had rewarded Kumar by appointing him as the Chief Advisor to Punjab's Chief Minister.

Maliwal claimed that the assault, which allegedly took place at Kejriwal's residence on May 13 last year, was followed by Kumar's promotion to a top administrative position in Punjab, highlighting the 'true face' of the AAP in its treatment of women.

She criticised Kejriwal and accused him of "rewarding Kumar", despite the Supreme Court labelling him a "goon".

## Protesting farmers defer Jan 21 march to Delhi; ask Centre to hold talks soon

AGENCIES

CHANDIGARH, JAN 20

Protesting farmer leader Sarwan Singh Pandher on Monday announced the postponement of the January 21 foot march, by 101 farmers to Delhi, urging the Central government to hold talks soon over their demands of a guarantee law for

a Minimum Support Price (MSP) for their produce.

"It's not a condition but a request," the convener of the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, told the media at Shambhu, the border between Punjab and Haryana, urging the Centre to hold a meeting in Delhi before February 14, instead of Chandigarh, as initially proposed.

"We had earlier announced that a 'jatha' of 101 farmers will move towards Delhi on January 21. We discussed this and both forums have decided to postpone it till January 26 to give more time to the government.

"We will take further decisions on January 26... It's not our condition but a request to the government to call the meeting

at the earliest in New Delhi as it's a matter concerning the farmers and their protest," he said.

Earlier, Pandher said the farmers would march to Delhi and accused the Central government of trying to create division among the growers.

Despite the Centre's proposal for talks, fasting farmers' leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal

has announced to continue his hunger strike until an MSP guarantee law is enacted.

Though he accepted medical assistance late on Saturday night, his health remains critical. Medical experts have expressed concern as the hunger strike by Dallewal, a cancer patient who has been on hunger strike since November 26, has completed

56 days.

The 121 protesting farmers, comprising 10 from Haryana, ended their fast-unto-death on Sunday after the Central government agreed on Saturday to hold a meeting with farmers' forums in Chandigarh to discuss their demands. The farmers had been fasting in solidarity with 70-year-old Dallewal.

A delegation of officials from the Union agriculture ministry, led by Joint Secretary Priya Ranjan, met Dallewal on Saturday evening and held a meeting with the representatives of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, which are spearheading the agitation for the past 11 months.

# Trump's swearing-in indoors may raise his protection, but with multifarious threats

## Washington takes no chances

AGENCIES  
NEW YORK, JAN 20

For the swearing-in of US President-elect Donald Trump, who has survived two assassination attempts, Washington is taking no chances mobilising a huge safety cordon of tens of thousands of personnel, putting miles of fences, installing vehicle barriers, and deploying helicopters and drones.

Moving the ceremony indoors to the Capitol because of the freezing weather on Monday may lessen some risks but major threats remain.

"From radiological threats to flat tires, the Secret Service has spent over a year preparing for Monday's inauguration, working with top law enforcement and public safety partners to ensure



a safe, successful event," Secret Service Spokesperson Anthony Guglielmi posted on X.

More than 25,000 personnel from around the country will be deployed for security, Secret Service Special Agent Matt McCool said at a news conference on Sunday.

They will include National Guard contin-

gents from 40 states and police volunteered by 32 states to supplement the national capital's police forces.

Helicopters and drones will provide security from the air and miles of fences will gird the Capitol and key areas.

Space agency NASA said it was conducting low-altitude helicopter flights over

Washington to check for radiation risks.

Giving reassurances that there won't be a repeat of the assassination attempts against Trump, McCool said, "We took a close look at what happened there, and those things that went wrong have been fixed. You will not see something like that happen here at the inauguration."

The New Year's Day attack using a vehicle by an Islamic State terrorist on celebrators in New Orleans has brought another threat to the mix.

McCool said that there will be two layers of fencing around the Capitol and reinforced with vehicles capable of blocking attacks and concrete barriers.

Although the ceremony will be held at the rotunda of the Capitol, which houses the two chambers

of Congress, with very limited capacity, and a livecast will be shown at the Capital Arena for about 20,000 people, thousands will brave the freezing temperatures and gather outdoors.

It could also draw protesters like those who participated in what was billed as the "People's March" on Saturday. Politico reported that several intelligence and police agencies have warned that the inauguration could be an "attractive target" for extremists.

In a secret threat assessment document, the group of agencies warned that "foreign terrorists, domestic extremists, and lone wolves could initiate bomb hoaxes, swatting calls (fake complaints to divert security), drone flights or vehicle-ramming attacks," according to Politico.

# Australian PM commits \$1.2 billion to incentivise green aluminum production

AGENCIES  
CANBERRA, JAN 20

Australia's Prime Minister Anthony Albanese on Monday announced a 2-billion-Australian-dollar (1.24 billion US dollars) plan to incentivise aluminium smelters to transition to renewable power.

The funding will be used for a scheme that will pay aluminium smelters for every ton of the metal produced using renewable electricity over a 10-year period to 2036, reports Xinhua news agency.

He said that investing in the local aluminium industry is a "massive opportunity" to create jobs and set Australia up for the future.

"We've got the resources, the workers, and the know-how -- the only thing we don't have is time to waste," Albanese said. "We are building Australia's future, not taking Australia backwards."

The new scheme was announced at the smelter



of Tomago Aluminium, Australia's largest producer of the metal and the country's largest electricity consumer.

According to Tomago, the company accounts for 10 per cent of all electricity consumption in New South Wales, Australia's most populous state, and electricity consumption makes up about 40 per cent of its costs.

Tomago in 2021 announced it was aiming to transition to almost 100

per cent renewable energy by 2029, but chief executive Jerome Dozol said last November that the goal was not achievable.

The Australian Prime Minister has made renewable energy a key policy point ahead of the 2025 general election, which must be held by May.

His Labor Party government has set a goal of 82 per cent of Australia's electricity coming from renewable sources by 2030.

# Israel releases 90 Palestinian prisoners in exchange of three hostages

AGENCIES  
TEL AVIV, JAN 20

The Israel Prison Service announced on Monday the release of 90 Palestinian prisoners as part of a ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas.

On Sunday, Israeli authorities began transferring Palestinian detainees to Ofer Prison in the West Bank, preparing them for release.

The process coincided with the Red Cross meeting Hamas forces to secure the transfer of three Israeli hostages, who were later brought to Israel, reports Xinhua news agency.

The three women—Emily Damari, 28, a British-Israeli, Doron Steinbrecher, 30, a veterinary nurse, and Romi Gonen, 23, abducted from the Nova music festival—were the first hostages freed



after 471 days in captivity.

Their release marked the initial stage of the agreement, which outlines the release of 33 Israeli hostages by Hamas and 990 to 1,650 Palestinian prisoners by Israel.

As part of the deal, the first group of 90 Palestinian prisoners, mostly women and children from West Bank and East Jerusalem, underwent medical

checks and identification procedures before being handed to the Red Cross.

Hamas, in turn, transferred the three Israeli hostages through the Red Cross to Israeli forces near the Gaza border, where they were reunited with their families.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described the moment as significant, stating, "The

three went through hell."

IDF Spokesman Daniel Hagar expressed gratitude for their return while emphasising that Israeli forces are prepared for any violations of the agreement.

Hamas spokesperson Abu Ubaida reiterated the group's commitment to the ceasefire, contingent on Israel's adherence. He described the October 7 assault, which killed 1,200 people in Israel and led to the kidnapping of 250 others, as a "turning point" in the conflict.

The ceasefire deal, which aims to halt hostilities after over 15 months of intense Israeli airstrikes in Gaza, marks the beginning of six weeks of calm.

The phased release of hostages and prisoners is seen as a critical step towards reducing tensions between the two sides.

# Unlike 2017, top stars, tech tycoons and politicians line up for Donald Trump's historic inauguration

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON, JAN 19

As millions all over the world anxiously wait for Donald Trump's second inaugural address late Monday evening, India time, after he is sworn into office for another presidential term, several foreign leaders, tech billionaires and top celebrities have started arriving in the US capital to attend the ceremony that will take place inside the Capitol Rotunda.

As people queue up for the ceremony, Politico revealed that seven Democrats, who had boycotted Trump's first inauguration in 2017, are also going this time. Breaking tradition, several foreign leaders will also be attending the high-profile ceremony.

"Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni will attend the inauguration ceremony of



US President-elect Donald Trump," stated the Italian Government Presidency of the Council of Ministers.

Argentina's President Javier Milei, who has already addressed a couple of events - including at the Milken Centre in Washington DC on Sunday - has called the inauguration of President Trump as a milestone event in "global crusade for freedom" and the "clearest evidence that a new era has begun". Ecuador's President Daniel Noboa, El Salvador President Nayib

Bukele, former Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki have also been invited. Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who may not be able to make it for the inauguration stated over the weekend that "everything will change" after Trump takes office. "A different day will dawn over the Western world; four bitter, difficult, painful years, punctuated by failures, will come to an end: democratic governance," Orban said on Friday in a radio programme.

External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar will be representing India at the swearing-in ceremony and will also have meetings with representatives of the incoming administration, as also some other dignitaries visiting the US on the occasion.

According to the New York Times, Elon Musk, Mark Zuckerberg and Jeff Bezos, three of the world's wealthiest men, are expected to be among the major tech executives who would sit in a "position of honour on the dais" at Trump's inauguration, possibly along with Apple Chief Executive Tim Cook.

Regular attendees would include President Joe Biden and Jill Biden, former President Bill Clinton and Hillary Clinton, former President George W Bush and Laura Bush, and former President Barack Obama.

# North Korea condemns Japan's opening of NATO mission as escalating regional military tension

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, JAN 20

North Korea on Monday denounced Japan's recent opening of a new diplomatic mission to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), accusing the country of dangerously escalating the military tension in the region.

The North's official Korean Central News Agency (KCNA) issued the criticism in an article attributed to an international security analyst, following Japan's formal inauguration of an independent mission to NATO

last week to bolster cooperation.

"Japan set up its independent mission in NATO at a time when the security environment in the Asia-Pacific region is more seriously threatened due to the US provocative military hegemony," the KCNA said.

"This is a dangerous act of adding new instability to the regional situation."

The KCNA also accused Japan of "extremely escalating the military tension in the region" by tightening military cooperation with NATO, "pursuant to the US strategy for world

domination to expand NATO's sphere of influence into the Asia-Pacific region."

It also called Japan "a war criminal state" and "an anti-peace force," accusing it of threatening the Asia-Pacific region and the rest of the world through its "admission to aggressive military blocs, undisguised arms buildup and ceaseless war drills."

"The tightened nexus" between Japan and NATO is a serious threat to international peace and security, Yonhap news agency reported quoting KCNA.

# Iranian army stages two-day drill in northeastern province

AGENCIES  
TEHRAN, JAN 20

The Iranian army's ground force launched a two-day military drill on Sunday in the northeastern Khorasan Razavi province, said local authorities.

The exercise aims to enhance the troops' combat capabilities and showcase the Iranian armed forces' new weapons and gears, according to a press release from the army's public relations on Monday.

The first stage of the exercise, involving artillery, armoured, airborne, drone, electronic warfare



and missile units, began in Torbat-e Jam County on Sunday night, it said.

In the first phase of the "offensive-security" drill, the ground force's special rapid reaction units practiced capturing mock ter-

rorist leaders and senior members before they could enter the country, carrying out specialised operations with drones, missiles, bombs, helicopters and armoured vehicles, it added.

The Iranian armed forces have conducted several drills over the past few days and plan to hold more during the coming weeks to maintain and enhance their military preparedness against potential threats, Xinhua news agency reported.

Earlier this month, Iran's armed forces held a large-scale joint air defence exercise near the Natanz uranium enrichment facility in central Isfahan province.

The 'Eqtedar' (Power) 1403 exercise was launched in the first week of the year on the orders of Khatam al-Anbia Air

Defence Base Commander Qader Rahimzadeh, IRIB TV said.

The first phase involved Aerospace Force units of the Islamic Revolution Guards Corps (IRGC) conducting "all-out point defence of the nuclear site against numerous aerial threats under tough electronic warfare conditions," according to IRIB.

IRGC spokesman Ali-Mohammad Naeini said that the annual drills aim to maintain and improve military preparedness, counter potential military threats and acts of sabotage, and boost national morale.

# Biden says 'guns in Gaza have gone silent' as Hamas hands over 3 hostages

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON, JAN 20

US President Joe Biden said the "guns in Gaza have gone silent" as Hamas handed over three hostages -- the first group to be released under a ceasefire deal between Israel and the militant group that took effect on Sunday.

"The deal that I first put forward last May for the Middle East has finally come to fruition. The ceasefire has gone into effect in Gaza, and today, we're seeing hos-

tages being released -- three Israeli women held against their will in the dark tunnels for 470 days," Biden said in remarks from Charleston, South Carolina, on Sunday.

"After so much pain, destruction, loss of life today, the guns in Gaza have gone silent," he added. Displaced Gazans have started returning to their homes, while aid trucks laden with much-needed supplies have crossed into Gaza.

The three Israeli hostages released by Hamas

on Sunday are now back in Israel, according to a statement from the Israeli military.

Romi Gonen, Doron Steinbrecher, and Emily Damari are being reunited with their mothers, who travelled to Re'im in southern Israel, to meet them.

"The released hostages are currently on their way to an initial reception point in southern Israel, where they will undergo an initial medical assessment," the military said.

They will then be transferred to Sheba Medical

Center in Tel Aviv.

Earlier, the Red Cross transferred the hostages to the Israeli military in Gaza, the military said in a statement.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has credited both the outgoing Biden administration and President-elect Donald Trump's transition team for helping secure the deal. Biden's team worked on the pact for many months, keeping the incoming Trump administration closely apprised on the final contours of negotiations.

President Biden told reporters on Sunday that he was pleased that both his administration and President-elect Donald Trump's transition team spoke as "one voice in the final days" to reach a Israel-Hamas ceasefire deal.

"It was both necessary and effective and unprecedented, but success is going to require persistence and continuing support for our friends in the region, and the belief in diplomacy backed by deterrence," Biden said in remarks from Charleston, South Carolina.

# Ramaswamy planning to run for Ohio governor: Reports

AGENCIES  
NEW YORK, JAN 20

Vivek Ramaswamy, who was appointed by US President-elect Donald Trump as the co-head of a body to improve government efficiency, is planning to run for governor of Ohio, according to media reports.

USA Today reported on Sunday that according to a source close to him, Ramaswamy will announce his run for governor "shortly".

If elected, he would become the third Indian-American elected governor, after Bobby Jindal in Loui-

siana and Nikki Haley in South Carolina, all Republicans. The three made unsuccessful bids for the party's presidential nomination. An avowed anti-Left crusader, Ramaswamy, 39, ran against Trump for the Republican Party's presidential nomination but dropped out to become one of his most vociferous supporters.

Trump appointed him to be the co-head of the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) with Elon Musk after having hinted during the campaign that he may even be consid-

ered for Secretary of State. "He's really smart, and I hope he's going to be involved in our administration," Trump said.

"We can put him in charge of one of these big monsters (in government) and he'll do a better job than anybody you can think of."

At the DOGE, only an advisory body outside the government, Ramaswamy, who has a strong personality and is a multi-millionaire, was overshadowed by Elon, who has a stronger personality, is a multi-billionaire and closer to Trump.

# Paytm log 10 pc revenue jump at Rs 1,828 crore in Q3, PAT improved by Rs 208 crore

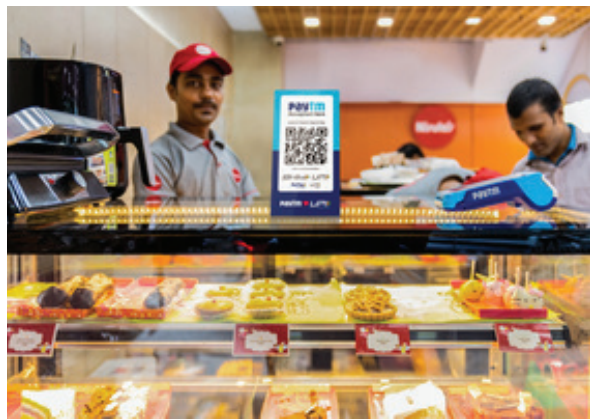
AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JAN 20

Leading payments and financial services company, Paytm, on Monday reported impressive robust growth across key financial metrics.

The company's operating revenue surged by 10 per cent quarter-on-quarter (QoQ) to Rs 1,828 crore in Q3 FY2025, driven by its payments business and expanding financial services distribution portfolio.

The company reported a PAT improvement of Rs 208 crore QoQ to Rs (208) crore, while its cash reserves increased by Rs 2,851 crore QoQ to Rs 12,850 crore.

The key highlights include a Rs 181 crore QoQ improvement in EBITDA, which now stands at Rs



(223) crore. The company's contribution margin (excluding UPI incentives) held steady at 52 per cent, translating to a contribution profit of Rs 959 crore, up 7 per cent QoQ, according to the company.

EBITDA before ESOP costs improved by Rs 145 crore QoQ to Rs (41) crore, with the company maintaining its target to

achieve EBITDA profitability before ESOP costs by Q4 FY25.

The company's payment services revenue grew to Rs 1,059 crore, while its financial services revenue saw an impressive 34 per cent QoQ increase, reaching Rs 502 crore.

Gross Merchandise Value (GMV) processed through the platform rose to Rs

5.0 lakh crore, a 13 per cent QoQ growth, further underscoring Paytm's strong market position.

Paytm's merchant subscriber base for payment devices rose to 1.17 crore, with 5 lakh new additions during the quarter. The net payment margin reached Rs 489 crore, aided by higher subscription revenue and a stable payment processing margin.

Indirect costs were down 7 per cent QoQ and 23 per cent year-on-year (YoY). Employee expenses for the first nine months of FY2025 dropped by Rs 451 crore YoY, surpassing the company's annual cost-saving target of Rs 400-500 crore.

The company also distributed loans worth Rs 3,831 crore during the quarter, versus Rs 3,303

crore in Q2 FY2025. Notably, over 50 per cent of these loans were provided to repeat borrowers, reflecting a consistent demand and strong customer retention.

A significant portion of merchant loans was distributed under Paytm's DLG (Direct Lending & Guarantee) model, which continues to bolster the company's financial services revenue.

Loans under the DLG model, known for their higher upfront cost, deliver higher revenue over their lifecycle, further enhancing profitability. The strong performance of this model has attracted increased interest from lenders eager to partner with Paytm, recognising its potential to drive sustainable growth and returns, said the company.

# January 20: Sensex opens higher as traders gear up for Trump's inauguration

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, JAN 20



Indian benchmark indices opened higher on Monday, taking positive cues from its Asian peers, as traders geared up for Donald Trump's inauguration as the 47th US President.

At around 9.35 am, Sensex was trading at 76,701.3, up nearly 100 points while Nifty was at 23,215.65, nearly flat.

Shares of Kotak Mahindra Bank, Wipro, Bharti Airtel and State Bank of India led gains in Nifty, while ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, SBI Life, Infosys, and Tata Motors weighed on the index.

Nine out of the 12 sectors on the NSE advanced, with Nifty Media, Nifty Realty rising the most on Monday. Nifty Metal and Auto fell the most in early trade.

According to market watchers, globally, stock

markets will be in a wait and watch mode as Trump 2.0 unfolds today.

"Many executive actions, particularly on immigration, are expected from the President starting from day one. Markets will wait and watch for the nature of the decisions and their likely impact," they noted.

Meanwhile, the latest IMF report on Global Economic Outlook projects 'solid' growth of 6.5 per cent for 2025 and 2026 for India despite the recent

deceleration in growth. "This is positive. There is a flurry of Q3 results this week and the market will respond to the results depending on, apart from the numbers, the outlook and management commentary," said experts.

In the US, stocks closed sharply higher on Friday, sending the S&P 500 and Dow Jones Industrial Average to their biggest weekly gains, as market participants prepare for the inauguration of Trump.

# South Korea to expand export financing support amid Trump uncertainties

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, JAN 20

The government here on Monday announced plans to provide extensive financial support to bolster exports this year, as uncertainties in the global trade environment are expected to intensify with the inauguration of US President-elect Donald Trump.

Trump is set to begin his second presidential term on Monday (US time), heightening concerns about a potential rise in global protectionism and its impact on South Korea's export-driven economy.

"With the U.S. administration's policy shifts and other global factors increasing external uncertainties, there are growing concerns over potential challenges for businesses in the export sector," said Kim Dong-joon, a senior finance ministry official in charge of a government task force on exports.

The task force was



launched in October, involving senior officials from the finance and industry ministries, as well as other relevant financial agencies, to assess the status of export financing and develop effective support measures.

Trump's proposal to impose a 25 per cent tariff on all products from Mexico and Canada, and an additional 10 per cent tariff on goods from China, has raised concerns among South Korean companies.

To address anticipated challenges, the government plans to provide export financing on an unprecedented scale, amounting to 360 trillion won (\$247 billion) in 2025 alone, according to the finance ministry.

Additionally, the budget for exchange rate insurance will rise from 1.2 trillion won to 1.4 trillion won in 2025 amid the weak Korean won. Funding for overseas trade fairs and trade delegations will increase from 2.1 trillion

won to 2.9 trillion won.

Meanwhile, Trade Minister Cheong In-kyo said on Monday that South Korea's exports are anticipated to experience a slowdown this month due to a reduced number of business days as a result of the Lunar New Year holiday.

Cheong made the remark in a meeting with government officials after the government designated next Monday as a temporary national holiday, extending the holiday season to six days until next Thursday.

The designation reduced the number of business days in January by four from a year earlier, when the Lunar New Year holiday fell in February.

"As there is also a decrease in demand from major Asian trade partners who are observing holidays as well, exports are expected to experience a temporary slowdown in January," Cheong said.

# 24 companies to invest Rs 3,516 crore under PLI scheme for ACs and LED lights

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JAN 20

With as many as 24 beneficiary companies committing an investment of Rs 3,516 crore in the third round, the government's production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme is poised to significantly boost the production of components of ACs and LED lights across India, according to a Commerce and Industry Ministry statement on Monday.

In the third round of the online application window of the PLI scheme, a total of 38 applications were received. After reviewing these applications, the government has provisionally selected 18 new companies. These companies include 10 manufacturers of components of Air Conditioners and 8 manufacturers of LED Lights, with committed investment of Rs 2,299 crore, the statement said.

The companies that



have been selected include Voltas Components, Jupiter Aluminium, SMEL Steel, Lumax, Intelux Electronics and Neolite.

In addition, six existing PLI beneficiaries have been provisionally selected to upgrade to higher investment categories, committing an additional investment of Rs 1,217 crore. These include companies such as Hindalco, LG Electronics, Blue Star and Voltas.

Altogether, 84 companies under the PLI Scheme for White Goods are set

to bring investments of Rs 10,478 crore, resulting in production worth Rs 1,72,663 crore, the statement said.

It highlighted that the move is expected to bolster the manufacturing capabilities and economic growth in the sector. For air conditioners, companies will be manufacturing components like, compressors, copper tubes (plain and/or grooved control assemblies for IDU or ODU, Heat Exchangers and BLDC motors among others.

Similarly, LED Lights, LED Chip packaging, LED Drivers, LED Engines, LED Light Management Systems and Metallized films for capacitors etc. will be manufactured in India.

The Union Cabinet had given approval to the PLI Scheme for White Goods (Air Conditioners and LED lights) to be implemented over FY 2021-22 to FY 2028-29 with an outlay of Rs 6,238 crore on April 7, 2021. The scheme was notified by DPIIT on April 16, 2021.

The PLI Scheme on White Goods aims to create a robust component ecosystem for air conditioners and LED lights Industry in India, and make the country an integral part of the global supply chains. The scheme extends an incentive of 6 per cent to 4 per cent on reducing basis on incremental sales for a period of 5 years, subsequent to the base year and one year of gestation period.

# HD Hyundai Electric Q4 net falls 10.9 pc on one-off costs

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, JAN 20

HD Hyundai Electric, a South Korean electrical equipment maker, said on Monday its fourth-quarter net profit fell 10.9 per cent from a year earlier due to one-off costs.

Net profit for the three months ended on December 31 fell to 123.9 billion won (\$85 million) from 139 billion won in the year-ago period, the company said in a regulatory filing, reports Yonhap news agency.

"In the fourth quarter of last year, one-off expenses, which are not related to operations, were reflected in the bottom line," a company spokesperson said over the phone. The company didn't elaborate on

the costs.

But operating profit jumped 33.4 per cent to 166.3 billion won in the December quarter from 124.7 billion won a year ago. Sales were up 2.3 percent to 815.7 billion won from 797.3 billion won during the same period.

"The quarterly operating profit got a boost from increased transformer orders in the United States, which is increasing investments in electrical infrastructure and data centres," the company said in a press release. For the whole of 2024, net income soared 90.8 per cent to 495.1 billion won from 259.5 billion won the previous year.

Operating profit more than doubled to 669 billion won from 315.2 billion won

over the cited period, with sales rising 22.9 per cent on-year to 3.32 trillion won from 2.70 trillion won.

In 2024, the company obtained \$3.81 billion worth of orders, exceeding its order target of \$3.74 billion.

This year, it aims to win \$3.82 billion worth of orders and 3.89 trillion won in sales.

To preemptively respond to a rising demand for its ultra-high pressure transformers, the company will invest a total of 396.8 billion won in its production facilities - 211.8 billion won in its domestic plant in Ulsan, 305 kilometers southeast of Seoul, and 185 billion won in its U.S. plant in Alabama, the release said.

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JAN 20

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday highlighted that the government's strides in the toy manufacturing sector have boosted India's quest for 'Aatmanirbharta,' and popularised traditions and enterprise.

"It was during one of the #MannKiBaat episodes that we had talked about boosting toy manufacturing and powered by collective efforts across India, we've covered a lot of ground in that," the Prime Minister posted on X.

"Our strides in the sector have boosted our quest for Aatmanirbharta and popularised traditions and enterprise," he added.

# GOVT'S PUSH TO TOY MANUFACTURING BOOSTED AATMANIRBHARTA: PM MODI



The Indian toy industry has now expanded its global footprint to more than 100 countries including the US, the UK, Germany, Netherlands, Denmark and even China from where toys were imported

in large quantities, a senior official of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) said.

As part of its strong commitment to create a better ecosystem for the

toy industry, the Government of India has identified the sector as one of the champion sectors, with a long-term vision to create a global market for 'Made in India' toys.

According to industry estimates, India's exports of toys, games and sports articles between 2014-15 to 2022-23 increased by 239 per cent, whereas the imports fell by 52 per cent.

Further, the report presented the current market size of the industry is \$1.7 billion, and expected to reach \$4 billion by 2032 with a 10.5 per cent annual growth rate.

Addressing the joint workshop of Indian toy manufacturers and e-retailer Flipkart, Joint Secretary, DPIIT, Sanjiv Singh,

said, "The success of the Indian toy industry reflects in the enhanced exports, increasing robustness of the manufacturing ecosystem and reduced import dependence."

In line with the objective of providing an impetus to the growing Indian toy sector, DPIIT has also been hold workshops with e-commerce giants like Flipkart to leverage the emerging opportunities from the e-commerce marketplace to bolster the growth of the Indian toy industry.

Besides, the government has been encouraging toymakers to display their products at trade fairs such as IITF 2024 in Delhi which had elicited a good response.

# Union Budget: COAI calls for further reforms to revitalise telecom industry

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JAN 20

In a bid to further revitalise the telecom industry, the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI) on Monday released the telecom industry's recommendations for the upcoming Union Budget 2025-26 to the Ministry of Finance.

Considering the huge capital that Telecom Service Providers (TSPs) have to invest in the current scenario, especially for the deployment of 5G, COAI recommended that the Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF) levy be abolished.

"Alternatively, the government may consider

the suspension of the USO contribution of 5 per cent of AGR, till the existing USO corpus of over Rs 86,000 crore is exhausted," said the apex telecom industry body.

COAI also recommended that the license fee be urgently reduced from 3 per cent to 1 per cent, so that it just covers the administra-

tive costs by the DoT/government, thereby relieving the TSPs from additional financial burden.

The industry is also concerned over the present definition of Gross Revenue (GR), as it covers revenue from all telecom activities.

The COAI also recommended that the definition of GR be made precise,

stipulating that the revenue from activities for which no license is required should not be a part of GR.

"Further, we strongly believe that large traffic generators (LTG) should take the responsibility of participating in the development of telecom infrastructure as they ride on the networks created by telecom compa-

nies, earn profits, but don't pay anything for creation of the infrastructure," said the COAI.

It recommended that LTGs should pay to USO fund/Digital Bharat Nidhi Fund and thereby contribute to the Indian digital economy.

Owing to the intense price competition in the

market, the telecom industry in India has consolidated from over 10 companies in 2017 to 3 private and 1 public sector company, which is an optimal structure and encourages healthy competition.

"Further to the above, cash flow and projections of some of the players in the telecom industry

have also been adversely impacted post the Supreme Court Ruling of 2019, in the context of calculation of Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR), whereby telecom operators are required to pay additional AGR dues basis the revised computation, over a longer period of time," said the COAI.

# Rohit, Jaiswal named in Mumbai's Ranji Trophy squad for match against J&K

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JAN 20

India Test and ODI captain Rohit Sharma is set to play his first Ranji Trophy match since 2015 after being named in Mumbai's squad for their upcoming clash against Jammu and Kashmir, starting on January 23 at MCA Sharad Pawar Cricket Academy in Bandra-Kurla Complex, Mumbai.

Alongside him, young left-handed opener Yashasvi Jaiswal has also been named in the squad to be captained by veteran India batter Ajinkya Rahane, who led Mumbai to their 42nd Ranji Trophy title



in the previous domestic season.

Other Indian team players named in Mumbai's 17-member squad selected by the panel of Sanjay Patil (Chairman), Ravi Thaker, Jeetendra Thackeray,

Kiran Powar, and Vikrant Yeligeri include batter Shreyas Iyer, all-rounders Shivam Dube and Shardul Thakur, while India U19 batter Ayush Mhatre also finds a place. Previously on Saturday,

while announcing India's squads for the ODI series against England and the Champions Trophy, Rohit had confirmed that he would be playing in Mumbai's match against Jammu & Kashmir after last playing a domestic first-class game in September 2016.

Other India Test team players like Ravindra Jadeja (Saurashtra), Rishabh Pant (Delhi) and Shubman Gill (Punjab) are also set to play in the upcoming round of the Ranji Trophy, which kicks starts the second leg of the prestigious first-class competition.

Mumbai have played five matches in the ongoing Ranji Trophy season,

where they have won three games and lost once, while the other one ended in a draw. Currently, they are third in the Elite Group A points table behind leaders Baroda and second-ranked Jammu and Kashmir.

Mumbai squad: Ajinkya Rahane (captain), Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Ayush Mhatre, Shreyas Iyer, Siddhesh Lad, Shivam Dube, Hardik Tamore (wk), Akash Anand (wk), Tanush Kotian, Shams Mulani, Himanshu Singh, Shardul Thakur, Mohit Awasthi, Sylvester D'Souza, Royston Dias, Karsh Kothari.

# India to participate in Mandiri U20 Challenge Series in Indonesia

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JAN 20

The India U20 men's team will participate in the Mandiri U20 Challenge Series 2025, a four-nation friendly tournament, in Indonesia from January 24 to 30. Syria, Jordan and hosts Indonesia are the other teams. Biby Thomas Muttath has been appointed as the coach, with Mileswamy Govindaraju Ramachandran as the assistant coach and Dipankar Choudhury as the goalkeeper coach, the All India Football Federation said in a release.

Thomas, on Monday, named a 23-member squad consisting of 17 and 18 year-olds (born 2007 and 2008), who are preparing for the

SAFF U19 Championship to be held from May 8 to 18.

India will begin the tournament with a match against Syria on January 24, followed by Jordan on January 27 and Indonesia on January 30. The matches will be played at the Gelora Delta Stadium in Sidoarjo. All three of India's opponents are using the tournament to prepare for February's AFC U20 Asian Cup (with players born in 2005).

India U20 squad for the Mandiri U20 Challenge Series, Indonesia:

Goalkeepers: Suraj Singh Aheibam, Alsabith Sulaiman Thekkakaramel, Karan Makkar.

Defenders: Yaipharemba Chingakham, Sumit Sharma Brahmacharima-

yum, Afinmon Bajju, Mukul Panwar, Malemngamba Singh Thokchom, Jodric Abranches.

Midfielders: Md. Arbash, Mahmud Sami, Levis Zangminlun, Manbhakupar Malngiang, Ahongshangbam Samson, Ningthoukhongjam Rishi Singh, Jajo Prashan, Ngamgouhou Mate, Gurnaj Singh Grewal, Danny Meitei Laishram.

Forwards: Bharat Lajrenjam, Lemmet Tangvah, Sujin S, Mohd. Zulkif.

Head Coach: Biby Thomas Muttath

Assistant Coach: Mileswamy Govindaraju Ramachandran

Goakeeping Coach: Dipankar Choudhury

Strength and Conditioning Coach: Chelston Pinto

# Speed skater Shruti Kotwal aiming for 2026 Winter Olympics qualification

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JAN 20

India's first professional woman speed skater Shruti Kotwal, who will be leading India's charge in the Asian Winter Games (AWG) in Harbin, China from February 7-14, has her eyes set on qualifying for the 2026 Winter Olympics.

The AWG will be a big opportunity for Shruti to test herself against the best skaters in the world and qualify for the 2026 Winter Olympics. "I'm focusing on the 500m and 1000m events for Olympic qualification. The timing requirements are incredibly challenging - sub-40 seconds for the 500m and under 1:20 for the 1000m. My Indian national record is 41.97 seconds and I need to skate under 40 seconds to qualify," said Shruti in an interview with SAI Media.

The sports ministry



has cleared a squad of 41 athletes for AWG. These include speed skaters and their support staff. For Shruti, this will be her second appearance in the AWG after 2017, when the Asian meet was last held in Japan.

"This will be my second Asian Winter Games and I'm thrilled to compete again. Countries like South Korea, Japan, and China consistently produce strong skaters who are technically and physically exceptional. I've faced some of these com-

petitors in previous events and understand their strengths. It's a tough field, but I see every race as an opportunity to push my limits and improve my performance," she said.

Shruti is currently training at the Utah Olympic Oval in the US. Training at this indoor speed skating centre, which was built for the 2002 Winter Olympics, has played a major role in her career.

"Training in the US, especially at facilities like the Utah Olympic Oval, has been a game-changer. The exposure to world-class coaches, advanced training methodologies, and access to one of the fastest ice tracks in the world has significantly improved my technique, endurance, and speed.

"Competing with and observing some of the best skaters here has pushed me to refine my skills and understand the finer details of the sport.

# ISL 2024-25: Chennaiyin FC target to keep playoff hopes alive against leaders Mohun Bagan

AGENCIES  
CHENNAI, JAN 20

Chennaiyin FC will host Mohun Bagan Super Giant in the Indian Super League (ISL) 2024-25 on Tuesday at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Chennai.

The Marina Machans are currently 10th on the table with 17 points from 16 games, while the Mariners sit comfortably at the top spot with 36 points from as many matches as the Marina Machans. Chennaiyin FC are winless in their last four games (D2, L2), including consecutive 2-2 draws, and will look to end their drought against the Mohun Bagan Super Giant.

The Mariners, who secured a narrow 1-0 victory in the reverse fixture on November 30, are aiming for their first-ever league double over Chennaiyin FC. Notably, the Marina



Machans and Mumbai City FC are the only sides Mohun Bagan have faced multiple times in the ISL without completing a league double.

Chennaiyin FC have struggled defensively so far, keeping the joint-least clean sheets (2) in the league along with Hyderabad FC. They have conceded 27 strikes, including nine in their last five encounters. The Mariners have been lethal in offence,

recording the joint-most goals (31 - same as Odisha FC and NorthEast United FC), with Jamie Maclaren top-scoring with six goals, and Alberto Rodriguez, Subhasish Bose, and Jason Cummings netted on four occasions each.

The Jose Molina-coached team might look to exploit the weaknesses in the Chennaiyin FC backline, whereas the home team will want to wear a guarded look to bridge

their seven-point gap with the sixth-placed Mumbai City FC (24), in order to repeat their heroics of qualifying as last season.

Chennaiyin FC have given away multiple goals in each of their last two home games - a 2-2 draw against Odisha FC and a 4-2 loss to Bengaluru FC. The last time they endured a longer streak was between December 2018 and February 2019, when they conceded eight goals over three consecutive home games. They will need to ensure that their defence is at the top of their game, especially on their home turf.

Chennaiyin FC assistant coach Noel Wilson revealed that injury concerns have troubled their defensive stability this season.

"This season, we have had injuries because of which we have not played

the same back-four consistently. You wouldn't want to change the defence across 100 minutes because once the opposition scores one goal, they are raring to go for another," he said.

Mohun Bagan Super Giant head coach Jose Molina brushed aside concerns over his forwards not making the most of the goal-scoring chances being created in the last few games.

"I would be worried if my attackers didn't have chances to score. But, that is not the situation. I am sure that the goals will come," he said.

The two teams have played nine games in ISL history. Mohun Bagan Super Giant have won four matches, whereas Chennaiyin FC have clinched two victories. Three encounters have produced draws.

# Will give my 200 pc and that's my commitment to you, says Pant after becoming LSG captain

AGENCIES  
KOLKATA, JAN 20

After being unveiled as the captain of Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) ahead of the IPL 2025 season, Rishabh Pant has vowed to give his 200 per cent commitment in terms of leading the franchise, who are chasing their maiden championship win this year.

IANS had previously reported on Saturday that Pant was highly likely to be appointed as LSG's new captain after being bought by the franchise for a record Rs 27 crore at the mega auction last year.

"Thank you to LSG family for showing faith in me. I will give my 200% and that's my commitment to you. I will try whatever



is in my power to repay the faith you have shown. Looking forward to have a new beginning with new energy and just have a blast out there, and have lots of fun," said Pant in a press conference in Kolkata alongside principal team owner Sanjiv Goenka and mentor Zaheer Khan.

Pant will now be LSG's fourth captain in their history of playing in the IPL after KL Rahul, Nicholas Pooran and Krunal Pandya.

He takes over from Rahul, who was at the helm since 2022 but moved to Delhi Capitals (DC) after entering the

auction. This will be the second IPL team Pant will be captaining after previously leading Delhi Capitals.

Pant had been DC's captain from 2021 to 2024 editions of the IPL, barring the 2023 season, which he missed due to recovery from various injuries sustained in a life-threatening car accident in December 2022.

But ahead of the IPL 2025 retention deadline, he was released by DC, with the leadership role being the main reason behind his nine-year association with the franchise ending on October 31.

In a show on Star Sports, while unveiling Pant as LSG's captain, Goenka predicted that the left-handed

wicketkeeper-batter has all the ingredients to be one of the most successful IPL captains after MS Dhoni and Rohit Sharma.

"My thinking was that time will prove that he's not the only most expensive player in IPL but he's going to be the best player in IPL. I have never seen a player with so much hunger and energy; he has a casual style of leadership; it is almost like the boy next door."

"I see a born leader in Rishabh Pant. He will probably be the best captain IPL has ever seen. People now say Mahi & Rohit are IPL's most successful captains. Mark my words, after 10-12 years, it will be Mahi, Rohit and Pant."

The International Tennis Federation, announced that Swiatek had accepted a one-month ban after the agency determined that her positive test for TMZ was caused by a contaminated melatonin product that is regulated as a medication in Poland and was sourced from a reputable pharmacy in that country.

WADA said it has conducted a full review of the case file related to the ITIA decision, which it received on November 29.

"WADA's scientific experts have confirmed that the specific contami-

# Tennis: WADA will not appeal in case of doping against Poland's Iga Swiatek

AGENCIES  
MONTREAL (CANADA), JAN 20

The World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) on Monday announced that it will not appeal in the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) against the one-month ban imposed on Polish women's tennis player Iga Swiatek, for testing positive for trimetazidine (TMZ), a prohibited substance, last August.

On November 28, the International Tennis Integrity Agency (ITIA), the independent body that delivers anti-doping programmes on behalf of

nated melatonin scenario, as presented by the athlete and accepted by the ITIA, is plausible and that there would be no scientific grounds to challenge it at CAS," according to a WADA media release.

"Further, WADA sought advice from external legal counsel, who considered that the athlete's contamination explanation was well evidenced, that the ITIA decision was compliant with the World Anti-Doping Code, and that there was no reasonable basis to appeal it to the CAS", the release added.

The Warriors managed to defend their goal well as they stayed in the match.

The Tigers won their second penalty corner of the match right as the hooter went off to mark the end of the half. Udita's slap shot took a deflection off a Warriors defender before creeping past Bartram into the goal.

The third quarter was an evenly matched affair. The Tigers did most of the attacking as they tried to get back on level terms. It was a credit to the Warriors defence that they

went into the final quarter with their noses ahead.

The Warriors scored in the third minute of the quarter to relieve the pressure off of them. Tigers goalkeeper Jennifer Rizzo deliberately played the ball behind the goal line to gift the Warriors a penalty corner. Jansen stepped up and delivered to restore her side's two-goal advantage. The Warriors won another penalty corner in the 49th minute, but this time Rizzo made a good save with her foot to keep out Jansen's drag flick.

# Odisha Warriors hammer Bengal Tigers 3-1 in Hockey India League

AGENCIES  
ROURKELA, JAN 20

It was a memorable night for hockey fans at a packed Birs Munda Hockey Stadium here as the Odisha Warriors beat the Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers 3-1 in the Women's Hero Hockey India League (2024-25).

Michelle Fillet (16'), Yibbi Jansen (18' and 47') and Neha Goyal (58') scored for the Odisha Warriors while Udita (30') scored for the Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers on Sunday night.

The two sides had played out a 1-1 draw three days ago in Ranchi, with the Odisha Warriors then winning the penalty shootout thanks to goalkeeper Jocelyn Bartram's heroics.

Penalty shootouts were not required tonight as the Warriors secured the win in style to take them to the top of the points table with eight points.

The Shrachi Rarh Bengal Tigers were the better side at the start of the first quarter as they made multiple circle penetrations. However, they were unable to

test Bartram in the Odisha Warriors goal.

In the 11th minute, the Warrior's Baljeet Kaur made a good run down the right before feeding the ball to Rutuja Pisal in the circle. The young Indian player did well to force goalkeeper Grace O'Hanlon to make a good save.

The first penalty corner of the match was awarded to the Tigers in the 14th minute. Udita's slap shot was deflected onto Ishika Chaudhary's body by a Tigers player, and the



umpire awarded the Tigers a penalty stroke.

The Warriors used their referral to reverse the decision as the ball had struck Chaudhary above

her knee.

The Warriors opened the scoring with the first move of the second quarter. Yibbi Jansen played a delightful pass

from the halfway line to find Michelle Fillet. Fillet's shot was hit with so much power that it went past goalkeeper O'Hanlon before she could even react.

The Warriors kept up the pressure and won their first penalty corner in the 18th minute. Yibbi Jansen found the bottom corner with a venomous drag-flick to double her side's lead.

The two goals gave the Warriors a significant boost as they made multiple circle penetrations through quick counterat-

tacks. The Tigers managed to defend their goal well as they stayed in the match.

The Warriors won their second penalty corner of the match right as the hooter went off to mark the end of the half. Udita's slap shot took a deflection off a Warriors defender before creeping past Bartram into the goal.

The third quarter was an evenly matched affair. The Tigers did most of the attacking as they tried to get back on level terms. It was a credit to the Warriors defence that they

went into the final quarter with their noses ahead.

The Warriors scored in the third minute of the quarter to relieve the pressure off of them. Tigers goalkeeper Jennifer Rizzo deliberately played the ball behind the goal line to gift the Warriors a penalty corner. Jansen stepped up and delivered to restore her side's two-goal advantage. The Warriors won another penalty corner in the 49th minute, but this time Rizzo made a good save with her foot to keep out Jansen's drag flick.

## DDC Kulgam reviews physical & financial progress recorded under District Capex 2024-25

JNEWS SERVICE  
KULGAM, JANUARY 20

District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan today convened a meeting to take stock of the physical and financial achievements made under District Capex 2024-25.

During the meeting, it was informed that out of 2600 approved works 1500 works have been completed physically by the end of December.

DDC took a detailed review of progress achieved in each department including RDD, Health, Education, R&B, PDD, PHE & Agriculture allied departments.

It was given out in the meeting that in the RDD department alone as many as 1220 works were taken up out of which 920 stands



were completed by the end of December.

The DDC directed the concerned executing agencies to ensure that the implementation of all the works on ground is expedited so that they are completed at the earliest.

While reviewing the progress of ongoing works, the DC instructed concerned officers to ensure quality work under each category is ensured so that the desired outcome is realized.

He stressed to utilize

the working season properly to complete projects well in time by spending all the released money. It will minimize the last month's rush to treasury billing, DDC added.

Officers were stressed to put in best efforts for maximum and optimum utilization of funds under different schemes so that no released expenditure would be surrendered.

He also urged the concerned to work vigorously and put extra efforts to achieve the desired results by the end of February. The meeting was attended by SE R&B, ACP, JDP, ACD, Executing Engineers from R&B, REW, CEO, CMO, all BDO's and other District Officers.

## DDC Shopian chairs DLTC meeting, finalizes scale of finance for agriculture & allied sectors

JNEWS SERVICE  
SHOPIAN, JANUARY 20

A meeting of District Level Technical Committee (DLTC) was Monday held under the chairmanship of the District Development Commissioner (DDC) Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar to finalise the scale of finance for the year 2025-26 for Agriculture and allied sectors at Mini-Secretariat, Shopian.

On the occasion, DDC sought detailed feedback from the officers regarding the costs of inputs involved for growing different types of agricultural crops.

The committee discussed input and market prices to determine appropriate short-term loans for farmers across various sectors, including



agriculture, horticulture, animal, sheep husbandry, etc.

It was informed that the rates finalized by the Committee will be forwarded to the State Level Technical Committee.

It was also informed that the rates approved in scale of finance serves as a tool for arriving at the Potential Credit Plan of

the district.

Dar emphasized the importance of agriculture and allied sectors to the local economy and urged banks to proactively provide loans to farmers, highlighting the significance of credit facilities in boosting agro-economic activities.

The DDC directed the officers to ensure maxi-

mum coverage of the farmer under the agricultural development schemes.

The meeting was attended by ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmed Lone; LDM, CAO, DSHO and the Officers from Animal Husbandry, Sericulture, Floriculture, Fisheries and officials of the banks operating in the District.

## 7 Day Divisional Level Training on Scientific Beekeeping begins at Kisan Kendra Jammu

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JANUARY 20

A seven-day training program on scientific beekeeping, organized by Apiculture Development Scheme-Department of Agriculture Production and Farmers Welfare Jammu under the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM), commenced today at Baba Jitto Kisan Kendra, Jammu.

The program is aimed at raising awareness and building skills among 50 prospective beekeepers from Jammu and Samba districts of the Jammu division.

The training programme was inaugurated by Director Agriculture

Jammu, S. Arvinder Singh Reen as the Chief Guest.

In his address, the Director Agriculture Jammu emphasized the vital role of beekeeping in generating income and employment opportunities. He encouraged the unemployed youth of the region to adopt beekeeping as a profession, noting the immense potential in Jammu & Kashmir due to its diverse agro-climatic conditions, rich biodiversity, and the growing demand for honey, driven by its medicinal and nutritional significance.

The Director further highlighted the department's commitment to supporting beekeepers, saying, "Advanced-level training programs and



exposure visits to national institutes will be organized to meet the wider aspirations of beekeepers. The department is also committed to providing both technical and financial assistance, particularly for the migration of bee colonies to optimize honey harvests and the production of various types of honey with unique aroma and taste."

He encouraged the trainees to make the

most of the opportunities offered under the HADP and other department schemes designed to promote beekeeping.

He also informed participants that the department will provide outlets for sale of local products including honey through opening of farmers facilitation centres at sub divisional level.

Assistant Entomologist Rajesh Verma provided details about the seven-day training program, which will cover all aspects of scientific beekeeping. He informed that experts from SKUAST-

Jammu and the Department of Agriculture will deliver lectures on key topics such as seasonal management, pest and disease management, value addition, and marketing strategies. Practical, hands-on training on bee hive operations and bee colonies management will also be conducted at the Apiculture Demonstration cum Training Centre in Chimney Chak, Jammu. The participants will also visit the AICRP for Honey Bees and Pollinators at SKUAST-Jammu to gain knowledge about the value addition of honey and its potential to make beekeeping a profitable enterprise.

An interactive session, including a feedback ses-

sion, was also held, where participants expressed satisfaction with the quality and relevance of the training. They appreciated the comprehensive lectures and the practical insights provided during the program.

The inaugural session was attended by Deputy Director (Central) Jammu Dr. Ashwani Sharma, Agronomist (VIS) Vikas Padha, Deputy Director Training (J) Alok Pandotra and Dr. Adil Rashid, Assistant Soil Survey Officer. The officers and staff of the Apiculture Development Scheme, Directorate of Agriculture, Jammu, conducted the proceedings of the program.

## DC Baramulla chairs DLCC meeting on NTPC programme, reviews COTPA implementation

JNEWS SERVICE  
BARAMULLA, JANUARY 20

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Baramulla, Minga Sherpa today chaired a meeting of the District Level Coordination Committee (DLCC) under the National Tobacco Control Programme (NTPC) to review the implementation of the Cigarettes and Other Tobacco Products Act (COTPA) in the district.

The meeting threadbare discussed effective measures to strengthen tobacco control initiatives in the district.

During the meeting, the DC emphasized the importance of enforcing COTPA

regulations to ensure a tobacco-free environment. Key directives included regular inspections by enforcement teams near educational institutions, especially within a 100-meter radius, and ensuring that all public offices display 'No Smoking' signage and remain smoke-free.

The DC also outlined plans for weekly drives in public spaces to promote awareness and prevent tobacco consumption. Awareness campaigns will be conducted during school assemblies to inform students about the harmful effects of tobacco and the provisions of COTPA.

## Deputy Chief Minister inaugurates "Sale Mela of Wool, Silk Products" of JKI

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JANUARY 20

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Kumar Choudhary, today underscored the need to promote the indigenous handicrafts of Jammu and Kashmir at national as well as international level.

"Nature has bestowed Jammu and Kashmir with variety of indigenous handicrafts, which have created a niche in national and international markets and the need is to promote these by way of sustained marketing as well as promotion. This would be providing a bigger market to these products which would in turn result in boosting the economy and generating jobs", the Deputy Chief minister maintained.

The Deputy Chief Minister was addressing a gathering after inaugurating the Jammu and Kashmir Industries (JKI)



Sale Mela today, showcasing an extensive range of wool and silk products.

The event, organised by Jammu and Kashmir Industries (JKI), was attended by Secretary in Industries and Commerce Department, Smitha Sethi, Director Industries and Commerce Jammu, Arun Kumar Manhas, Managing Director Jammu and Kashmir Industries, Vikram Gupta, Managing Director of Jammu and

Kashmir Minerals, Pawan Kumar Sharma and other senior officers.

While appreciating the efforts of JKI in organizing the event, the Dy CM said that the government is committed to support the local industries and necessary mechanism is already in place to catalyse the industrial growth. "This Sale Mela is a testament to the extraordinary talent of JKI workers and the rich heritage

of Jammu and Kashmir especially related to Mulberry Silk. The government remains dedicated towards promoting local crafts, ensuring sustainable livelihoods for our Sheep wool rearers, Sericulturists, Artisans and expanding their market reach," he said.

The Deputy Chief Minister also directed the JKI to explore the possibilities of conducting such kind of events at other prominent places within and outside J&K as well to showcase our rich heritage products.

The Sale Mela witnessed huge response from the employees of Civil Secretariat and will continue for next 10 days, offering exclusive discounts and special promotions to encourage public participation.

## Housing for all cherished mission of PM Modi: DDC Vice-Chairperson Udhampur

JNEWS SERVICE  
UDHAMPUR, JANUARY 20

Vice Chairperson, District Development Council (DDC) Udhampur Juhí Manhas Pathania on Monday met several public delegates from across the District. The delegations from Roun Mansar, Khoon, Patwar, Palnoo met the Vice Chairperson at her office in the DC Office Complex.

During the series of interactions with the delegations, she emphasized the importance of the PMAY initiative.

Highlighting the core mission of PMAY, Juhí Pathania said "Our priority is to identify and register every deserving beneficiary, ensuring no one is left behind. This initiative showcases the centre government's clear intentions, strong deter-

mination, and dedication to ensuring that the benefits of PMAY reach 100% eligible population, in line with the principle of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas.'"

She urged the survey teams to meticulously follow the scheme's guidelines, ensuring that no eligible beneficiary is excluded from the program. Stressing the importance of inter-departmental cooperation, Ms. Pathania emphasized the need for seamless implementation and accurate data collection to optimize the scheme's impact.

During her field visit, the Vice Chairperson actively engaged with the public, listened to their concerns, and assured them of timely redressal of grievances. She directed accompanying officers to expedite the completion

of developmental projects and prioritize initiatives aimed at uplifting rural communities. The Vice-Chairperson directed the Jal Shakti Department to execute all water supply schemes sanctioned under the Jal Jeevan Mission in the prescribed time to meet the requirement of the potable water supply of the area. She also directed the other line departments to pace up the progress of ongoing developmental works in the area.

Reiterating her commitment to the PMAY mission, Ms. Pathania stated, "This scheme is not merely about housing but about providing dignity, security, and a better quality of life to the underserved. We are steadfast in our efforts to ensure that every family has access to a safe and secure home."

## Power Shutdown

JNEWS SERVICE  
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 20

According to the Chief Engineer, Distribution, KPDCL, in order to carry out Augmentation/stabilization of 33 KV Awantipora Line, the shutdown of 33KV Awantipora-Awantipora Line shall be observed due to which Receiving Stations at Awantipora-Ist, Awantipora-II, IUST, AIIMS, Rice Mills, LIS shall remain off while power supply to the Malangpora, Padgampora, Beighpora, Barsoo, Awantipora and adjoining areas will be affected from 10:00 AM to 04:00 PM on 23, 28 & 30 January, 2025.

Similarly, to carry out the balance work for IE Wuyan Tap Line, the shutdown of 33KV Pampore-SIDCO Line shall be observed due to which 33/11KV Receiving Stations at the cement plants of Khrew & IE Khrew shall remain off while the power supply to IE Khrew and IE Wuyan will be affected from 10:00 AM to 05:00 PM on 23 January, 2025.

## Speaker J&K Legislative Assembly addresses 85th All India Presiding Officers Conference at Patna

JNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JANUARY 20

Speaker, J&K Legislative Assembly, Abdul Rahim Rather, today participated and addressed the 85th All India Presiding Officers Conference

2025 at Patna, Bihar. The conference, inaugurated by Lok Sabha speaker, Om Birla, was held on the theme '75th Anniversary of Constitution: Contribution of Parliament and State legislative bodies in strengthening constitutional

values'.

Addressing the conference, Abdul Rahim Rather highlighted that the Constitution not only serves as a substantive tool to set up the system of Governances, rather it is a roadmap to restore our glory.

"Our Constitution is fully committed towards welfare of the citizens which is progressive, inclusive and transformative", maintained the Speaker.

He added that the 75th anniversary of our Constitution is an opportune moment to

reflect on our achievements, acknowledge our shortcomings and reaffirm our commitment to uphold the values that have shaped our nation.

The Speaker said that the Parliament at the Central level and the state legislatures

at state level contributed significantly in strengthening the constitutional values in this journey of 75 years. He also appreciated the role of Supreme Court as the custodian and interpreter of the Constitution.