

**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:

- Sudden and continuous fever above 102°F
- Severe joint and muscle pain
- Nausea and vomiting
- A drop in body temperature
- Rash
- Bleeding from gums or nose, blood in stool
- Redness in eyes

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

# JINDRAH IMAGES

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## What couldn't be done in 70-years, PM Modi did it in one decade: Amit Shah

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, JAN 23

Terming abrogation of Article 370 as one the major achievements of Prime Minister Narendra Modi led regime, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday said that India during the past one decade has completed all those tasks which were pending for the past 70-years.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of Hindu Adhyatmik Aur Seva Mela at Ahmedabad in Gujarat, Shah, according to the news agency said, "There were many tasks that no one had the courage to do for seven decades after



independence. But now, India has been able to complete those tasks and stands with the world with full pride and honour."

He said, "Under the leadership of Prime Minister Modi, many works, which were pending for

decades, have been completed in the past ten years."

"The Article 370 was abolished from Kashmir, Ram Lalla's exile was completed and a grand Ram Temple was built in Ayodhya after centuries,

Kashi Vishwanath Corridor was built, Somnath Temple is being made of gold and Triple Talaq was abolished," he said.

Shah said that 170 countries of the world propagate yoga and accept its teachings. "PM Modi led

government at the Centre has enriched the languages and religions of India. The government has been able to bring back more than 350 idols of gods and goddesses stolen from India during the time of slavery," he said, adding, "The Modi government has taken India's culture to the world and the work in this direction will continue during the tenure."

The Union Home Minister paid tributes to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose on his birth anniversary. "Netaji is the guiding star of the 90-year-long freedom struggle from 1857 to 1947. He dedicated his entire life to the

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## CM Omar urges early completion of major hydropower projects in J&K



**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JANUARY 23

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah today chaired a review meeting of the Jammu & Kashmir State Power Development Corporation Limited (JKSPDC) here at Civil Secretariat to assess the progress made in execution of new hydroelectric projects and the expected enhancement

in power generation from these projects.

The meeting was attended by Advisor to the Chief Minister Nasir Aslam Wani, Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister Dheeraj Gupta, Principal Secretary Power Development Department (PDD) Rajesh H Prasad, Principal Secretary Finance Santosh D Vaidya, Managing Director

JKSPDC Pankaj Magotra and other senior officials.

During the meeting, the Chief Minister emphasized the need for timely execution of these projects to ensure their public utility and stressed the importance of tackling challenges such as contractual issues, time and financial over runs in case of projects under

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## PM Modi praises J&K, Ladakh for elevating country's sports culture

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JAN 23

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday praised Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh for elevating the sports culture across the country, and showcasing the nation's beauty and diversity.

In his message at Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2025 event that commenced in Leh today PM Modi, according to the news agency, reiterated the government's commitment to spread sports activities across India and said, "Ladakh and J&K have not only elevated



the culture of sports in our country, but also boosted tourism, showcasing the nation's beauty and diversity."

"The KIWG 2025 will play a crucial role in taking

our sporting excellence to the next level," the Prime Minister said, adding,

"Our government attaches top priority to sports development

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## Rajouri mysterious deaths: Investigations underway, fear among locals; authorities say situation under control

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JAN 23

The situation in the Badhaal area of Rajouri district continues to be grim following 17 deaths due to unknown causes. The government has yet to determine the reason behind these fatalities, which has led to widespread fear and anxiety among local residents. Officials are currently investigating various factors that could be contributing to this troubling phenomenon, while the people remain on high alert.

A government official who spoke to the news

agency said the situation remains under control. However, the mystery surrounding the deaths has left citizens feeling vulnerable. "We are conducting investigations at various levels to ascertain the causes of the deaths," the official said.

There are growing concerns among residents that toxins may be contaminating their food and water supply. Local authorities have begun shifting affected persons to a medical facility where they can receive proper assessments and care. This precautionary relocation aims to break any

the chain of infection that could arise from the contaminated resources, the official added.

Principal of GMC Rajouri, Dr Amarjeet Singh Bhatia, speaking to KNO said, "This is a fight against an invisible enemy, which is why various steps are being implemented to manage the situation. People should not panic." He said the decision to relocate residents to the medical college is not a quarantine measure but rather a precaution to ensure prompt medical attention if symptoms arise.

Dr Bhatia reassured

the public that healthcare workers have remained vigilant in the area for over 50 days without any team members falling ill. "I even visited the area without a mask and did not contract any illness," he said, adding that so far, there is no concrete evidence linking the deaths to a viral outbreak.

Even with reassurances, MLA Budhal, Javed Iqbal Choudhary, addressed a press conference where he expressed concern over the Central and J&K governments' handling of the crisis. He said the Omar Abdullah-led government is taking the situation

seriously, but added that the public should remain cooperative and patient during this challenging time. "All steps taken thus far are for the safety of the residents, and even the government is ensuring our cattle receive necessary fodder and water on time," he said.

Despite the actions being taken, Choudhary said that traces of toxins have been detected in some water samples. "One person named Aijaz received an antidote at GMC Rajouri and later at PGI Chandigarh. Thankfully, he is

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## Day, night temp settle above normal in Kashmir

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JAN 23

The minimum as well as the maximum temperatures across the Valley continued to settle above normal on Thursday while the weatherman has predicted no major weather activity till January 31 across Jammu and Kashmir.

According to the news agency, the maximum temperature settled at 13.3 degree Celsius in Srinagar, the summer capital



of Jammu and Kashmir, which was 6.2 degree Celsius above normal while the minimum temperature was also 0.3 degree above normal.

As per the details, Gul-

marg recorded a day temperature of 3.0 degree Celsius against the normal of 0.1 degree while the night temperature settled at minus 7.5 degree Celsius against minus 8.4

degree Celsius normal. The maximum temperature in Qazigund, a gateway of Kashmir settled at 13.4 degree Celsius while the minimum temperature settled at minus 2.6 degree Celsius. Pahalgam, recorded a day temperature of 9.6 degree Celsius against the normal of 4.8 degree while the night temperature settled at 5.6 degree Celsius.

Kupwara recorded a day temperature of 13.7 degree Celsius while the night temperature set-

tled at minus 2.2 degree Celsius and Kokernag in South Kashmir recorded a day temperature of 9.8 degree Celsius while the minimum temperature settled at minus 1.6 degree Celsius. Meanwhile, the Director Meteorological department (MeT) has predicted mostly dry and cloudy weather conditions till January 31.

However, he stated that there is a possibility of light rain and snow at isolated places in between January 29 and 30.

## J&K Police initiates legal action as fake account of Jammu ADGP's appears on FB

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JAN 23 (UNI)

Jammu and Kashmir Police on Thursday initiated legal action following a fake account of Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) Jammu, Anand Jain appeared on the Facebook social media platform.

The police spokesman

said, "it has come to our attention that a fake Facebook account has been created using the name of Anand Jain with a profile picture of the ADGP and a misleading introduction claiming to be associated with "Department Jammu & Kashmir ADGP, Director, Fire & Emergency Services, J&K." This fraudulent account is being used

to mislead the public and exploit their trust."

"We strongly condemn such unethical and fraudulent activities. The public is urged to remain vigilant and avoid responding to messages, friend requests, or any solicitations from such fake profiles," said the spokesperson.

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## India's first underwater deep sea human mission this year: Dr Jitendra

**AGENCIES**  
NEW DELHI, JAN 23

In a significant step toward advancing India's scientific capabilities and bolstering the blue economy, the Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Science and Technology; Earth Sciences and Minister of State for PMO, Department of Atomic Energy, Department of Space, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Dr. Jitendra Singh, announced that the country is set to launch its first human underwater submersible (Deep-Sea

Manned Vehicle) this year. Speaking at the second meeting of the Mission Steering Committee on the "Deep Ocean Mission", Dr. Jitendra Singh emphasized the groundbreaking nature of this initiative, which positions India among a select group of six nations with the technological prowess to undertake such an ambitious endeavour.

The Minister shared that the initial submersible will operate at a depth of up to 500 meters, with a subsequent goal of reaching a staggering depth of 6,000 meters by

next year. This achievement will align with the timelines of India's other landmark missions, including the Gaganyaan space mission, marking a "pleasant coincidence" in the nation's journey toward scientific excellence.

The Deep Ocean Mission, a flagship program launched under the visionary leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has been highlighted by him twice from the ramparts of the Red Fort on Independence Day.

Dr. Jitendra Singh underscored its poten-

tial to unlock vast resources, including critical minerals, rare metals, and undiscovered marine biodiversity, all of which are crucial for the country's economic growth and environmental sustainability.

"Through this mission, we are not just exploring the depths of our oceans but also building a robust blue economy that will drive India's future," Dr. Jitendra Singh said. The Minister emphasized that the entire initiative is based on indigenous technology, developed and manufactured entirely

in India, showcasing the nation's self-reliance in cutting-edge science. The mission also aims to enhance understanding of deep-sea ecosystems, contributing to sustainable fisheries and biodiversity conservation. By tapping into these underwater treasures, India is poised to secure long-term benefits for its economy, scientific community, and environmental resilience.

The Deep Ocean Mission faced delays due to the pandemic, but Dr. Jitendra Singh expressed optimism about the progress made, calling it a testament to India's determination and innovative spirit. He also highlighted the unique dual achievements of the coming years, with one Indian traveling to space and another venturing into the depths of the ocean, signifying the country's unparalleled advancements in both space and marine exploration.

As India prepares to launch its first human deep-sea submersible, the mission is a beacon of hope for sustainable development and

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## Transport Commissioner, JMC Commissioner inaugurate cleanliness, awareness drive for drivers

JINNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JANUARY 23

Transport Commissioner, Jammu & Kashmir Vishesh Paul Mahajan and Jammu Municipal Corporation Commissioner Divyansh Yadav today inaugurated a Cleanliness cum Awareness Drive for drivers here at Warehouse. The event was organized by the Pollution Control Centres Union and witnessed active participation from drivers of Mini-Buses and Buses.

Devansh Yadav, CEO Smart City was the Guest of Honour. During the drive, dustbins were installed at key locations and distributed among Mini-Bus and Bus drivers to encourage proper waste disposal. Additionally, a "Dos and Don'ts" guide for commercial vehicles was also launched, aimed at



promoting road safety and environmental consciousness among drivers.

Speaking on the occasion, CEO Smart City, Devansh Yadav, emphasized the importance of maintaining cleanliness at bus stops and other public areas, assuring that the Smart City Mission will play an active role in ensuring proper sanitation and waste management in

the city.

Addressing the gathering, Vishesh Paul Mahajan highlighted the significance of cleanliness and its direct correlation with road safety. He encouraged drivers to adopt clean and responsible practices not only for the benefit of passengers but also for the overall well-being of the community.

Among others present

were Jt. Transport Commissioner Vinay Samotra, Regional Transport Officer Jammu Pankaj Bhagotra, Joint Commissioner Municipal Abdul Satar, Health Officer JMC Dr Vinod Sharma, ARTO HQR. Jammu Rehana Tabassam, ARTO (FS) Bipen Singh Charak, ARTO B.O.I (P) Tara Mani, Members of different Transport Unions, MVIs and SMVIs.

The event concluded with a strong message to drivers and the public about the importance of cleanliness, road safety, and collective responsibility in creating a sustainable environment.

Later Transport commissioner along with CEO Smart city also took a whirl round of Apsara road Jammu, to take stock of traffic related issues.

## JMC organises cleanliness drive-cum-awareness campaign across City Hospitals

JINNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JANUARY 23

In the run-up to Republic Day, the Jammu Municipal Corporation (JMC) today conducted a city-wide cleanliness drive-cum-awareness campaign focusing on hospitals, health institutions, and their surrounding areas. The initiative aimed to enhance hygiene and promote public awareness about waste management.

The main event took place at Government Medical College and Hospital (GMC&H), Bakshi Nagar, Jammu, where students, staff, and local residents actively participated. The program featured a detailed demonstration on waste segregation, showcasing the correct use of different coloured bins for various types of waste.

This was followed by a



quiz competition on cleanliness and waste management, with winners receiving rewards as an encouragement for their efforts.

Adding a green touch to the event, a plantation drive was also conducted, led by prominent participants including the Medical Superintendent of GMC&H, the Head of the Department of Community Medicines, Dr. Vinod

Sharma and the Joint Commissioner of Health and Sanitation, JMC, as they stressed on the importance of collective efforts toward sustainable cleanliness.

Addressing the gathering, Mr. Abdul Star, Joint Commissioner (H&S) said that today's initiative was not just a symbolic event but a call for continuous efforts at both individual and community levels.

"Waste is a resource," Joint Commissioner (H&S) highlighted, "and if managed appropriately, it can help achieve the goal of wealth from waste."

The campaign also reinforced the importance of taking cleanliness practices into homes and neighbourhoods.

By maintaining proper waste segregation and disposal at the household level, citizens can contribute significantly to the national cleanliness mission. The event echoed the vision of the Prime Minister to realize the dream of a Swachh Bharat.

Participants expressed enthusiasm and pledged to carry forward the message of cleanliness, ensuring that the city remains clean and healthy for its residents.

## ADDC Udhampur flags off awareness rally ahead of National Voters Day

JINNEWS SERVICE  
UDHAMPUR, JANUARY 23

To spread awareness about the significance of National Voters' Day and encourage greater voter participation, an awareness rally was today flagged off by Additional District Development Commissioner Udhampur Rajinder Singh.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Dr Gurvinderjeet Singh, Chief Planning Officer Mohd Iqbal, Assistant Commissioner Development, Dr Ranjeet Singh Kotwal, Incharge Deputy District Election Officer, Dr Malvika and other officers and staff members of DC office besides students of educational institutions participated in the rally. The rally aimed to sensi-

tize citizens about their voting rights and responsibilities. The rally commenced from the District Administrative Complex and passed through the Salthia Chowk, Court Road, Ramnagar Chowk, Gole Market, Bus Stand and culminated at Mini Stadium Udhampur.

Participants carried banners, placards and slogans promoting voter awareness and the importance of informed and ethical voting.

The ADDC emphasized the pivotal role of voters in shaping the future of the nation. He urged everyone, especially the youth and first-time voters, to actively participate in the electoral process and contribute to the success of democracy.

## DC Kulgam reviews status of change in land use cases



JINNEWS SERVICE  
KULGAM, JANUARY 23

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan who is also Chairman of District Level Committee on Thursday chaired a meeting of Officers of various departments to review the progress achieved in the disposal of change of land use cases.

At the outset, DC

enquired about the status of NOCs being issued in favour of the applicants and applications received till date besides their reporting and follow up status by the concerned departments.

Six cases were put by the Committee today in which 04 cases were approved.

The Deputy Commissioner directed concerned members to ensure timely

issuance of NOCs to the applicants after proper verification of documents and rules under land conversion.

The meeting was attended by ACR, GM DIC, DFO, Executive Engineers from PHE, PDD, R&B, PMGSY, Irrigation and Flood Control, CAO, CHO, Tehsildar Kulgam/Yaripora/DH Pora, Devsar, EO MC Kulgam, Devsar and other Officials.

## GGHS Domana students join DIPR to promote Nasha Mukht Bharat campaign

JINNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JANUARY 23

A Cultural program on Nasha Mukht Bharat campaign was organised by Cultural Unit Jammu today at Government Girls High School Domana.

Artists of the Cultural Wing of the Information Department and students presented a scintillating cultural programme.

Incharge Headmaster Rajesh Singh shared his views on the topic and also appreciated the Cultural Unit of Department of Information and Public Relations for organizing the program to aware the future of the nation.

Among others staff members, officials of the Information Department and a large number of audience witnessed the program.

The whole programme



was conducted under the direction of Joint Director Information Jammu Atul

Gupta and supervision of Cultural Officer Mukesh Kumar Sharma.

## District Administration Poonch celebrates 10 years of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Scheme



JINNEWS SERVICE  
POONCH, JANUARY 23

The District Administration Poonch hosted a vibrant event today to commemorate the 10th anniversary of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) initiative, aimed at supporting girls and promoting gender equality. The celebration took place in the Auditorium Hall of Government Degree College.

Organized by the District Social Welfare Department under the supervision of District Social Welfare Officer Wakeel Ahmed Bhat, the event featured Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal as the Chief Guest. The gathering included

District Education Planning Officer, Chief Medical Officer, AD FCS & CA, the College Vice Principal, along with the officers, officials, and students from numerous educational institutions.

Under the slogan "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao," the event aimed to combat biases against girls, addressing critical issues such as female foeticide, underage marriages, and gender prejudices. The goal was to raise awareness and foster an environment conducive to the overall development of girls.

The event commenced with the lighting of a lamp by Chief Guest Vikas Kundal, followed by reciting of the National

Anthem. Attendees enjoyed a variety of cultural performances, including skits and dances presented by students, all centered on BBBP theme.

The Deputy Commissioner highlighted the significant strides made in women's education, empowerment, and improvements in child sex ratios over the past decade. The Deputy Commissioner urged all citizens to actively participate in these efforts, reinforcing the programme's message to protect and empower the girl child.

District Social Welfare Officer Wakeel Ahmed Bhat also addressed the audience, emphasizing the BBBP scheme's mission to educate citizens against gender bias and enhance welfare services for girls.

The event also featured speeches from various guests and students, further promoting the theme of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao.

## DDC Baramulla reviews physical, financial progress under District Capex

JINNEWS SERVICE  
BARAMULLA, JANUARY 23

In an effort to ensure the efficient and timely implementation of the District Capex Budget for 2024-25, the District Development Commissioner Baramulla, Minga Sherpa, chaired a comprehensive review meeting today at Dak-Bungalow, Baramulla.

The meeting focused on assessing both the physical and financial progress of ongoing developmental projects in the district.

The Joint Director Planning Baramulla, Javed Ahmad, delivered a detailed PowerPoint presentation, providing a sector-wise analysis of project achievements, financial expenditures and the status of various ongoing projects.

The presentation highlighted key metrics, including funds allocated, utilization rates, physical targets achieved and challenges encountered during project execution.

This data-driven approach helped guide productive discussions among the officials.

The DDC emphasized the need for timely project execution, optimal



utilization of funds, and adherence to quality standards in all sectors. He also stressed the importance of inter-departmental coordination and directed officers to resolve any bottlenecks hindering project progress. Additionally, the DDC urged officials to expedite the clearance of pending bills to ensure smooth project continuation.

DDC Minga Sherpa directed all department heads to prioritize the removal of bottlenecks, speed up the implementation of ongoing projects, and ensure timely comple-

tion of tasks. He emphasized the importance of coordinated efforts across departments and urged officials to work towards achieving the set goals for the fiscal year to benefit the people of Baramulla.

Officers from departments, including R&B, RDD, Hydraulic, KPDC, ICDS, Education, and others, provided updates on their respective sectors. The DDC reiterated the need to enhance monitoring mechanisms to ensure transparency, accountability, and efficient execution of developmental projects.

## Dy CM inspects Smart City works; asks to fast pace Jammu beautification



JINNEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JANUARY 23

Deputy Chief Minister, Surinder Choudhary, today inspected the ongoing smart city works at Residency Road, Jammu.

The Dy CM was accompanied by Municipal Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation, Devansh Yadav and other senior officers.

While inspecting the ongoing works, the Deputy Chief Minister directed for strict quality monitoring and fast paced execution of the project. He asked the officers for expeditious completion of beautification works being executed in Jammu city, so that the people get benefitted from

these development initiatives.

"Instructions have been already given to the executing agencies for taking the work in accordance with the already approved plans and there should be no compromise with the quality of works. Strict action would be initiated in case of any deviation and low quality works", maintained the Deputy Chief Minister.

While asking for undertaking developmental works in consonance with the local needs and aspirations, the Deputy Chief Minister said that developmental plans should be formulated in consonance with the demands and convenience of people of the area.

## Alumni Association meeting held at GCOE Jammu

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JANUARY 23

Alumni Association of Government College of Education, Jammu, organized a special meeting, featuring an insightful lecture on "Communication Skills for Professional Development" by Madhvi Sharma, Senior Broadcaster, All India Radio (AIR).

The event commenced with a welcome address by the President Dr Davinder Kour, who is also Convener of Alumni Association of GCOE Jammu.

In her Presidential address the College Principal, Dr Jyoti Parihar emphasized the significance of alumni engagement in the growth of the institution and the professional development of students. She appreciated the presence of esteemed alumni and special guest Madhvi Sharma, whose expertise in broadcasting and communication added great value to the session.



In her lecture, Madhvi Sharma highlighted the importance of effective verbal and non-verbal communication, public speaking, active listening and confidence building in professional settings. She shared real-life experiences from her career in broadcasting, providing practical insights on how strong communication skills can enhance career prospects.

Illustrious alumni who also spoke on the occasion were Dr Joginder Singh, Associate Professor, GDC Samba, Rajiv Trikha, Lecturer, Jawaz Iqbal Wani, Best Teacher Awardee,

Mukeet Ahmed, Ph.D. Scholar, Anjali and others.

The program was organized by Alumni Relations Cell members Dr Shalini Rana, Prof Balwan Singh, Dr Suraj Prakash, Raman-deep Kralia. Harpreet Kour compared the program.

All the faculty members were also present on the occasion. Razia, Jaspreet, President, Anadika, Sneha, Surbhi, Riya, Raksha and Diksha were the student organizers. About fifty students were present on the occasion.

The formal Vote of thanks was presented by Prof Balwan Singh.

## DC Budgam lays foundation of Revenue court room

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
BUDGAM, JANUARY 22

The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Budgam Akshay Labroo, today laid the foundation for a state-of-the-art Revenue Court Room at the District Headquarters today.

The event was attended by Officers of District Administration including ADC, ACR, SE R&B circle Budgam, CPO, Executive Engineer R&B, AEE R&B besides representatives of District Bar Association, Budgam. Speaking on the occasion, the DDC underscored the critical role of revenue courts in addressing land and property disputes effectively besides emphasizing the need for adequate infrastructure to facilitate smooth functioning and timely resolution of revenue cases.

The DC stated that litigants and advocates had



projected the need to have a dedicated court room for smooth & seamless adjudication of revenue cases at the district HQ in Budgam. Foundation laying event is a step in realising the objective, he added.

He said that the Court Room is being designed to meet contemporary standards, incorporating modern amenities to provide a comfortable and efficient working environment for litigants, officers & lawyers.

A single storey complex will serve as a hub for revenue related cases/ issues pertaining to District Budgam, he added.

The DDC also directed all the stakeholders to ensure the timely completion of the project.

Representatives from District Bar Association, Budgam stated that establishment of Revenue Court will streamline adjudication and delivery of justice in revenue related matters in district Budgam.

## Poonch: Heavy penalty imposed on Stone crushers, leaseholders for Violation of mining regulations



**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
POONCH, JANUARY 23

To enforce compliance to environmental norms, District Mineral Officer (DMO) Poonch, during his recent whirlwind tour of the district, has imposed substantial penalties on several stone crushers, leaseholders and a government company for violation of regulations.

A penalty of Rs 37 lakh has been imposed on stone crushers and Rs 2 lakh on leaseholders for violation of operational and environmental norms and mining lease agreements. An additional Rs 2 lakh penalty has been

charged from a government company for not complying with operational guidelines.

To enforce strict compliance with mineral exploitation laws and promote sustainable mining practices, the DMO also issued a penalty notice of Rs 25 lakh to stone crusher unit holders across the Poonch district for violations of established norms.

The DMO emphasized that these actions are taken to ensure that mining operations are conducted in an environmentally responsible manner and enforce payment of due royalties.

## GDC Ramgarh Students sensitized about legal protection for Women at Workplace

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SAMBA, JANUARY 23

Women Development Cell-CASH of Government Degree College Ramgarh organized an awareness programme on the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013.

The event was organized under the guidance and supervision of the Principal of the College, Prof. (Dr.) Geetanjali Andotra and was aimed at empowering women by creating awareness about their legal rights to prevent and address sexual harassment at the workplace.

The program was coordinated by Dr. Snobar, convener of the women development cell of the college. The resource person for the session was Advocate Mehrukh Syedan- a renowned expert in criminal law, civil litigation and other legal matters.



She delivered an informative lecture on the provisions of POSH Act, 2013, its significance, and the protection it offers to women in the workplace. She highlighted the role of the Internal Complaint Cell (ICC) and Local Complaint Cell (LCC), which serve as vital platforms for addressing sexual harassment cases both within institutions and at the local level. She also highlighted the "Vishaka Guidelines" that were stipulated by the Supreme Court of India, in Vishaka and others v State of Rajasthan case in 1997, regarding sexual harass-

ment at workplace, a landmark case which helped with giving rise to the POSH Act, 2013. She also threw light on welcome and unwelcome behaviour at the workplace. The event concluded with a call for increased awareness and collective efforts to create a safer working environment for women. The session was attended by all the faculty members including Dr. Snobar, Prof. Sandeep Kumari, Prof. Brahm Dutt, Ashok Kumar (PTI), Dr. Shivali Panjgotra, Dr. Neeraj, Priya Sharma and Anjali.

## Sakeena Itoo visits GMC Jammu, SMGS Shalamar, enquires about health of Budhal patients

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JANUARY 23

Minister for Health and Medical, Social Welfare and Education, Sakeena Itoo, today visited the Government Medical College (GMC) Jammu and SMGS Hospital, Shalamar to enquire about the health and well being of patients of Budhal village of Rajouri district.

MLA Banihal, Sajjad Shaheen; Principal GMC Jammu; Medical Superintendents of both the hospitals and other concerned medical professionals were also present on the occasion.

During her visit, Sakeena Itoo interacted with the patients of Budhal and assured them of all possible assistance and support from the government. He assured the affected families that a detailed investigation is underway to determine the cause of the tragedy. "Health department, police department and district administration is working tirelessly 24\*7 to ascertain the real cause behind this tragedy", the Minister stated.

While personally reviewing the ongoing treatment and care of these patients,



The Minister asked the hospital administration to monitor their health conditions on regular basis. She directed them to keep ample number of doctors and paramedics available for their continuous monitoring. She also asked them to keep the ministry updated about the well being of these patients.

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## SWD celebrates 10 years of Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme at Kishtwar

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
KISHTWAR, JANUARY 23

An impressive event was organized today by the District Social Welfare Department to mark the celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Programme.

The event witnessed the enthusiastic participation of Girl Students and NCC Cadets of local Schools and Colleges, Staff of Parisha-Home for Girls, Staff of DSWO office besides others.

Assistant Labour Commissioner Mamta Sudershan and BDO Trigam Chandan Manhas were the Special Guests on the occasion.

The Special Guests highlighted the significant improvements in women's education, women's empowerment, and child sex ratios achieved over the past ten years. They also emphasized that the district administration is committed to furthering these initiatives through a



series of week-long activities aimed at promoting the goals of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao scheme.

District Social Welfare Officer Zubair Ahmed spoke about the programme, outlining plans for community engagement activities throughout the week to raise awareness about the critical importance of educating and uplifting girls.

He called on all citizens to participate actively in these efforts, reinforcing the message of the programme that aims to protect and empower the girl child.

The event also featured

Beti Bachao Beti Padhao pledge administered to the students of Various schools, colleges and NCC cadets.

Also a Special Cake Cutting Ceremony along with cultural performances was held at the "Parisha-Home for Girls" to commemorate the 10 Year celebration of BBBP initiative.

The overwhelming participation marked the success of initiative in the district.

The whole activities were coordinated under the close supervision of TSWO Kishtwar Rajesh Kumar Sharma.

## Industrial Association Bari Brahmana meets CM's Advisor

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, JANUARY 23

Ahead of the first budget to be presented by Omar led government, a delegation of Bari Brahmana Industries Association today met Advisor to Chief Minister, Nasir Aslam Wani, presenting a comprehensive list of demands to make their units lucrative.

The association emphasized the need for extending implementation of turnover-based incentives to support and encourage existing operational industrial units of J&K. It also sought a dedicated budget for working capital interest subvention without any capping, ensuring financial relief to industrial units.

Other demands raised by the association included introduction of price and purchase preferences for

local MSMEs to enhance their competitiveness and market share. The delegation also demanded steps to convert leaseholder rights into freehold rights for existing industrial units in J&K.

In addition, they asked for Infrastructure Upgradation at Industrial Estate Bari Brahmana, GST-Linked Incentives, adoption of ease of doing business principles by all government departments, including onboarding on a single-window system to streamline approvals and processes.

The delegation stressed that these measures are vital for industrial sector's growth and attracting more investments into the region.

The Advisor to Chief Minister listened attentively to the delegation's concerns and assured them

of government's commitment towards resolving their genuine issues. He made out that the Omar Abdullah led government is focused on creating a business-friendly environment and ensuring that the industrial sector thrives.

The delegation was led by Association President, Lalit Mahajan, with other members including Senior Vice President, General Secretary and several Executive Committee members of the association accompanying him to meet the Advisor.

Pertinent to mention here that besides these a number of delegations from all over J&K met the Advisor and apprised him of their demands. He assured them of taking all necessary steps to address their issues and concerns at an earliest.

## DC reviews arrangements for Republic Day 2025 at DPL Rajouri

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
RAJOURI, JANUARY 23

Deputy Commissioner Rajouri, Abhishek Sharma, today conducted an on-site inspection of arrangements being made for the Republic Day 2025 celebrations at the District Police Lines (DPL) Rajouri. Accompanying him were Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Dr. Raj Kumar Thapa, and other

senior district officers. During the visit, the DC took a comprehensive review of the preparations, including seating arrangements, stage setup, security measures, and logistical arrangements for the smooth conduct of the event. He emphasized the need for meticulous planning to ensure the event is organized with grandeur and discipline, reflecting the spirit of the occasion.

## Community Awareness Program on Rabies Prevention organised at Block Kot Bhalwal

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JANUARY 23

Department of Information and Public Relations, in collaboration with The State Surveillance Unit, Integrated Disease Surveillance Program (IDSP), Directorate of Health Services (DHS) Jammu and with support from the National Health Mission (NHM) and Chief Medical Officer (CMO), Jammu, successfully conducted a Rabies Awareness Program here at Village Ghorata, Block Kot Bhalwal.

The initiative, organised under the direction of Joint Director Information Jammu, Atul Gupta and supervision of Cultural Officer, Mukesh Kumar Sharma, received significant support from Dr. Rakesh Magotra, Director Health Services Jammu and Dr. Harjeet Rai, State Surveillance Officer/State Nodal Officer NRPC, Dr. Harbaksh Singh, Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Jammu and Dr. Rabia Khan, Block Medical Officer (BMO) Kot Bhalwal and Cultural Unit of Department of Information and Public Relations.

As part of the program,



a Nukkad Natak was presented at the local school, attracting enthusiastic participation from both students and the general public. The street play effectively conveyed key messages about rabies prevention, the importance of timely vaccination and the need for community engagement in rabies control efforts.

The event aimed to raise awareness about rabies—a preventable viral disease that remains a significant public health concern. The program emphasized the importance of early reporting of animal bites, timely administration of anti-rabies vaccines, and the role of responsible pet ownership in preventing the spread of rabies. In addition to providing accurate information, the Natak effectively dispelled common myths related to vaccination and rabies prevention. It also emphasized important Do's and Don'ts,

such as Wash animal bite wounds immediately with soap and water for at least 15 minutes, seek medical attention promptly after a bite, don't rely on unverified traditional remedies and don't ignore minor scratches or assume all pets are vaccinated.

The program also highlighted the free availability of ARV and ARS at government health facilities, ensuring accessibility to life-saving interventions for all.

The collaboration between various departments, including Health, Information and Education, underscores the collective resolve to combat rabies and protect public health. This activity serves as a significant step in building community awareness about Rabies prevention and control, aligning with the National Goal of Dog Mediated Rabies elimination by 2030.

## Youth Week: CUJ, Ramkrishna Mission hold Inspiring Talk on 'Swami Vivekananda & Youth'

J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JAN 23

The Office of Dean Students' Welfare, under the patronage of Prof. Sanjeev Jain, Vice-chancellor, Central University of Jammu, in collaboration with Ramkrishna Mission, Jammu, and Vidyarthi Sewa Educational Trust, successfully hosted a series of impactful events under Youth Week, with the highlight being a thought-provoking talk titled "Swami Vivekananda and Youth." This program, organized in commemoration of National Youth Day, inspired participants with Swami Vivekananda's enduring vision for youth empowerment.

The keynote speaker, Swami Yajnadharananda, Secretary of Ramkrishna Mission, Jammu, captivated the audience with a powerful address. The event witnessed enthusiastic participation from students, faculty, and non-teaching staff, who collectively reflected on Swami Vivekananda's teachings and their relevance in fostering a progressive and resilient society.

As part of the Youth Week celebrations, a free medical camp was organized by Ramkrishna Mis-



sion exclusively for university students, faculty, and non-teaching staff. This initiative highlighted the importance of holistic well-being—encompassing physical, intellectual, and spiritual health. The camp featured comprehensive health check-ups and consultations led by a distinguished team of medical professionals, including Dr. B.D. Sharma (Ex-Director of Health), Dr. Shakti Kumar (Physician), Dr. Shekhar Sharma (Eye Specialist), dedicated staff nurses and Swami Vijaysharananda, Medical Incharge of the Ramkrishna mission.

To further intellectual engagement, a bookstall showcasing literature on Swami Vivekananda's life,

philosophy, and inspirational works was set up by Ramkrishna Mission, allowing attendees to explore his teachings in greater depth.

The program commenced with a warm welcome to the distinguished guests and a traditional lamp-lighting ceremony, followed by a Pushpanjali (floral tribute) to Swami Vivekananda. On the eve of Parakram Diwas, homage was also paid to Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose, a symbol of courage and patriotism. His unwavering dedication to India's freedom and his inspiring leadership were remembered with deep reverence. The event emphasized the shared values of Swami

Vivekananda and Netaji, including courage, perseverance, and selfless service.

Prof. Ritu Bakshi, Dean of Students Welfare at Central University of Jammu, delivered the welcome address, underscoring the importance of unity, dedication, and value-based education among the youth. Prof. Ashwini Kumar Nanda, Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities, emphasized the significance of youth empowerment and education in shaping a brighter future. Sanak Srivats, Secretary of ABVP, J&K, delivered an engaging speech on the transformative role of youth in driving societal progress, inspiring students

to actively contribute to community development and leadership. The special guest, Swami Yajnadharananda, delivered a compelling address on the theme of Yuva Shakti (Youth Power). Drawing from Swami Vivekananda's ideals, he encouraged students to harness their inner strength, adopt discipline, and commit to serving society. His message highlighted the immense potential of youth in nation-building.

Prof. Yashwant Singh, Registrar of Central University of Jammu, quoted Swami Vivekananda, reminding the audience, "Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached." He emphasized the unparalleled energy and potential of young minds to transform society when guided by discipline, values, and purpose. The event ended on a high note with a heartfelt vote of thanks delivered by Dr. Bharti Gupta, expressing gratitude to the dignitaries, organizers, and participants for their contributions to the program's success.

### FROM THE PAGE 1...

#### What couldn't be done...

independence of the country. In the history of the world's freedom movements, Netaji will always be remembered by the world for his efforts to make India free by traveling to several countries to form the Azad Hind Fauj, and leading the nation towards independence."

Shah stated that Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose will remain a guiding light for generations of India's youth, teaching them qualities like patriotism, character, and dedication. KNO

#### CM Omar urges early...

construction and operation and maintenance issues of commissioned projects.

The roadmap for the next five years was presented showing substantial capacity addition to meet growing energy demands which would gradually reduce reliance on power imports, and boost the state's energy self-sufficiency. Upcoming projects, Detailed Project Report (DPR) formulation and appraisal were also discussed and JKSPDC was asked to focus on strategic project planning for development of hydropower assets on Chenab, Jhelum, Ravi and Indus rivers.

Highlighting the government's commitment to sustainable energy, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah urged officials to study revival plans for stalled projects and execute them efficiently.

He called for a proactive approach to address the challenges faced by JKSPDC and stressed that enhancing J&K's hydropower capacity is essential for meeting our energy demand.

"The timely execution of hydropower projects is essential to unlocking Jammu and Kashmir's potential as a power-surplus state. I urge all stakeholders to address challenges proactively and expedite ongoing works to serve the public interest," Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said. Earlier, Principal Secretary PDD provided a comprehensive update on the status of hydroelectric power development in Jammu and Kashmir.

Of the region's estimated 18,000 MW hydropower potential, 15,000 MW has already been identified, making it a key driver for future energy initiatives.

A detailed review of commissioned projects, including the Baglihar Hydroelectric Power Project (Stages I & II) on the Chenab River, Upper Sindh Hydroelectric Project (Stages I & II) on the Sind River, Lower Jhelum Hydroelectric Project in Baramulla was carried out during the meeting. The meeting also deliberated on projects under construction, including the New Ganderbal Hydroelectric Project (93 MW) on the Sind River, the Pakal Dul Hydroelectric Project (1,000 MW) under the Chenab River cascade, and the Ratle Hydroelectric Project (850 MW), which has been revived through a joint venture between NHPC and JKSPDC.

Discussions highlighted the importance of expediting work on these projects to ensure these become operational at the earliest.

#### PM Modi praises...

in Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir. Through 100 Khelo India Centres in Jammu & Kashmir and three in Ladakh, including a State Centre of Excellence in Leh for athletics, archery, and boxing, our efforts are shaping the region into a hub of sporting excellence."

The Prime Minister congratulated Ladakh and J&K for organising the first major sports meet of the national calendar and demonstrating to the world why these regions are hubs of winter sports.

The Khelo India Winter Games (KIWG) 2025 kicked off in Leh this morning the opening ceremony took

place at the iconic NDS Stadium despite challenging weather conditions.

Union Sports Minister Dr. Mansukh Mandaviya was unable to attend the event due to a flight cancellation caused by inclement weather.

A statement issued by the Ladakh administration stated that Dr. Mandaviya expressed disappointment at missing the opening ceremony. However, he declared the games open in a message, highlighting India's diverse sporting potential. He described India as a "4D sports destination" with opportunities for winter sports in the Himalayas, adventure sports in the Northeast, beach games in the South, and popular games on the West Coast.

Looking ahead, Dr. Mandaviya expressed optimism for India's sporting future, citing the successes of 2024 in chess, cricket, the Olympics, and Paralympics. He stated that the Khelo India Winter Games serve as a training ground for future Winter Olympians, where dedicated athletes are being prepared to achieve international success.

Nineteen teams representing states, union territories, and institutions like the Army and ITBP are participating.

A total of 594 participants, including 428 athletes, nineteen teams, comprising States, Union Territories and institutional outfits like Army and ITBP, are competing in the Ladakh leg of KIWG 2025. This marks the second time Ladakh has hosted the winter Games, now in its fifth edition. KNO

#### Rajouri mysterious deaths...

responding well to the treatment," the MLA said. He added that three siblings who showed severe symptoms were airlifted to GMC Jammu for further evaluation; however, complications arose in arranging an air ambulance to transfer them to PGI Chandigarh.

Choudhary said systemic failures are a significant barrier to effective action, asserting that the "dual power system" in Jammu and Kashmir hampers timely decision-making and action. "There is no singular authority, and we need to have a direct line of communication between J&K and Central government to address emergencies like this more efficiently," he claimed.

"Home Minister had sent the team here which took samples, but the samples are still here as they are being sent by vehicle which will take time," he said. "Air ambulance should have been here to take them to the respective institute for immediate analysis so as to ascertain the reasons of deaths but that isn't happening due to dual power system."

He added, "I myself contacted Dr Jitendra Singh, LG, CM for air ambulance but failed that is why people need to wake up and fight to end this dual power system."

Critically, Choudhary accused the Principal, GMC Jammu of causing unnecessary delays in referring the ill siblings to PGI Chandigarh, saying that personal conflicts and "ego clashes" are endangering lives. "If anything happens to these children, the Principal should be held accountable," he said.

The MLA said the situation warrants the declaration of a national emergency. "We must all work collaboratively—this is not the time for politics," he said, adding that playing partisan games could detract from essential public health responses.

Principal, GMC Jammu, Dr Ashutosh Gupta said the hospital was informed at 6:30 pm on Wednesday about airlifting three children exhibiting symptoms of the mysterious illness from GMC Rajouri to GMC Jammu.

"To facilitate their care, GMC Jammu contacted PGIMER Chandigarh to confirm bed availability. Despite repeated requests to the Director and HoD of PGIMER Chandigarh, the administration at PGIMER conveyed their inability to accept the patients due to a lack of

available beds," he said.

Dr Gupta said that, in response, GMC Jammu immediately dispatched critical care ambulances to the technical airport in Jammu for potential road transport to Chandigarh. However, considering the urgency of the children's condition, they were transferred to SMGS Hospital, Jammu, where senior pediatric consultants, including the HoD Pediatrics, received them, he said.

"One child's condition deteriorated rapidly upon arrival, requiring immediate ventilator support and advanced ICU interventions. Timely and high-end interventions at SMGS Hospital prevented adverse outcomes that could have occurred during transit to Chandigarh," he added.

Dr Gupta said the GMC Jammu medical team is in constant touch with their counterparts at PGIMER Chandigarh. Experts from ICMR and NCDC Delhi are also providing regular updates and guidance on patient management.

He also acknowledged the efforts of MLA Budhal Javed Iqbal Choudhary for arranging midnight airlifting and for standing by the public of Bhudhal during this critical time.

Dr Gupta praised the dedication of the GMC Jammu medical fraternity, including faculty, paramedics and administrative staff, who he said are working tirelessly to save lives. "We will leave no stone unturned to support the people of Bhudhal and ensure the best possible medical care during these extraordinary times," he said. KNO

#### J&K Police initiates...

He said, "instances of similar scams in the past have led to financial losses and emotional distress for victims."

The Additional Director General of Police (ADGP), Jammu Zone, emphasizes that this fraudulent act is a serious violation and an attempt to mislead the public, the spokesman said.

He stated, "the Jammu and Kashmir Police takes such cyber offenses very seriously. Immediate legal action has been initiated against the individuals involved in this unlawful activity."

A thorough investigation is currently underway, and strict action will be taken as per the law to ensure that the perpetrators are held accountable, said the spokesperson.

The public is advised to be cautious and avoid engaging with such fake accounts, report any suspicious online activity to the authorities promptly, rely only on verified and legitimate social media accounts of the Jammu and Kashmir Police for official communication or updates.

"For reference, the official Facebook profile of the ADGP is easily identifiable. Stay alert, stay cautious, and report any suspicious activity," said the Police spokesman.

#### India's first underwater...

scientific discovery, paving the way for a future where the ocean's potential is harnessed responsibly and effectively.

The meeting saw the participation of distinguished leaders such as Pankaj Chaudhary, Minister of State for Finance; Sanjay Seth, Minister of State for Defence; Suman K Bery, Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog; Prof. Ajay Kumar Sood, Principal Scientific Advisor to the Government of India; Dr. M Ravichandran, Secretary of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, along with senior officials from various Ministries.

## Keeway India unveils K300 SF with Exclusive Launch Offer



J1 NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JANUARY 23

Keeway India, under the aegis of Adishwar Auto Ride India (AARI), is excited to announce the introduction of a special edition of its popular K300 motorcycle series, named the Keeway K300 SF (Street Fighter). As part of an exclusive offer, the first 100 customers can own this stunning machine at a special price of just 1.69 lakhs (ex-showroom). The K300 SF is an upgraded version of the K300N, and the limited period offer will make it a great value for money product for performance motorcycle enthusiasts.

In this ever-growing 300cc segment, the K300 SF with its exclusive pricing, will give the first 100 set of customers a unique opportunity to step into the premium 300cc segment, standing out from the rest in the Indian market. Speaking on the launch, Mr. Vikas Jhabakh, Managing Director of Keeway India, said, "The Keeway K300 SF embodies our focus on delivering world-class products tailored to the needs of Indian riders. By introducing the K300 SF at a special price for the first 100 customers, we're offering a touch of exclusivity to early adopters who share our passion for innovation and performance. This initiative makes the K300 SF a compelling offering with immense value for money. We're confident that it will resonate deeply with motorcycling enthusiasts across the country." The Keeway

K300 SF offers a seamless blend of sporty design and superior performance, promising an unmatched riding experience. With its striking new name, cutting-edge features, and exclusive pricing, it's the ultimate choice for riders who value individuality and adrenaline-fueled journeys.

#### Key Features of the Keeway 300 SF:

- Engine Power: Equipped with a robust 292.4cc, liquid-cooled, single-cylinder, 4-stroke engine that delivers exceptional performance.
- Maximum Output: Generates a peak power of 27.5 HP at 8,750 RPM and maximum torque of 25 Nm at 7,000 RPM.
- Transmission: Smooth 6-speed gearbox offering precise gear shifts for enhanced riding dynamics.
- Design & Build: Sporty and aggressive naked streetfighter design, highlighted by a sharp LED headlamp, sculpted fuel tank, and ergonomic seating.
- Braking System: Advanced dual-channel ABS paired with disc brakes for superior stopping power and safety.
- Suspension: Front USD (upside-down) forks and rear mono-shock suspension for optimum stability and comfort.
- Tyres: Fitted with grippy 17-inch alloy wheels and tubeless tyres for enhanced control.
- Instrument Console: Fully digital instrument cluster providing comprehensive information, including speed, gear position, fuel level, and more.

## DDC reviews implementation of Self Employment Schemes in Poonch District

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
POONCH, JANUARY 23

District Development Commissioner Poonch, Vikas Kundal on Thursday chaired a meeting to review the progress achieved in promoting self employment under Jammu and Kashmir Rural Employment Generation Programme (JKREGP), Prime Minister Employment Generation Programme (PMEGP) being implemented by District Industries Centre and Khadi And Village Board Poonch.

The Deputy Commissioner asked the line departments to encour-



age the maximum number of unemployed youth to establish ventures under government schemes. He urged bankers to expedite the processing of loan Disbursement to achieve the desired targets and facilitate aspiring entrepreneurs in establishing their income-generating units without delay.

The JKREGP and PMEGP schemes aim to harness the potential of youth in establishing enterprises in pro-

duction and services sectors, thereby creating job opportunities.

Additionally, it focuses on developing entrepreneurial skills among rural unemployed youth through the establishment of new self-employment ventures and MSMEs.

The meeting was attended by the General Manager of DIC, District Officer of KVIB, Lead District Manager, and other concerned officers.

## Teacher training programs conclude at DIET Poonch

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
POONCH, JANUARY 23

Two impactful teacher training programs aimed at enhancing classroom efficiency and participatory school governance successfully concluded at the District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) Poonch here today.

The training sessions, conducted on the directions of SCERT Jammu and under the guidance of DIET Principal Anjali Gupta, witnessed enthusiastic participation from over 200 teachers representing 11 educational zones.

The first program focused on the Development of Teacher Resources for Classroom Transactions and Learning Outcomes, coordinated by Muzaffar Hussain. It emphasized equipping educators with innovative strategies and tools to improve classroom interactions and learning results. Participants actively engaged in creating teaching resources tailored to meet diverse student needs, ensuring practical applications in their respective schools.

Simultaneously, the second training program, coordinated by Altaf Hus-



sain, centered on the Creation of School Management and Development Committees (SMC/SMDC). This initiative aimed to strengthen school management through participatory governance. Teachers were trained to draft comprehensive School Development Plans (SDPs), promoting inclusive and sustainable school growth. The training sessions were enriched by lectures delivered by prominent resource persons, including Hatoon Rathore, Darshan Kumar, Harish Kumar, Balvinder Singh, Ajaz Hussain, Divyot Singh, and Harsimran Singh. These experts provided valuable insights

on topics such as effective classroom resource creation, collaborative school governance, and strategies for enhancing learning outcomes. In her closing address, Principal Anjali Gupta commended the dedication and creativity displayed by the participants. She expressed her confidence that the training would bring transformative changes in classrooms and schools across the district. "The enthusiasm and innovation demonstrated by our teachers are commendable. I urge all participants to implement their learnings effectively in their schools to ensure lasting impact," she said.

## DC Srinagar finalizes arrangements for observance of upcoming Meraj-un-Nabi (SAW)

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 23

In connection with observance of upcoming Meraj-un-Nabi (SAW) 1446 Hijri, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Dr Bilal Mohi-Ud-Din today Bhat chaired a meeting here at Meeting Hall of the DC Office Complex to review the arrangements being made by all line Departments for smooth conduct of the auspicious religious occasion.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioners, RTO, Kashmir, Superintendents of Police, Traffic, Security, Joint Commissioner SMC, Superintending Engineer R&B, PDD, SDM East, Chief Medical Officer, besides senior Officers of Information, Fire & Emergency, PHE, JKRTC, and other line Departments, besides Executive Magistrate of J&K Wakf Board and Management members of Hazratbal Shrine and Jenab Sahib Saura.

At the outset, the Deputy Commissioner sought a detailed action plan from concerned Departments regarding the arrangements being put in place during auspicious days of Meraj-un-Nabi (SAW) with regard to electricity, water supply, sanitation, cleanliness, fire service, transport, parking and medical facilities etc.

The DC directed the Officers of all line Departments to ensure special arrangements for smooth

observance of the religious occasion at the Shrine for the Devotees particularly during the intervening night (Shab) 26-27th Rajab 1446 Hijri, which falls on intervening night of 27-28 January 2025 and on Friday following that falls on January 31, 2025.

To ensure adequate availability of transport facility, the RTO was asked to make better transport arrangements particularly during night and wee hours for the devotees during the auspicious days of Meraj-un-Nabi (SAW) and make availability of e-Rickshaws from parking slots to Shrine for old age and physically challenged people.

With regard to power supply, the DC asked the PDD Engineers to ensure uninterrupted power supply at the Shrine during the auspicious days of night prayers as well as on the day of display of Holy Relic and keep proper power backup to tackle any power breakdown. In this regard the DC was informed that in addition 400 KVA Genset and 20 KVA UPS has been kept as backup to provide power supply during any failure so that devotees do not face any difficulty.

Similarly, the DC directed the PHE authorities to ensure adequate water supply at the Shrine so that devotees do not face any inconvenience. He instructed them to keep a sufficient number of water tankers at the premises to cater to the demand.

Likewise, the DC

asked the SMC Officers to deploy sufficient men and machinery at the venue to ensure proper cleanliness in and around the Shrine. They were also asked to take measures for establishment of mobile toilets besides a concrete mechanism to contain stray dog menace in and around the Shrine.

The DC also laid stress on making all dysfunctional Street/Mass lights functional well before the commencement of the Holy religious occasion.

The Health authorities were asked to set up a Medical camp with adequate number of Doctors and Paramedics, besides an ambulance service and other first aid facilities in the premises of Hazratbal Shrine as per past practice to provide medical facilities at the Shrine.

Earlier, the DC was apprised by the Executive Magistrate, J&K Wakf Board about the arrangements being made by the Wakf Board for smooth observance of the Holy religious occasion during which thousands of people are expected to visit to take a glimpse of the Holy Relic and offer special prayers.

Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner also reviewed the arrangements being made at Jenab Sahab Saura, Asar-e-Sharif Shahri Kalashpora, Shrine of Hazrat Mir Syed Yaqoob Sahib in Sonwar and other prominent religious places and directed for ensuring better facilities to devotees on the eve of Meraj-un-Nabi (SAW).

## District Employment & Counseling Centre Samba hosts Job Fair

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
SAMBA, JANUARY 23

The District Employment & Counseling Centre Samba successfully conducted a comprehensive Job Fair today, bringing together job seekers and prominent employers to address local employment challenges.

As many as 10 private companies including Jamkas Pharmaceuticals, Uflex Ltd, Kandhari Beverage Pvt Ltd, LIC, Guru Ji Placements, Agile Herbs participated in the fair. Over 300 job seekers registered for the event of which 62 candidates were shortlisted by participating companies.

Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma inaugu-



rated the job fair and engaged with employers. He emphasized the importance of continued collaboration of government departments and the private sector.

Assistant Director Employment Naresh Kumar encouraged youth participation and facilitated employer interactions.

Beyond job interviews, the event also provided crucial support to attendees including counseling on self-employment

schemes including Mission YUVA, Mumkin, Tejeswini and Information about government-sponsored entrepreneurship programs. On-the-spot registration on the J&K state employment portal (<http://jakemp.nic.in>) was also provided.

The job fair acted as a significant step in connecting local talent with employment opportunities and promoting entrepreneurship in the region.

## MLA Ramban leads "Swachhtra" Sanitation Drive ahead of Republic Day

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
RAMBAN, JANUARY 23

In a significant initiative to promote cleanliness and patriotism, MLA Ramban Arjun Singh Raju today led a special sanitation drive themed "Swachhtra - Gantantra Ki Shaan, Swachhta Se Bane Mahaan."

The drive, aligning with the spirit of Republic Day, aims to underscore the importance of cleanliness as a fundamental pillar of national progress and development.

Republic Day marks the adoption of the Indian Constitution and celebrates values such as justice, equality, and responsibility. Cleanliness, being central to these principles, was highlighted as a collective responsibility of every citizen. The sanitation drive was envisioned as a community-driven initiative to inspire action towards a cleaner and healthier environment across Jammu & Kashmir.

The campaign, organised by the Municipal

Council Ramban under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, included special sanitation activities in and around District Hospital Ramban and other health institutions. These efforts brought together various sections of society, including local citizens, Swachhta ambassadors, hospital staff, and attendants. The participants showcased great enthusiasm and solidarity in making the event a success.

## DLSA Ganderbal holds monthly review meeting for Legal Aid Defense Counsels



**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
GANDERBAL, JANUARY 23

The District Legal Services Authority (DLSA) Ganderbal organized a monthly review meeting today to evaluate the performance of Legal Aid Defense Counsels.

The objective was to uphold service delivery standards, identify challenges encountered by the counsels, and discuss strategies for enhancement.

The meeting was presided over by Sheikh Babar Hussain, Secretary of DLSA, Ganderbal, and was attended by Sajid Irfan, Deputy LADC, and Tanveer Ashraf, Assistant LADC.

During the session, the Legal Aid Defense

Counsels reported on the status of their assigned cases, while the Secretary assessed their performance and reviewed case files.

Resolutions were passed to improve the operations of the counsels, focusing on punctuality, the provision of thorough and competent legal services, and the maintenance of accurate records.

The Secretary committed to addressing the issue of insufficient supporting staff with the J&K Legal Services Authority for a swift resolution.

The purpose of the meeting was to enhance the provision of legal aid services and ensure equitable access to justice for all.

## DDC Kupwara reviews progress achieved under JJM



**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
KUPWARA, JANUARY 23

The District Development Commissioner (DDC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today chaired a review meeting of concerned officers to assess the progress of the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in the district.

The mission, aimed at providing functional household tap connections (FHTC) to every rural household, is one of the flagship programs of the Government of India to ensure universal access to safe and adequate drinking water.

During the meeting, the DDC reviewed the ongoing work in the district under JJM, including the status of water supply schemes, the number of households covered under FHTC, and the progress of the infrastructure being developed to ensure the sustainability and quality of water supply.

It was informed in the meeting that 1.28 lakh of the total 1.56 lakh targeted households have been connected with functional tap connections.

It was also informed that out of 247 allotted Water Supply Schemes, 115 works have been completed in PHE Divisions of Kupwara & Handwara and SSD Tangdar and work is

in progress to complete the rest of the schemes.

Regarding Dug well works, it was informed that 14 works were allotted in the district out of which 11 stands completed, besides, 10 bore-wells were also completed. Besides, 15 water supply schemes in PHE Division Kupwara, 10 schemes in PHE Division Handwara and 5 schemes in SSD Tangdar have been commissioned under JJM.

The DDC also reviewed the progress of Rapid Sand Filtration Plants, Over Head Tanks, Pipe Networks, Electro-Mechanical schemes and Pipe availability.

The DDC directed the concerned officers to ensure that all the ongoing water supply schemes and other allied works are completed within the stipulated time frame.

She expressed her dismay over the laxity of the officers in fulfilling the targets of several schemes in their jurisdictions and warned them about strict action if the projects are not accomplished well within the timeline.

District Superintendent Engineer PHE, ACD, CPO, Executive Engineers of PHE Division Kupwara & Handwara; AEEs, AEs and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

## Awareness camp on PMEGP, PM Vishwakarma Scheme held at Seri Ramban

**J1 NEWS SERVICE**  
RAMBAN, JANUARY 23

An awareness camp on PM Vishwakarma and other departmental schemes was organised today at Panchayat Seri-A to encourage the local unemployed youth to avail the benefits and establish their own income generating ventures.

The camp witnessed

wide participation from the public. Attendees were briefed on the application process, eligibility criteria, and financial support available under the PMEGP and PM Vishwakarma Scheme. The schemes aim to empower individuals by offering financial assistance, skill development, and market access for sustainable livelihoods.

## EDITORIAL

Congress-NC alliance:  
Time for a rethink?

Deep fissures have emerged within the Congress party regarding the continuation of its alliance with the National Conference (NC). The divide is clear: while many senior leaders and defeated MLAs advocate severing ties with the NC, citing humiliation and marginalization of the party, elected MLAs remain hopeful of retaining their positions in the coalition, with aspirations for ministerial berths in the Omar Abdullah-led government. This internal discord within the Congress is rooted in what many perceive as betrayal by the NC. During the government formation process, the NC allegedly sidelined Congress, leaving its leaders feeling alienated and disrespected. Many Congress leaders argue that the NC's actions have reduced the party to a mere spectator in governance, a situation that, in their view, demands a dignified exit from the coalition. At the core of the debate is the anticipated Cabinet expansion. Despite the NC's apparent disregard, Congress MLAs remain optimistic about securing ministerial positions in the limited nine- or ten-member Council of Ministers permissible under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganization Act, 2019. The Act, which caps the size of the ministry at 10 per cent of the Assembly's total strength, complicates power-sharing dynamics in the Union Territory's legislative framework. With a 90-member elected Assembly and a provision for five nominated members, the cap effectively restricts the Cabinet to nine or ten members, including the Chief Minister. This leaves little room for Congress MLAs, given the NC's majority and its reliance on Independent legislators for support. Adding to the tension are accusations from some Congress leaders that their defeats in the recent elections were orchestrated by the NC through the fielding of proxy candidates. These leaders are now the most vocal proponents of ending the alliance, urging the party to prioritize its dignity over uncertain prospects of power. The Congress faces a pivotal decision. On one hand, remaining in the alliance risks continued marginalization and internal discontent. On the other, an official break would necessitate recalibrating its political strategy in the Union Territory, where regional dynamics and public sentiment are already in flux. The current legislative structure—designed to streamline governance in the reorganized Union Territory—has inadvertently strained coalition politics. For the Congress, this framework has exposed the fragility of its alliance with the NC, raising questions about the viability of such partnerships in the new political landscape of Jammu and Kashmir. Ultimately, Congress must weigh the potential benefits of ministerial representation against the cost of prolonged humiliation and internal discord. As the party deliberates its future, it must consider whether clinging to the alliance serves its long-term interests or if a dignified exit would better position it to reclaim its political relevance in the region. A decisive course of action, rooted in clarity and conviction, is essential for Congress to navigate these turbulent times.

A S MITTAL

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman gears up to present the Union Budget 2025-26 on February 1, the nation stands at a pivotal crossroads. With GDP growth projected to dip to a four-year low of 6.4 per cent in FY 2024-25, the spotlight turns to revitalising the rural economy, a cornerstone of the country's consumption-driven progress.

The urgent call for agricultural reforms has grown louder, fueled by ongoing farmer protests, including the fast-unto-death by 70-year-old farmer leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal at Punjab's Khanauri border, which has captured national attention, demanding a legal guarantee for Minimum Support Price (MSP). Agriculture, which employs nearly 45 per cent of the country's workforce and sustains over 60 per cent of its rural population, is at a breaking point. Stagnant productivity, declining incomes, and policy neglect have left farmers in crisis. This Budget cannot be limited to lofty promises—it must deliver practical solutions to secure livelihoods, strengthen rural demand, and narrow the rural-urban divide. Revitalising agriculture is not just an economic necessity but a moral obligation to foster inclusive growth.

Here's how Budget 2025 can introduce transformative measures to bolster the agricultural sector and ensure rural spending—currently contributing 60 per cent of total consumption—fuels India's economic resurgence.

## 1. Boost Agriculture Budget and

## Research

The allocation for agriculture and allied sectors constitutes only 3 per cent of the Union Budget, which needs to be raised to at least 7.5%. Unspent funds in this category should be carried forward to address critical gaps in research, education, and infrastructure for crop storage and processing. Investing in agricultural research institutions to develop climate-resilient crop varieties and sustainable farming techniques can enhance productivity. Encouraging public-private partnerships in agrarian innovation can further drive the sector's growth.

## 2. Provide Legal Backing to MSP

The persistent demand for Minimum Support Price (MSP) with legal guarantees highlights the sector's vulnerabilities. Implementing the MS Swaminathan Commission's recommendation of setting MSP at C2 (comprehensive cost of production) +50 per cent and granting it legal status can ensure private buyers do not exploit farmers. This reform would not put a significant financial strain on the government but could protect farmers from distress sales. Furthermore, creating a robust monitoring mechanism to enforce MSP and extending its coverage to more crops can improve farmers' incomes. Enhancing the transparency of procurement processes through digital platforms and integrating MSP enforcement with local market committees can also make the system more reliable.

## 3. Enhance PM-KISAN Support

The Rs 6,000 annual support to around 10 crore small and marginal farmers under PM-KISAN to help meet their working capital needs, unchanged since its launch in 2018, has not kept pace with inflation. However, with inflation averaging 6 per cent over the past six years. The government should consider doubling this support to Rs 12,000 annually to address farmers' growing financial needs.

This increase could significantly impact small-marginal farmers, who struggle to meet their expenses amid rising input costs for seeds, fertilisers, and irrigation.

## 4. Transform the Kisan Credit Card (KCC)

The KCC scheme provides short-term loans with an interest subsidy for up to Rs 3 lakh. However, the rigid repayment schedule often forces farmers to rely on private moneylenders to meet short-term cash requirements.

A more farmer-friendly approach would be to convert KCCs into running overdraft accounts, increase the credit limit to Rs 10 lakh, and cap interest rates at 4 per cent. Removing usage restrictions on loans would further empower farmers to make long-term agricultural investments. Additionally, simplifying the KCC application process and enhancing awareness through rural outreach programs can improve access to credit. Expanding the scheme to include sharecroppers, tenant farmers, and farm labourers can promote financial inclusion in agriculture.

## 5. Introduce a Pension Scheme for Small Farmers

India's farmers lack a robust social security net. A non-contributory pension of Rs3,000 per month for small and marginal farmers aged 60 and above, owning up to 2 hectares of land, could provide much-needed financial security. Contributions from state governments could further augment this scheme. Implementing such a pension system can alleviate poverty among elderly farmers and reduce their dependence on family support.

## 6. Strengthen Animal Husbandry and Dairy Sectors:

Livestock contributes over 25 per cent to agricultural GDP but suffers from fluctuating milk prices and restrictive cattle rearing and trade policies.

A simple yet impactful step would be legally mandating private dairies to match or exceed the milk procurement prices set by cooperatives like Amul. Additionally, incorporating milk and eggs into the mid-day meal scheme can improve farm incomes while tackling malnutrition among children.

Promoting cattle insurance schemes and increasing budgetary allocation for veterinary services can enhance livestock productivity. Encouraging the adoption of modern technologies like artificial insemination and genetic improvement can further boost the sector's contribution to rural livelihoods.

## 7. Reform Fertiliser Subsidy Policies

The current system treats fertiliser subsidies as farmer benefits but deducts the subsidised amount while calculating MSP. This practice lowers farmers' actual remuneration. MSP calculations should instead consider the market price of inputs, ensuring fairer returns for farmers. The government could also promote balanced fertiliser use by incentivising organic farming practices and providing subsidies for bio-fertilisers. A shift towards a direct benefit transfer system for fertiliser subsidies can reduce leakages and ensure benefits reach the intended beneficiaries.

## 8. Simplify Crop Insurance

The PM Fasal Bima Yojana requires farmers to navigate complex procedures to claim compensation. The government should shoulder the entire premium initially, including the state's share, and simplify the claim process. This would reduce the administrative burden on farmers while ensuring timely compensation for crop losses.

Leveraging technology like satellite imagery and AI-driven risk assessment models can streamline the verification process and minimise disputes. Expanding insurance coverage to include post-harvest losses and natural calamities can make the scheme more comprehensive and farmer-friendly.

## 9. Reassess Inflation Control Policies

Policies like export bans, stock limits on agricultural produce, and the Food Corporation of India (FCI) dumping

grains at below-market prices undermine farmers' profitability. These interventions should be re-evaluated to balance inflation control with fair returns for farmers. Encouraging exports of surplus produce and ensuring better storage infrastructure can reduce post-harvest losses. Developing a decentralised agricultural pricing system driven by real-time market data can align domestic policies with global demand trends. A Vision for Fairness and Growth India's agricultural sector has long been the backbone of its economy, yet farmers have faced systemic neglect and economic disparity.

Over the last decade, the government has written off Rs12.30 lakh crore in big corporate loans, while farmers continue to struggle under mounting debt (Rs 18 lakh crore) and policies that fail to guarantee fair prices for their produce. The 2025 Budget presents an opportunity to correct these imbalances. By addressing these critical issues, the government can improve farmers' lives, spur rural demand, catalyse GDP growth and lay the foundation for a more equitable and sustainable agricultural future. It's time to honour the farmers who feed the nation by delivering the support they deserve.

**(The Author is Vice-Chairman of Sonalika IITL Group, Vice-Chairman (of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board, Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council. Views expressed are personal)**

## India's Foreign Policy: Championing the Global south

KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar attended the US presidential inauguration earlier this week. President Trump's inauguration by itself is an epochal moment for global international relations. India outlined its foreign policy approach a few days ago, during EAM's address at Nani Palkivala's memorial lecture. He mentioned that India's foreign policy in 2025 reflects a deepening commitment to multilateralism, but also recognises the competitive realities of a shifting global order. The nation has embraced issue-based partnerships with major groupings like the Quad, BRICS, and the India-Middle

East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC). India's ability to balance multiple memberships and partnerships underscores its evolving diplomatic strategy, driven by a pragmatic approach to international relations.

At the heart of India's foreign policy is a strong solidarity with the Global South, rooted in post-colonial values of independence, sovereignty and resistance to external pressures. This unique perspective sets India apart from traditional alliance structures, as it champions the rights of developing nations while pursuing its strategic interests. While India continues to engage in global dialogues, it maintains its core principle of non-alignment and the freedom

to choose partners based on national priorities. Recent shifts in India's domestic policies—across politics, economics and security—have influenced its foreign relations.

Notably, India's relationship with the United States has transformed, moving past historical hesitations to embrace a deeper strategic partnership. This cooperation spans security, technology, trade, and science, benefiting both nations. India's diaspora also plays a crucial role, acting as a living bridge to enhance bilateral ties. Despite occasional policy shifts in the US, the foundation for a robust relationship is now firmly established. However, India's engagement with China remains a complex

challenge. As the two largest Asian nations with over a billion people each, their dynamic is shaped by historical disputes and differing political systems. The boundary issue, exacerbated by tensions since 2020, continues to complicate bilateral relations. The guiding principles for India's approach to China are mutual respect, sensitivity, and shared interests, with an emphasis on long-term stability and a multi-polar Asia. In the Indo-Pacific, India has extended its Act East policy, fostering deeper relationships with Japan, Australia and ASEAN countries, and strengthening the Quad alliance.

This partnership has progressed in areas such as climate action, maritime secu-

lity, and digital connectivity. Similarly, India's collaboration with Russia remains a pillar of its foreign policy, with growing economic ties and shared strategic interests. India advocates for diplomacy in addressing global challenges, such as the Ukraine conflict, and seeks to provide solutions to global problems, including food security and climate change.

It has assisted smaller neighbours during crises, including the 2023 financial support to Sri Lanka, reinforcing its role as a regional leader. However, India's relationship with Pakistan remains strained due to ongoing cross-border terrorism. India is also engaged in strengthening ties with Myanmar and Afghanistan,

maintaining its people-to-people connections despite political complexities. India's global ambitions are reflected in its increasing role in international organisations. As a proponent of multilateral reform, India has pushed for changes in the United Nations, advocating for greater representation of the Global South. It also leads initiatives such as the International Solar Alliance and Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. These efforts highlight India's growing responsibility as a global power, dedicated to addressing pressing issues like climate change, digital governance, and humanitarian crises.

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

## Pioneering community-led groundwater management for a sustainable future

SHANTANU GARG

The Atal Bhujal Yojana, or Atal Jal, is a pioneering government initiative spearheaded by the Ministry of Jal Shakti, in collaboration with the World Bank. This innovative program marks a significant departure from traditional top-down approaches to water management, instead empowering communities to take the lead in sustainable groundwater management.

A Bottom-Up Approach to Water Security Atal Jal has been implemented across 8,203 Gram Panchayats, 229 blocks, and 80 districts in seven states: Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, and Uttar Pradesh.

By directly engaging with marginalised farmers, the poor, Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities, and other vulnerable groups, the scheme promotes inclusive development and social equity.

The core objective of Atal Jal is to increase groundwater availability and ensure its long-term sustainability. By bolstering groundwater resources, the programme aims to enhance agricultural productivity and build resilience against the growing threats of climate change.

Atal Jal is more than just a water management programme; it is a catalyst for social and economic transformation. By empowering communities and prioritising gender equity, the scheme is paving the way for a more prosperous and sustainable rural India. As this groundbreaking initiative continues to unfold, it offers a beacon of hope, illuminating a future where water security and equitable development go hand-in-hand.

With its transformative impact reverberating through every layer of society, this groundbreaking initiative is a harbinger of hope, fortifying



the future through equitable resource management and fostering prosperity among those it touches.

The Atal Bhujal Yojana (Atal Jal) is a comprehensive initiative that goes beyond technical solutions to address the

pressing issue of groundwater depletion. It is a multifaceted programme that combines technical interventions with social and behavioural change strategies.

## Empowering Communities

A key aspect of Atal Jal is its focus on gender equality and community empowerment. By involving women in decision-making processes and capacity-building programmes, the scheme empowers them to play a crucial role in sustain-

able water use.

Women are encouraged to participate in meetings, training and leadership roles, ensuring that their perspectives and needs are considered. Atal Jal employs innovative approaches to engage with communities.

Through a variety of activities, including rallies, community meetings, competitions, and social media campaigns, the scheme raises awareness about groundwater issues and promotes sustainable practices.

The programme also recognises the importance of educating the next generation and conducts essay and drawing competitions in schools.

To further enhance its impact, Atal Jal utilises technology to monitor groundwater levels and disseminate information. The Atal Jal mobile app provides stakeholders and the general public with access to information about groundwater resources and manage-

ment practices.

## A Sustainable Future

Atal Jal's well-defined sustainable strategy involves training community resource persons and preparing water budgets in collaboration with the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. This systematic approach ensures the long-term sustainability of the program and empowers communities to make informed decisions about water use.

The success of Atal Jal is a testament to the dedication and hard work of the team behind the initiative. By combining technical expertise with a strong focus on social and behavioural change, Atal Jal is poised to become a model for future groundwater management programmes.

**(The writer is Programme Coordinator, the Green Evolution, India, Nepal, Bangladesh & Coalition for Food Systems Transformation in India; views are personal)**

## WEF 2025: WHO's role essential for maintaining global health systems, says Adar Poonawalla

AGENCIES  
New Delhi, Jan 23

Even as the US has pulled out from the World Health Organization, Serum Institute of India (SII) chief Adar Poonawalla on Thursday said that the UN health agency's role is essential in global health systems.

In a media interview at the World Economic Forum (WEF) 2025 in Davos, Poonawalla said that WHO plays a crucial role in maintaining global standards on medicines and vaccines. In addition, they also contribute to testing, research, and surveillance.

"They (WHO) maintain, and sustain global standards for medicines and vaccines, and they're

essential for maintaining global health systems, testing, research, and surveillance," Poonawalla said.

His comments come as the new Donald Trump-led administration in the US pulled out funding from the WHO. Shortly after his inauguration to a second term, Trump signed the executive order on the withdrawal stating that the WHO mishandled the Covid pandemic and that the agency required "unfairly onerous payments" from the US that were disproportionate to the sums provided by other, larger countries, such as China.

The US has long been the largest contributor to the WHO's mission, con-



tributing \$1.28 billion in 2022 and 2023 - \$400 million more than Germany, the second-largest contributor.

Poonawalla called on other nations to step up and bridge the funding gap left by the US.

"We've been calling upon leaders and others here to step up to bridge that gap because there are other countries who can

and \$500 million is not a huge amount in the grand scheme of things for countries to pitch in and contribute."

He also shared about how SII is tackling the global malaria challenge by providing vaccines, especially in poor countries.

SII is "trying to reduce malaria in countries in Africa by providing vaccines that can save lives", the CEO said, while calling for collaboration between governments and private entities to develop affordable solutions to various other diseases.

"With our capacity and partnerships, we aim to ensure that every individual who needs these vaccines gets access to them,"

he added.

Globally, the WHO data reveals that an estimated 2.2 billion cases of malaria and 12.7 million deaths have been averted since 2000, but the disease remains a serious global health threat, particularly in the WHO African Region.

In 2023, there were an estimated 263 million cases and 597,000 malaria deaths worldwide -- representing about 11 million more cases in 2023 compared to 2022, and nearly the same number of deaths.

Poonawalla noted that SII has been shipping the R21/Matrix-M malaria vaccine to African countries, which has an efficacy of 77 per cent.

## Celltrion's autoimmune disease treatment hits 5 major European countries

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, JAN 23

South Korean drug major Celltrion's autoimmune disease treatment has been launched in five major European nations, the company said on Thursday.

The treatment - SteQeyma -- is an ustekinumab biosimilar treatment for multiple chronic inflammatory diseases. According to Celltrion, it was released in France on Monday (local time), following its launch in Italy and Spain earlier this month, Yonhap news agency reported.

The launch in France follows its release in Britain last month and in Germany in November. The drug won the European Commission's (EC) approval in

August for biologic therapy in gastroenterology, dermatology, and rheumatology indications.

It marked Celltrion's seventh biosimilar to win the EC's approval, following Remsima, Truxima, Herzuma, and others.

Celltrion said it plans to expand sales of SteQeyma in Europe and also introduce the product in the US in the future.

According to data from healthcare researcher Iqvia, the European ustekinumab market was valued at \$3.1 billion in 2023, with the global market size reaching \$20.4 billion.

Meanwhile, the South Korean drugmaker also aims to achieve annual sales of 5 trillion won (\$3.58 billion) in 2025.

The target will be driven by the growth of its biosimilar products and a new treatment for autoimmune diseases, according to its chairman Seo Jung-jin in November last year.

The 2025 sales target is 50 per cent higher than the 3.5 trillion won of annual revenue expected to be recorded in 2024, Jung-jin said. "By 2027, the company will also be able to post an annual revenue of 10 trillion won," he said.

Celltrion also plans to commercialise 22 products, including biosimilars, by 2030.

In December, last year, Celltrion also established a subsidiary in South Korea to specialise in the contract development and manufacturing organisation (CDMO) business.

## Australian research makes breakthrough in boosting breast cancer cure rate

AGENCIES  
SYDNEY, JAN 23

Australian researchers have made a breakthrough in improving the cure rate for the most common form of breast cancer.

An international clinical trial led by Melbourne's Peter MacCallum Cancer Center (Peter Mac) has shown that adding the immunotherapy drug nivolumab to the chemotherapy that breast cancer patients receive before surgery can dramatically improve outcomes, according to the latest news release on Peter Mac's website.

The trial involved 510 people with ER+/HER2- a subtype of breast cancer, which accounts for about 70 per cent of all cases globally, who received chemotherapy to shrink their tumour before it was sur-



gically removed, Xinhua news agency reported.

Researchers assessed how adding an infusion of nivolumab, or a placebo, during the pre-surgery phase affected their response to treatment.

They found that 25 per cent of trial participants treated with nivolumab achieved a pathologic complete response (pCR), which means there was no

sign of cancer after surgery, compared to 14 per cent in the placebo group.

"These patients are considered to be likely cured because their tumor was removed and samples of breast and lymph node tissue collected at the same time also show no detectable cancer cells," said Sherene Loi, a medical oncologist from Peter Mac and leader of the trial.

Recently, Russia announced a groundbreaking development in cancer treatment with the creation of an mRNA-based vaccine designed to treat cancer patients.

This revolutionary vaccine, set to be launched in early 2025, will reportedly be distributed free of cost to Russian citizens.

The personalised vaccine, which uses genetic material derived from a patient's tumour, will cost the state approximately 300,000 rubles (\$2,869) per dose, state-run media reports revealed.

The announcement was made by Andrey Kaprin, head of the Radiology Medical Research Centre of the Ministry of Health.

"This vaccine aims to treat cancer patients rather than prevent tumour formation," Kaprin stated.

## HEALTH FAIR CATCHING UP WITH POOR IN PALAMU

AGENCIES  
DALTONGANI, JAN 23

It's not only the medicines that come free in the Swasthya Mela. Pathological tests too are conducted free. It's a mini health bonanza said sources. Swasthya Mela is catching up with the local populace.

Visitors to Swasthya Melas are going for their BP (blood pressure) check. It's more with visitors who are 45 and plus. Swasthya Melas have adequate medicines for the management of the BP.

This correspondent met one Santoshi Devi, 60, at Adhaura Swasthya Mela who knew far more about the BP than many of her age group urban women. "Ghareloo tension say BP barh ja ee la. Ka kareen. Ee Ghar k up jal bimari ba



(Family tension triggers high BP. Can't do anything. This disease is born in the family," said Santoshi.

Civil surgeon Dr Anil Kumar said, "People are conscious of their BP. It will help them in their anger management."

Even the rural populace is conscious of the lifestyle disease. BP is one such. Diabetes another. Low back pain is the result of long sitting.

A quack charges 20 to 30 rupees for a BP check. It's coming free in the

Swasthya Melas is proving a boon for many poor people.

At the Nawa Bazar Swasthya Mela the deputy development commissioner Md Shabbir Ahmad got his blood sugar level tested.

## Odisha intensifies campaign to eliminate Tuberculosis

AGENCIES  
BHUBANESWAR, JAN 23

The Health and Family Welfare (H&FW) Department of the Odisha government has intensified its efforts to eliminate Tuberculosis (TB) through a focused and collaborative approach.

As part of this initiative, a 100-Day Intensified Campaign was launched on December 7, 2024, targeting 20 high-TB-mortality districts in the state.

The campaign aims to reduce both TB incidence and mortality by actively screening and diagnosing TB cases among vulnerable populations.

As of January 21, 2025, nearly 60 per cent of the vulnerable population—including previous

TB patients, household contacts of TB patients, people with malnutrition, diabetics, individuals living with HIV, elderly persons (over 60 years), smokers, and alcoholics—has been successfully mapped and screened for TB. Official sources revealed that a total of 4,668 TB cases have been diagnosed across these 20 districts. In line with the campaign, Health and Family Welfare Commissioner-cum-Secretary Aswathy S. and National Health Mission (NHM) Mission Director Dr. Brundha D. held a meeting with the Collectors of the 20 targeted districts. The meeting aimed to review progress, address challenges, and discuss further action points to improve

outcomes.

During the meeting, it was resolved that district authorities should conduct weekly reviews of campaign activities to assess the quality of interventions and ensure effective results.

The Panchayati Raj Department was advised to provide additional nutritional support to active TB patients under the PMTBMBBA scheme by utilising the Gram Panchayat Development Plan (GPDP) budget.

Strengthening collaborations with NGOs, corporates, and other stakeholders as Ni-kshay Mitras is expected to ensure a comprehensive approach to TB care, including nutritional and social support for patients.

## Indian residents seek mental health support: Anxiety and relationship issues top concerns

AGENCIES  
KOLKATA, JAN 23

Relationship issues emerged as top concerns, reflecting unique urban challenges, on the backdrop of the evolving mental health landscape in India, according to a study.

A comprehensive analysis, done by Mpower, a unit of the Aditya Birla Education Trust and a leading mental wellness provider, released on the occasion of its 9th anniversary, is based on over 100,000 calls, and provides critical insights into the mental health concerns affecting individuals

across India.

The following highlights includes key trends and insights of the survey, for instance, the demographics of callers reveal that 60% are male and 40% are female, with young adults aged 18 to 40 accounting for 74% of the total calls. The primary concerns among callers include relationship issues, which make up 33% of all calls, followed by anxiety at 23%, depression at 20%, stress at 16%, and psychiatric disorders at 8%.

Mumbai accounts for 42% of total calls, leading all cities. Concerns are dominated by 34% rela-

tionship problems, 23% anxiety, and 21% depression. Meanwhile, gender parity is evident, with a 47% male and 53% female caller ratio. A majority 56% of callers are aged 26-40, reflecting workplace and family pressures. In the meantime, relationship concerns top the list in Delhi at 38%, followed by 22% anxiety and 18% depression. Gender disparity persists, with 60% male callers. On the other hand, callers aged 26-40 comprise the largest group at 48%.

In parallel, Bengaluru shows a balanced gender ratio among callers, with 49% male and

51% female. Relationship problems (27%) are the most common concern, followed by 26% anxiety and 20% depression. The largest demographic group comprises individuals aged 26 to 40, accounting for 52% of the callers.

In line with these trends, Pune sees 32% relationship problems and 26% anxiety as the leading concerns among callers. The majority, 51%, belong to the 18 to 25 age group, reflecting academic and career-related pressures.

Similarly, Kolkata reports a higher-than-average incidence of relationship issues at 45%, followed by 24% anxiety and

17% depression. Young adults aged 18 to 25 make up 49% of the callers in the city.

As per the statement of Rima Bhandekar, Senior Psychologist and Head of the Mpower Helpline, "The data highlights the multifaceted nature of mental health challenges across India. While anxiety and relationship concerns are common, each city reflects unique stressors influenced by its social and cultural environment. Addressing these insights is vital for crafting targeted interventions and enhancing access to mental health resources."

## CSIR-IICT LICENSES ECO-FRIENDLY PULP TECHNOLOGY FOR COMPOSTABLE SANITARY PADS

AGENCIES  
HYDERABAD, JAN 23

The CSIR-Indian Institute of Chemical Technology (CSIR-IICT) has introduced a revolutionary technology to transform agricultural waste into hygiene products, marking a significant step toward sustainability.

In collaboration with its industrial partner, Aakar Innovations Private Limited, CSIR-IICT has developed the "Wealth Out of Waste" (WOW) technology for commercial pulp production from agricultural by-products, particularly

banana pseudostems. This innovative process enables the creation of eco-friendly, compostable sanitary pads, addressing pressing societal needs such as menstrual health, especially in rural and underprivileged communities.

The patented technology, aligned with the Aatmanirbhar Bharat initiative, employs sustainable methods to extract pulp with superior adsorption and retention properties. This pulp serves as a cost-effective alternative to traditional pinewood-based materials, reducing dependency

on conventional resources.

The process was demonstrated on a 50-liter pilot scale on January 7-8, 2025, at CSIR-IICT. Led by Dr Vineet Aniya, Senior Scientist, CE&PT, the demonstration involved key figures, including Mr. Jaydeep Mandal, Managing Director and Founder of Aakar Innovations, Dr. Srinivas Reddy, Director of CSIR-IICT, and other senior scientists.

The technology transfer (ToT) agreement was formalised on January 17, 2025, at the CSIR Innovation Complex, Mumbai (C-ICM), in the presence of notable

dignitaries, including Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Science and Technology, and Dr N Kalaiselvi, Secretary, Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), and Director General of CSIR.

Dr Kalaiselvi praised CSIR-IICT's contribution to sustainable innovation and its societal impact. She emphasised the institute's commitment to addressing environmental and social challenges through advanced scientific solutions.

This collaboration between CSIR-IICT and

Aakar Innovations exemplifies the power of public-private partnerships in leveraging science for societal benefits. By promoting agricultural waste valorisation, this project aligns with national goals of economic and environmental sustainability.

CSIR-IICT reaffirmed its dedication to fostering industry collaborations, advancing eco-friendly technologies, and addressing global challenges, setting new standards in sustainable innovation, according to a statement here on Wednesday.

## PAKISTAN CONFIRMS 1ST POLIO CASE OF 2025

AGENCIES  
ISLAMABAD, JAN 23

The National Institute of Health (NIH) of Pakistan has confirmed the 1st wild poliovirus type 1 (WPV1) case of 2025.

An NIH official told Xinhua on Thursday that the Regional Reference Laboratory for Polio Eradication at the institute reported the case on Wednesday.

The Laboratory said that the case had been detected in the northwest province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Dera Isamil



Khan district, which reported 11 polio cases in 2024. A total of 73 cases were reported in Pakistan last year, with 27 from Balochistan province, 22 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 22 from Sindh province, and one each from

Punjab province and the capital Islamabad.

The Pakistan Polio Program conducted multiple mass vaccination drives last year, bringing the vaccine to children under the age of five at their doorsteps.

## Like Netaji, youth have to come out of comfort zone for Viksit Bharat: PM Modi

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 23

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday paid tribute to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose on his 128th birth anniversary, celebrated as Parakram Diwas, and urged Indian youth to draw inspiration from Netaji's life by stepping out of their comfort zones to achieve the vision of a 'Viksit Bharat'.

Highlighting Netaji's legacy, PM Modi said, "Netaji did not limit himself to his comfort zone. Born into a wealthy family, he cracked the civil services exam, yet he chose to dedicate his life to the nation's freedom struggle instead of living a comfortable life. Similarly, to fulfil the resolution of Viksit Bharat, we must come out of our comfort zones, aim for excellence, and make ourselves globally competitive."



Addressing the public, PM Modi said, "This year's Parakram Diwas is being organised in Netaji's birthplace, Cuttack, Odisha. I thank the people and government of Odisha for hosting this grand event. A significant exhibition showcasing Netaji's life is also being held in Cuttack, which will energise 'My Bharat.'"

PM Modi emphasised Netaji's unwavering commitment to 'Azad Hind,' saying, "Netaji's biggest aim was 'Azad Hind.' To achieve this, he remained steadfast in his resolve. For India's independence, he formed the Azad Hind Fauj, which united brave men and women from across the nation despite their linguistic differences.

This unity is a crucial lesson for achieving Viksit Bharat."

"At that time, unity was essential for Swaraj. Today, unity is crucial for achieving the vision of Viksit Bharat. We must remain vigilant against forces that seek to weaken and divide our nation," he said.

PM Modi also highlighted Netaji's pride in India's heritage, stating, "Netaji Subhas took immense pride in India's legacy and rich heritage. Today, India is shedding the remnants of colonial mindsets and moving forward with confidence in its cultural wealth."

Recounting significant milestones, PM Modi said, "It was my privilege to hoist the flag at the Red Fort in 2018 on the 75th anniversary of the Azad Hind Government. Our government has dedicated a museum to Netaji at the Red Fort, launched

the Subhas Chandra Bose Aapda Prabandhan Puraskar, and inaugurated Netaji's statue near India Gate."

The Prime Minister also highlighted India's progress over the past decade, stating, "In the last 10 years, 25 crore Indians have been lifted out of poverty. Modern infrastructure is being developed in rural and urban areas alike, and India's global presence has strengthened. The day is not far when India will become the world's third-largest economy."

"Let us continue working towards the resolution of Viksit Bharat. This will be our true tribute to Netaji," PM Modi concluded.

Earlier in the day, PM Modi paid homage to Netaji at the Central Hall of Parliament, interacted with students, and raised the slogan 'Jai Hind', echoing Netaji's undying spirit.

## Delhi polls: 'Ailing' Rahul Gandhi cancels rally at Mustafabad

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 23

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's mega rally at Mustafabad in the national capital on Thursday was cancelled due to his poor health and on medical advice, party's Delhi Chief Devender Yadav said.

"As of now, Rahul Gandhi's election rally in Madipur on Friday is on schedule and he is likely to address a massive gathering," said Yadav, a day after the Leader of Opposition in Lok Sabha failed to turn up for an election rally near Inderlok metro station in Sadar Assembly on Wednesday.

Dismissing speculation that the cancellation of Gandhi's rallies was aimed at helping the AAP - by not causing a division of Muslim voters - Yadav said, "These are rumours. We are fighting the election independently."

"After the Republic



Day, the party leaders are going to step up the campaign in Delhi," he said, indicating a busy schedule for Gandhi and party MP Priyanka Gandhi in the coming days for campaigning for the Assembly elections.

Alleging a collusion between the AAP and the BJP, Yadav said when the Congress does not hold a rally then the "elder brother" says we are helping the "younger brother" while the "young brother" alleges that "we are not supporting their fight against the 'big brother'."

The Congress campaign for the February 5 Assembly election was expected to get a big boost from Gandhi's three daily rallies on three successive days, starting January 22, but out of these, two have been cancelled.

Gandhi is expected to join the party campaign on Friday with an election rally in West Delhi's Madipur.

Earlier, announcing Gandhi's election rally schedule at a press conference at the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee office, former Delhi Minister Narendra Nath said that the party's star campaigner is expected to raise issues affecting the people of Delhi.

He said, apart from "exposing the failure" of the AAP government and the BJP in addressing the ills afflicting the Capital, Rahul Gandhi may also pitch for Dalits to get their dues.

## 'Alcohol Affected Party': Cong releases audio clip of AAP MLA exposing liquor scam

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 23

Coining a new term "Alcohol Affected Party" for the ruling party, the Delhi Congress on Thursday came out with an expose - based on a purported audio clip of a sitting MLA - on the alleged liquor scam in the national capital under the now-withdrawn excise policy.

Congress National Spokesman Pawan Khera shared an audio clip of a sitting AAP MLA in which the latter is purportedly heard opposing the controversial excise policy during a discussion with the then Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia.

In the purported conversation, AAP's Narela MLA Sharad Chauhan is heard saying that he objected to the excise policy but Sisodia tells



him that it was needed to generate party funds for fighting elections in Gujarat, Goa and Punjab.

"At present, the money for the Delhi election is coming from Punjab," said Chauhan in the audio recording.

Hitting out at Sisodia, Khera said Delhi voters now do not want a "manager" of liquor scam to provide education to their children.

Delhi Pradesh Congress

Committee President Devender Yadav said the party was the first to expose the liquor scam and file an FIR in the liquor scam that led to the arrest of AAP leaders and release on bail on stringent terms.

He said the Rs 2,000 crore liquor scam was a means for the AAP central leadership to offer money-making opportunities to all its close associates.

"The liquor scam has impacted the women the

most as the youth and men have been pushed into addiction," Yadav said, adding that at one stage the AAP government had started offering two free bottles of liquor on purchase of one bottle.

The actions of the AAP leaders do not match their promise of offering transparent governance, he said.

Yadav said the AAP's policy of promoting liquor sales is now hitting Punjab where alcoholism has increased ever since the party came to power.

"The presence of an AAP government in Punjab has strengthened the roots of liquor lobby in Delhi as well," he said.

The DPCC also launched a campaign song "Zarorat Hogi poori, Dilli mein Congress hai Zarori" with many party leaders shaking a leg on it.

## Subhas Chandra Bose's grand nephew recalls PM Modi's efforts in honouring Netaji's legacy

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 23

As the nation celebrates 'Parakram Diwas' (day of valour) marking the birth anniversary of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, Prime Minister Narendra Modi led the nation in paying tributes to one of the most iconic freedom fighters of the country.

On the occasion, Netaji's grandnephew Chittapriyo Bose spoke about PM Modi's connect and multiple meetings with the family regarding the de-classification of files. In a video message, he recalled the occasions when PM Modi honoured the invaluable contributions of Netaji.

He also commended PM Modi's efforts in honouring the legacy of Netaji with instances like renaming Ross Island as 'Netaji Subhas Chandra



Bose Dweep,' installing a grand statue at the India Gate, establishing the INA Museum at Red Fort and declaring Netaji's birth anniversary as 'Parakram Diwas'. Crediting PM Modi for the de-classification of files regarding Netaji's disappearance, ignored for decades after Independence, Chittapriyo Bose said that it was because of his prompt action that the process took off, soon after he became the Prime Minister.

Recounting the details of the Netaji family's first meeting with PM Modi, he said, "Me, my elder

brother Supriyo Bose, along with two-three cousins and Professor Chitra Ghosh had met PM Modi to request him to begin an enquiry about Netaji's disappearance, particularly after August 18, 1945. After hearing from us, he invited us to Delhi with more family members.

"A 50-member delegation went to PM's office - 25 of which were family members and 25 were eminent citizens from different walks of life. I represented my father Bijender

Nath Bose, an eminent freedom fighter and one of the closest associates of Netaji. We aired our views about de-classification of the details of Netaji's disappearance," he added.

He said that PM Modi directed the then External Affairs Minister Late Sushma Swaraj to initiate the process and begin with a request to Russia for the de-classification of files.

Chittapriyo Bose also lauded PM Modi for committed and consistent efforts in honouring Netaji's invaluable contribution to the nation. He said that it was PM Modi who decided to declare Netaji's birth anniversary as the Parakram Divas because of his valour, sacrifice and dedication to the nation.

He also informed us about a museum in the Red Fort, recollecting memories of Netaji's INA days.

## Prosecution's burden to establish conscious possession of contraband by accused: SC

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 23

The Supreme Court has ruled that in trials of cases involving offences coming within the purview of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, it is the burden of the prosecution to establish that the contraband was seized from the conscious possession of the accused.

"It is the burden of the prosecution to establish that the contraband was seized from the conscious possession of the accused.

Only when that aspect has been successfully

proved by the prosecution, the onus will shift to the accused to account for the possession legally and satisfactorily," the top court said.

Explaining the term, it said that conscious possession refers to a scenario where an individual not only physically possesses a narcotic drug or psychotropic substance but is also aware of its presence and nature, requiring both physical control as well as mental awareness.

"Conscious possession implies that the person knew that he had the illicit drug or psychotropic substance in his control and had the intent or knowl-

edge of its illegal nature," it added.

"Thus, before the court holds the accused guilty of the offence under the NDPS Act, possession is something that the prosecution needs to establish with cogent evidence.

"If the accused is found to be in possession of any contraband which is a narcotic drug, it is for the accused to account for such possession satisfactorily, if not, the presumption under Section 54 (dealing with presumption from possession of illicit articles) comes into place," said a Bench of Justices J.B. Pardiwala and R Mahadevan.



The Justice Pardiwala-led Bench was considering an appeal filed by a man who was convicted

under the NDPS Act and sentenced to ten years' rigorous imprisonment for carrying three cartons of

poppy husk in a train.

The appellant, who was detained at Ujjain Railway Police Station, stated that he was falsely implicated and was travelling with a valid ticket to visit his relative residing in Gujarat's Maninagar.

Before the apex court, the appellant's counsel argued that he was not in conscious possession of the contraband and he had nothing to do with the three cartons.

Further, there were many passengers in the train and the three cartons could have belonged to any one of the passengers and in such circumstances, the appellant deserves

to be given a benefit of doubt.

After considering the evidence as regards possession, the top court ruled that it was convinced that the appellant was found to be in conscious possession of the three cartons containing poppy husk.

It said, "The defence put forward by the appellant that he had no idea about the three cartons and that he got down from the coach along with the three cartons only because the officers asked him to come out of the coach, is something which is not palatable to us."

"We have looked into the further statement of

the accused. We do not find any satisfactory reply or explanation as to how come he was sitting on one of the cartons and the other two cartons were closely placed next to him," it added.

Dismissing the appeal, the apex court said, "We are convinced that the High Court committed no error in dismissing the appeal and thereby affirming the judgment and order of conviction passed by the Trial Court."

It ordered the appellant, who is on bail, to surrender within a period of eight weeks to serve out the remaining part of the sentence.

## India's airlines log 6 pc rise in traffic with 16 crore flyers on domestic routes in 2024

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 23

India's domestic air passenger traffic rose by 6.12 per cent to 16.13 crore in 2024 from 15.2 crore in the previous year, according to the latest data compiled by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA).

The country's commercial airlines also flew more than 1.49 crore passengers on domestic routes in December 2024, which represents an increase of

8.19 per cent compared to the corresponding figure of 1.38 crore for December 2023. In December, the market share of IndiGo stood at 64.4 per cent while that of Air India touched 26.4 per cent. Akasa Air and SpiceJet had a share of 4.6 per cent and 3.3 per cent, respectively.

According to the DGCA data, IndiGo's share in the domestic air passenger traffic increased from 60.5 per cent in 2023 to 61.9 per cent in 2024 with the airline

flying 9.99 crore domestic passengers during the year. In the same period, the share of SpiceJet decreased from 5.5 per cent to 3.7 per cent. The budget carrier carried 60 lakh air passengers within India in 2024.

Figures for the on-time Performance (OTP) in December show that IndiGo had the highest OTP of 73.4 per cent, followed by Air India (67.6 per cent), Akasa Air (62.7 per cent), SpiceJet (61.5 per cent) and Alliance Air (55.6 per cent).

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 23

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced that the Indian government will establish 100 new sainik schools across the country.

This initiative is aimed at improving basic education and contributing to the overall development of India. Singh made the announcement during the 47th annual day cel-



ebrations of Vidyadhiraja Sainik School in Alappuzha, Kerala.

Singh explained that the decision to open new sainik schools is part of the government's efforts to expand educational opportunities, especially in remote areas and regions with diverse cultural backgrounds.

Additionally, the Centre has also made a significant move by allowing girls to be admitted to sainik

schools, breaking barriers for female students.

The Defence Minister highlighted that as India moves towards becoming more self-reliant in various sectors such as health, communication, industry, transport, and defence, there is a growing need for an educational revolution.

He stressed the importance of the holistic development of children to ensure the future progress of the nation.

# India expects accountability on 2023 consulate attack in San Francisco: EAM Jaishankar

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON, JAN 23

Nearly hours after meeting with newly appointed US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Wednesday, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar said that "India expects accountability" for the attack on the Indian consulate in San Francisco in 2023 a "very serious matter" and those responsible to be held accountable.

He was in the US to attend Donald Trump's inauguration as the 47th President.

Responding to a question at a press conference in Washington D.C. on Wednesday, EAM Jaishankar said, "The arson attack on our consulate in San Francisco is a very,

very serious matter, and it is something for which we expect accountability. We would like to see that people who did it are held responsible."

The Consulate General of India in San Francisco was attacked by a group of assailants in March 2023. The intruders had committed criminal trespass, damaged public property, and attacked officials of the Consulate.

Some attackers had also tried to set the Consulate building on fire on the same day with the use of some inflammable substances.

Protesters were seen breaking through the makeshift security barriers while raising pro-Khalistan slogans and even installing two Khalistani flags inside the Consulate premises.



Around three months later, again in July, violent Khalistani activists attacked and sought to burn down the Indian consulate in San Francisco.

The incident, though, did not cause any damage inside the premises of the diplomatic building, but it was the second time that

Khalistanis made the SF consulate a target.

At the time, the attack was brought to the attention of the highest rung of American national security and diplomatic apparatus in Washington D.C., which instructed agencies to immediately investigate the incident and heighten

security.

India had made it clear that it wanted to see action in the matter, and not just sympathy. It wanted arrests of those involved in these incidents and preemptive measures by the US authorities to stop any such attacks in the future.

The local San Francisco police department, special diplomatic security personnel, and state and federal authorities were notified and they launched a probe into the July incident thereafter.

The incident was strongly condemned by the US, which called it a "criminal offence".

EAM Jaishankar held a bilateral meeting with Marco Rubio after the swearing-in ceremony of Donald Trump.

The two leaders also,

according to EAM Jaishankar, held a brief discussion on Bangladesh.

However, the EAM did not get into further details on the same and said that "I don't think it's appropriate".

EAM Jaishankar had also attended the first Quad ministerial meeting of the new Donald Trump administration on Tuesday and held the first bilateral meeting with Rubio shortly after.

In addition, the EAM also raised India's concerns over prolonged visa delays with Rubio, saying that these delays impact business, tourism, and the overall relationship.

He had said that the relationship is not "well-served" if it takes that many days for people to get a visa.

## South Korean economy logs weaker-than-expected growth in 2024

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, JAN 23

The South Korean economy posted weaker-than-expected growth last year amid slowing export growth, sagging domestic demand and a political crisis, central bank data showed on Thursday.

The economic expansion in the fourth quarter also came far below the earlier forecast by the Bank of Korea (BOK) as political turmoil sparked by President Yoon Suk Yeol's shocking martial law declaration dented private spending and investment, according to the central bank. The country's real gross domestic product -- a key measure of economic growth -- increased 2 percent in 2024, according to preliminary data from the BOK, reports Yonhap news agency.

The 2024 figure was

lower than the central bank's forecast of a 2.2 percent expansion, though the growth accelerated from a 1.4 percent advance in 2023.

Last year's growth was led by exports, which surged 6.9 percent from a year earlier, compared with a 3.5 percent on-year increase in 2023.

Private spending rose 1.1 percent in 2024, slower than a 1.8 percent growth the previous year.

Facility investment gained 1.8 percent, while construction investment fell 2.7 percent.

In the fourth quarter alone, Asia's fourth-largest economy advanced 0.1 percent on-quarter, far lower than the BOK's forecast of a 0.4 percent growth.

On a yearly basis, the economy grew 1.2 percent in the fourth quarter, slowing from the previous quarter's 1.5 percent gain.

# US Secretary of State Rubio discusses Iran, Gaza hostages with Israeli PM Netanyahu

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON, JAN 23

Secretary of State Marco Rubio expressed the US' support for Israel in a call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Wednesday and reiterated Washington's support for its ally, and the two also discussed Iran and Israeli hostages in Gaza, the State Department said.

The call was Rubio's first with Israel since the administration of Republican President Donald Trump took office on Monday.

Trump and his predecessor, Democratic former President Joe Biden, have both been supporters of Israel during its wars in Gaza and Lebanon.

Rubio underscored that "maintaining the United



States' steadfast support for Israel is a top priority for Trump," the State Department said in a statement.

Rubio told Netanyahu that Washington will continue to work "tirelessly" to help free the remaining hostages in Gaza, the State Department added.

The latest bloodshed in the decades-old Israeli-

Palestinian conflict was triggered on October 7, 2023, when Hamas militants attacked Israel, killing 1,200 and taking about 250 hostages, according to Israeli data.

Israel's subsequent military assault on Gaza has killed more than 47,000 Palestinians, the Gaza Health Ministry said, while also leading to accusa-

tions of genocide and war crimes that Israel denies. The assault displaced nearly the entire population of Gaza and caused a hunger crisis.

A ceasefire went into effect on Sunday and has led to the release of some Israeli hostages in Gaza and Palestinian prisoners held by Israel.

Rights groups have criticised the mounting humanitarian crisis from Israel's military assault.

Washington has maintained its support, saying it is helping its ally in its defence against Iran-backed militant groups, including Hamas in Gaza, Hezbollah in Lebanon, and the Houthis rebels in Yemen.

This is Rubio's second day on the job, after being sworn in on Tuesday.

"The Secretary congratulated the Prime Minister on Israel's successes against Hamas and Hezbollah and pledged to work tirelessly to help free all remaining hostages held in Gaza," State Department spokesperson Tammy Bruce said in a statement.

The call comes as US Special Envoy to the Middle East Steve Witkoff announced plans to travel to Gaza during a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas.

Netanyahu has also asked the Trump administration to approve a plan to allow five Israeli military outposts to remain in southern Lebanon, a source told media.

Rubio and Netanyahu spoke about "addressing the threats posed by Iran and pursuing opportunities for peace".

## US Congress passes Laken Riley Act as Donald Trump begins crackdown on immigrants

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON, JAN 23

The Republican-controlled US Congress handed President Donald Trump an early win in his crackdown on illegal immigration on Wednesday, passing a bill to expand pretrial detention for foreign criminal suspects, media reported.

This will mark President Trump's first piece of legislation that will be signed into law during his second term. The Laken Riley Act mandates the detention of undocumented immigrants charged with theft-related crimes.

The bill passed the Senate with a 64-35 vote earlier this week, following which the House of Representatives approved it with a 263-256 vote.

Receiving bipartisan support, apart from Republicans, 46 Democrats voted for it in the House and 12

voted to support it in the Senate.

The new law is in line with President Donald Trump's stance on immigration as he signed executive orders on his first day in office announcing mass deportations, sending US troops to the country's southern border to prevent illegal crossings.

The Laken Riley Act was named after 22-year-old student Laken Riley who was murdered by an undocumented Venezuelan man wanted for shoplifting.

Twenty-six-year-old Jose Antonio Ibarra was convicted of Riley's murder after she was found dead in a wooded area at the University of Georgia in Athens.

The new law would require US Immigration and Customs Enforcement to detain illegal immigrants who are either arrested

or charged with certain crimes including burglary, theft, larceny, and shoplifting, or who have been accused of assault on a law enforcement officer.

The bill was passed in both houses after a modification was made to the original document to expand mandatory detention to include crimes resulting in death or serious bodily injury as well.

President Trump had pointed to the Laken Riley case during his election campaign in November as proof of immigrants "poisoning the blood" of the country.

One of the issues Democrats highlighted during the proceedings was that the implementation of the new law would cost \$83 billion in the first three years, which is more than the Homeland Security Department's annual budget.

# UN humanitarian rushing aid to Gazans, assessing damage

AGENCIES  
UNITED NATIONS, JAN 23

UN humanitarian and their partners are seizing every opportunity presented by the ceasefire to increase aid deliveries and services for Gazans, including damage assessments for those returning to home sites only to find rubble.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said on Wednesday they are stepping up support for people across the Gaza Strip, increasing the flow of incoming supplies and deliveries, and scaling up storage capacity, repair work, life-saving services and needs. They are dis-

tributing food parcels and flour and working to reopen bakeries, Xinhua news agency reported.

Farhan Haq, deputy spokesman for UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, told reporters at a regular briefing about the UN system's efforts to help those in the devastated Gaza Strip.

"One of the things the United Nations does in conflict zones and in post-conflict situations is deal with the questions of rubble removal, demining, and the clearance of unexploded ordnance and rebuilding," Haq said. "Those are handled by various different groups, including the Mine Action Service, the UN Office for

Project Services, and the UN Development Programme."

Haq added that it would take time. "We're in the early days yet, and so we're just in the first phase, which is one really of assessment."

The UN Relief Agency for Palestinian Refugees (UNRWA) reported nearly 1,000 trucks entered Gaza on the second day of the ceasefire. Some 118 aid trucks delivered more than 53,000 food parcels to communities in Khan Younis and to UNRWA shelters in Deir al Balah alone.

The UN Population Fund (UNFPA) reported that 20 trucks delivered critical supplies, including



for safe births, emergency obstetric care, postpartum kits, contraceptives and winter items to Deir al Balah on Tuesday, and 20 more trucks carrying UNFPA assistance entered northern Gaza on Wednesday.

The UN Office for Project Services distributed fuel to ensure critical services such as healthcare, water pumping, and desalination can run on backup generators in the absence of electricity.

OCHA said the world

body and its partners are also supporting infrastructure repairs, including to water wells and desalination plants.

"Humanitarian partners are carrying out rapid assessments in newly accessible areas to identify people's most urgent needs, including water, hygiene, sanitation and healthcare," OCHA said. "They are also stepping up disease surveillance efforts."

The office said humanitarian partners are setting up trauma stabilisation points to handle emergency cases and mobilising specialised care teams.

The amount of aid entering Gaza since the ceasefire is in stark con-

trast to the scarcity of provisions allowed in before the ceasefire, especially in the northern governorates.

The scale of devastation has rendered neighbourhoods unrecognisable.

In the West Bank, OCHA warned that ongoing Israeli forces' operation in Jenin is putting people's safety and welfare at risk while destroying infrastructure as essential as roads, electricity and water pipes. Ten people have reportedly been killed, with dozens more injured.

The military operation, which began on Tuesday, involved air strikes and other lethal war-like tactics that OCHA said seem to exceed law enforcement

standards. The office said it received reports of more people being forced out of the Jenin camp, citing the ongoing Israeli operation and lack of water.

OCHA said the Jenin Government Hospital was disconnected from water and electricity networks.

It relies on dwindling water reserves from emergency tanks that were installed just weeks ago in preparation for emergencies through an allocation by the OCHA-managed Occupied Palestinian Territory Humanitarian Fund.

The office said humanitarian partners plan to refill water and full reserves at the hospital as soon as security allows.

## Israeli delegation in Cairo for talks on 2nd phase of Gaza ceasefire: Sources

AGENCIES  
CAIRO, JAN 23

An Israeli security delegation arrived in Cairo to continue negotiations on the implementation of the second phase of the recently-reached Gaza ceasefire-for-hostage release deal, according to well-informed Egyptian sources.

The Israeli delegation includes officials from the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad and Shin Bet security agency, the sources told Xinhua on condition of anonymity.

"The discussions focused on the execution

of the second phase of the ceasefire agreement, including the reopening of the Palestinian side of the Rafah border crossing to allow the passage of injured Palestinians," the sources added.

The talks also addressed the presence of Israeli troops in the Philadelphia Corridor, located on the Gaza-Egypt border, with Israel seeking a partial withdrawal while Egypt insists on a full Israeli withdrawal from the area, according to the sources.

They added that the Egyptian and Israeli security officials discussed a

further swap of Israeli hostages held by Hamas and Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails as per the terms of the deal, Xinhua news agency reported.

Israel and Hamas reached a three-stage ceasefire deal last week, mediated by Egypt, Qatar and the US, after more than 15 months of fighting.

The current six-week stage of the truce deal, which began on Sunday, includes the release of Israeli captives from Gaza and Palestinians from Israeli prisons, as well as intensified humanitarian aid delivery to Gaza and a partial withdrawal

of Israeli troops from the enclave.

Earlier a tense ceasefire agreement between Israel and Hamas took effect on Sunday, initiating six weeks of calm and raising hopes for an end to 15 months of Israeli assaults on Gaza that devastated the enclave and for the release of dozens of hostages held there.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu delayed the ceasefire by nearly three hours after Hamas missed an 8:30 a.m. deadline to submit the names of the first three hostages to be released later in the day.

## South Korea: Ex-capital defence commander claims innocence in martial law hearing

AGENCIES  
Seoul, Jan 23

South Korean former chief of the Capital Defence Command, suspected of taking part in impeached President Yoon Suk Yeol's short-lived martial law bid, claimed innocence on Thursday, saying he was only carrying out military measures upon receiving an order from Yoon.

Lee Jin-woo, the former Army commander charged with playing an 'integral' role in an insurrection and abusing his powers

in connection with Yoon's imposition of martial law on December 3, made the claim through his lawyer as he attended a preliminary hearing at a court martial in Seoul.

Lee is accused of ordering the deployment of troops to the National Assembly and instructing them to enter the Assembly building and drag out lawmakers.

"The defendant is a soldier who is under the control of the military commander-in-chief," Lee's lawyer said, stressing that

Lee inevitably assumed that the President's martial law declaration was a "legitimate" one approved through relevant legal process.

The commander's lawyer also emphasised that Lee had no intention of causing an insurrection, stressing that a trial at the court martial should be suspended until the Constitutional Court delivers its decision on Yoon's case, Yonhap news agency reported.

"The defendant's action is a military measure taken

in response to his superior's order and there was no intention or purpose of causing disorder in national constitution," the lawyer said.

Lee was indicted by the prosecution's special investigation headquarters last month, with physical detention.

Earlier this week, the military approved the official dismissal of Lee and three other senior commanders from their positions over their suspected roles in the botched martial law imposition.

## India's construction sector projected to scale \$1.4 trillion by 2047; experts focus on green tech

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JAN 23

India's construction sector, which is growing exponentially, is projected to reach \$1.4 trillion by 2047, according to Shailesh Kumar Agarwal, Executive Director, Building Materials and Technology Promotion Council under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

He was speaking at the Indo-German sponsored Asia Low-Carbon Building Transition (ALCBT) Project event on an orientation programme to promote sustainable construction practices and reduce carbon emissions.

Agarwal further stated that urbanisation is increasing rapidly and there is a need to reduce the operational energy in the buildings sector, apart from using low carbon building materials in the construction.

"To achieve this, there is a need to revisit the way we do our construc-



tion primarily focussing on recycling and mindful consumption," he said.

The program for master trainers on 'Low-Carbon Building Transition for Building Materials Manufacturers & Technology Providers' was organised by business chamber FICCI, jointly with Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI).

The project is being implemented by GGGI in five Asian countries including India with support from the International Climate Initiative (IKI) of the Government of Germany.

Taina Dyckhoff, Head of Environment Division German Embassy said that India and Germany are working closely together

in the field of climate change within the framework of the Indo-German Green and Sustainable Development Partnership.

The partnership targets various initiatives associated with climate mitigation, adaptation, natural carbon sinks, and biodiversity conservation.

"The capacity building initiative under the ALCBT

project will result in sufficient awareness among all concerned in the building ecosystem", she added.

Pravatani Samal, Director, Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power highlighted BEE's initiatives in energy efficiency across industries, buildings, and appliances. "In the building sector, significant energy is being used in various applications especially cooling," Samal said.

Soumya Garnaik, Country Representative - India, Global Green Growth Institute said that the ALCBT Project aims to integrate low-carbon concepts in existing and new buildings. "Given that over 70 per cent of buildings are expected to be built in the coming years, this presents a significant opportunity for India to explore low-carbon options. This project is expected to train over 2,100 professionals in the next two years," Garnaik said.

## Nearly 4 in 5 Indian employers report difficulty finding skilled talent in 2025: Report

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JAN 23

About 4 in 5 employers in India are expecting cautious hiring in the first quarter of 2025, as ongoing talent shortages continue to hinder recruitment efforts, according to a report on Thursday.

The report is based on the ManpowerGroup Talent Shortage Survey of more than 3,000 employers across the four regions of the country.

The report showed that despite the highest hiring demand globally (53 per cent), 80 per cent of employers in India are struggling to find the right talent they need. The trend has persisted since 2022 and is more than the global average, where 74 per cent of employers are reporting talent scarcity (the global figure remains unchanged over 2024).

It also highlighted that no region is immune to shortages, and talent scarcity remains a defining feature of the global labour market.

"The persistent talent



shortage, with 80 per cent of organisations struggling to fill roles in 2025, underscores the urgent need for collective action," said Sandeep Gulati, Managing Director, ManpowerGroup India, and Middle East.

Industries like IT, energy, and utilities are feeling the greatest strain, with demand for specialised skills like data and IT continuing to rise. The IT sector leads with the highest hiring demand 84 per cent, followed by energy and utilities and healthcare and life sciences at 81 per cent each.

Gulati said that in South India, where the shortage is especially pronounced (85 per cent), the pres-

sure on medium and large enterprises is significant.

"Employers are increasingly prioritising upskilling strategies to bridge this gap, reflecting a shift towards sustainable solutions over short-term measures like wage increases. Addressing this challenge will require a robust partnership between businesses, governments, and educators to build a future-ready workforce," he added.

The report showed that 80 per cent of employers report difficulty finding skilled talent, remaining consistent in the last three years, and increasing 86 per cent from 2021's survey.

## Samsung manufacturing new Galaxy S25 series at its Noida factory: JB Park

AGENCIES  
BENGALURU, JAN 23

In a fillip to the government's 'Make in India' initiative, South Korean tech giant Samsung will manufacture new Galaxy S25 series at its Noida factory in India, JB Park, President and CEO, Samsung Southwest Asia, said on Thursday.

The company also announced that customers can pre-order its latest Galaxy S25 Ultra, Galaxy S25+ and Galaxy S25 smartphones that set a new standard as a true AI companion. A first-of-its-kind, customised Snapdragon 8 Elite Mobile Platform for Galaxy chipset delivers greater on-device processing power for Galaxy AI and superior camera range and control with Galaxy's next-gen



ProVisual Engine.

"Samsung unveiled the era of mobile AI with the launch of Galaxy AI last year. Galaxy S25 series brings you the most context-aware, personalised AI yet, so that you can receive tailored, actionable insights with personal privacy assured," Park said in a statement.

Galaxy S25 series is the first smartphone series that comes with One UI 7, Samsung's AI-first platform for Galaxy chipset delivers greater on-device processing power, enabling AI-powered personalised mobile experiences.

With Galaxy S25 series,

the users can also perform actionable searches with context-aware suggestions for next steps.

Also, it is frictionless to switch between apps for quick follow-up actions, like sharing a GIF or saving event details, said the company.

The 12/256GB S25 is priced at Rs 80,999, the 12/512GB S25 comes for Rs 92,999. The 12/256GB S25 Plus costs Rs 99,999 while the 12/512GB S25 Plus variant is priced at Rs 1,11,999, according to the company.

The Galaxy S25 Ultra comes in three trims, 12GB/256GB, 12GB/512GB and 12GB/1TB, at Rs 1,29,999, Rs 1,41,999, and Rs 1,65,999, respectively.

Customers who pre-order Galaxy S25 Ultra will get pre-order benefits worth Rs 21,000, said the company.

## Hyundai Motor's 2024 net income up 7.8 pc, aims to sell 4.17 mn units this year

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, JAN 23

Hyundai Motor, South Korea's leading automaker, said on Thursday its net profit for 2024 rose 7.8 per cent from a year earlier owing to an increase in the global demand for eco-friendly vehicles.

Net profit came to 13.22 trillion won (\$9.2 billion) on a consolidated basis last year, compared with 12.27 trillion won in 2023, the company said in a regulatory filing.

Operating income for the year fell 5.9 per cent on-year to 14.23 trillion won, while annual sales increased 7.7 per cent to a record 175.23 trillion won over the cited period, reports Yonhap news agency.

Hyundai Motor said it



has set an annual sales target of 4.17 million units for 2025.

Additionally, it aims for a 3-4 per cent on-year increase in consolidated sales and an operating profit margin of 7-8 per cent this year.

The decrease in operating profit was attributed to the depreciation of the South Korean won

against the U.S. dollar late last year, leading to an increase in the provision of sales warranties.

Sales warranty provisions affect corporate earnings by reducing profit and increasing expenses when warranty claims are made.

In the fourth quarter, net profit totalled 2.47 trillion won, up 12.3 per cent

on-year. Operating profit fell 17.2 per cent to 2.82 trillion won, while sales gained 11.9 per cent to 46.62 trillion won.

Hyundai Motor said it sold 757,191 eco-friendly cars globally last year, marking an 8.9 per cent on-year increase.

This includes 218,500 electric vehicles (EVs) and 496,780 hybrid EVs.

The company's total vehicle sales last year reached 4,141,959 units. Of those, 1,066,239 units were sold in the fourth quarter.

In the fourth quarter, domestic sales slumped 4.6 per cent to 189,405 units. Global sales shed 1.6 per cent on-year to 876,834 units despite sales in North America growing 4.4 per cent to 294,383 units.

For the October-December period, the company's global sales of eco-friendly vehicles totalled 209,641 units, up 21 per cent on-year, driven by an expanded hybrid lineup and increased sales of sport utility vehicle (SUV) hybrids in the North American market.

The automaker said it anticipates the current challenging business environment to persist, driven by various factors such as slowing growth in major markets, the so-called EV phase and changes in the pace of industry development.

To navigate these challenges, the company said it plans to develop and implement systematic response measures for each internal division for all possible scenarios.

## Industry pins high hope on Budget 2025, expects measures to push growth

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JAN 23

Industry captains have pinned high hopes on the upcoming Union Budget and expect it will announce fresh measures to fire up key engines of economic growth.

Among the key expectations are lowering the tax burden for individuals, fresh incentives to further support emerging sectors like Electric vehicles (EVs), incentives for private sector investment and higher capital expenditure (capex) target for the next financial year 2025-26.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Budget on February 1, 2025.

"We anticipate Budget 2025 to introduce measures that strengthen the real estate sector. Revising tax slabs for middle-income earners and tackling raw material price volatility can help stabilise construction costs and housing prices, making homeownership more attainable. Redefining affordability based on regional needs and encouraging green building practices will make housing policies more inclusive and sus-



tainable," said Venkatesh Gopalakrishnan, Director Group Promoter's Office, MD - Shapoorji Pallonji Real Estate (SPRE).

Ketan Kulkarni, Managing Director, Gati Express and Supply Chain Limited said that the logistics industry anticipates bold initiatives aimed at improving last-mile connectivity and transformative reforms to strengthen the logistics and transportation ecosystem.

"A key expectation is the incentivisation of EV charging infrastructure, which is critical to driving sustainability through greater adoption of electric vehicles in logistics operations," he said.

Highlighting the issues being faced by the car rental sector, Ashok Vashist, Founder and CEO,

WTiCabs urged the government to introduce a unified tax regime of 5% without input tax credit (ITC) across all car rental and leasing products.

"There are multiple tax regimes for the car rental business, namely 5%, 12%, 18%, and 28% plus cess for leasing. GST, being a destination-based taxation system, does not allow clients/end consumers to avail of Input Tax Credit (ITC) for such taxes. Moreover, this type of taxation makes car rentals more expensive for app-based aggregators, and leasing becomes costlier than bank funding due to GST being charged even on interest. This creates widespread confusion and results in a complicated taxation system, leading to complex accounting issues

and increased litigation," he said.

Pradeep Bakshi, MD & CEO, Voltas Ltd said that while government's "Make in India" initiative has already made significant strides in reducing import dependency and generation of employment, there is scope for further support in form of subsidies and grants, particularly for MSMEs and smaller manufacturers, to foster local innovation and mass production.

"This would reduce the increasing costs of imports and local production while inducing global competitiveness for OEMs (original equipment manufacturers) and large component manufacturers. Further, the industry's growth trajectory can be sustained by policies that encourage investment in new skill development workshops that enable seamless integration of digital and physical operations crucial in reaching the tech-savvy, Gen Z consumers and investor base," he said.

Pankaj Sharma, Managing Director at K2 Infragen said that simplified tax structures with lower rates for infrastructure projects, including green energy, and favorable regimes for

carbon credits and offshore wind projects, can provide the sector with a significant boost.

"This budget offers a critical opportunity to strengthen India's infrastructure story. By focusing on strategic investments and practical reforms, we can drive economic recovery and lay the groundwork for sustainable and inclusive growth in the years ahead," he said.

Ashish Suman, Partner, JSA Advocates & Solicitors called for increased allocation for roads and highways sector, revival of public private partnership (PPP) in infrastructure sector and enhanced financing for urban local bodies among other proposals.

"While the private sector has to be a keen participant, the government too needs to continue providing investment towards this sector, with specific focus on tier 2 cities where private capital may be scarce. In this regard, it is expected that the Budget may provide for dedicated financial outlay for projects in this sector with focus on urban housing, water and sanitation," he said.

## SK hynix reports record Q4 earnings on rising demand for AI chips

AGENCIES  
SEOUL, JAN 23

South Korean chipmaking giant SK hynix said on Thursday its fourth-quarter earnings hit a record high on rising demand for artificial intelligence (AI) chips, including high bandwidth memory (HBM), sharply beating market expectations.

Its 2024 revenues and operating profits also broke previous records, the company said.

The world's second-largest memory chipmaker said in a regulatory filing that its fourth-quarter net income reached 8 trillion won (\$5.6 billion), shifting from a loss of 1.37 trillion won a year earlier, reports Yonhap news agency.

Its operating income for the October-December period shot up more than 20 times to 8.08 trillion won from 346 billion won a year ago. Its sales vaulted 74.8 per cent on-year to 19.76 trillion won.

The earnings beat market expectations. The average estimate of net profit by analysts stood at



5.99 trillion won, according to a survey by Yonhap Infomax, the financial data firm of Yonhap News Agency.

SK hynix attributed the better-than-expected bottom line to strong demand for AI memory, solidifying its status as a world leader in HBM technology.

For the entire 2024, its net income amounted to a record 19.79 trillion won, swinging from a loss of 9.13 trillion won a year earlier.

Operating income also turned to the black, reaching a record 23.46 trillion won in 2023. Its previous record of 20.8

trillion won was set in 2018 during the semiconductor super boom.

Annual revenue soared 102 per cent to 66.19 trillion won, exceeding the previous record of 44 trillion won set in 2022.

The company said sales of HBM continued rapid growth in the fourth quarter, accounting for more than 40 per cent of its total DRAM revenue.

Steady demand for enterprise solid state drive (SSD) also lent support to the robust sales.

SK hynix is leading the HBM industry, which has been growing rapidly with a generative AI boom.

# Soorma Hockey Club claim narrow 2-1 win over Delhi SG Pipers in HIL

AGENCIES  
RANCHI, JAN 23

JSW Soorma Hockey Club defeated Delhi SG Pipers by a narrow 2-1 margin in the Men's Hockey India League (HIL) match at the Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Munda Astro Turf Hockey Stadium here.

Harjeet Singh (9') and Gurjant Singh (17') gave JSW Soorma Hockey Club the lead early in the game on Wednesday night. Corey Weyer (59') pulled a goal back in the last quarter but Delhi SG Pipers were unable to change the outcome of the game any further.

JSW Soorma Hockey Club began the game aiming to stretch the pitch and pile pressure on the Delhi SG Pipers but the Pipers pressed hard and managed to steal the



majority of the possession.

However, on a counter attack, Prabhjot pulled the ball back to Harjeet Singh who fired a rocket from the top of the circle to beat the Pipers' goalkeeper Pawan and grant Soorma the lead in the first quarter. Soorma went on to dictate proceedings for the rest of the quarter but were unable to find the back of the net.

Soorma were on the

front as the second quarter began, forcing the Pipers to camp in their own half. Within minutes, Gurjant Singh picked up the ball on top of the circle and sidestepped his marker to slap the ball past Benjamin Rennie in goal and double Soorma's lead.

The Pipers showed some initiative as the quarter progressed and unleashed a few shots through Dilraj Singh and

Ky Willot but were unable to direct them towards goal and breach the Soorma's defence.

The third quarter was combative as the Pipers attacked with more purpose while Soorma continued to be unwavering in defence. Both teams engaged in an end to end battle, trading circle entries and shots as the quarter progressed.

Soorma had a good opportunity to score towards the end of the quarter as Gurjant, on a counter attack, looked to find Prabhjot Singh but his pass was swatted away by Pawan.

The Pipers responded by earning a penalty corner soon after but failed to beat Vincent Vanasch and the Soorma defence.

The Pipers went man to

man on defence as the last quarter began but Soorma managed to hold onto the ball and rotate it across the backline. Soorma, on a counter attack within a few minutes, were close to scoring as Phil Roper looked to find Pawan Rajhbar open in front of goal but the Pipers' Rohit managed to intercept the final pass.

The Pipers went on to peg Soorma back into their own half and Corey Weyer was on hand to loft the ball into goal after a save from Vanasch to pull one goal back.

The Pipers continued to surge ahead and earned another penalty corner with seconds left in the game but Tomas Domene's fierce flick was met with a firm save from Vincent Vanasch and Soorma managed to secure a 2-1 win.

## 'No pain' in bowling and batting: Kuhnemann hopes to board Sri Lanka flight

AGENCIES  
BRISBANE, JAN 23

Australia spinner Matthew Kuhnemann has recovered from his right thumb injury after undergoing surgery and is now feeling no pain in bowling and batting, boosting his hopes to fly to Sri Lanka for the upcoming two-Test series.

The left-arm orthodox spinner suffered a compound dislocation and fracture on the thumb during Brisbane Heat's five-wicket loss to Hobart Hurricanes last Thursday. The injury put his participation in the Sri Lanka tour in uncertainty despite being a key part of Australia's plans.

Kuhnemann, 28, was rushed to the hospital by his Heat teammate Daniel Drew after suffering a dislocated thumb. The injury was treated that night, with the dislocation put back, followed by surgery

the next morning to insert a pin into the fracture.

Despite the setback, Kuhnemann has made a swift recovery. After bowling eight overs at Allan Border Field in Brisbane on Thursday, he expressed optimism about joining Australia's squad in Sri Lanka. He also batted during the session, facing throwdowns from Heat and Queensland bowling coach Andy Bichel, took catches, and trained under the supervision of team physio Adam Smith.

Kuhnemann stated he feels good but will need clearance from Australia's medical staff, who are in Dubai for a pre-tour training camp. A conference call on Thursday evening will determine whether he can fly to Sri Lanka in the coming days.

"Nothing's official yet. I think it was more about just ticking off the boxes each day this week, and so far it's gone to plan. I'm

hoping so, but nothing's come out yet. I'll probably speak to the medical team this afternoon. My bowling, batting and fielding has gone excellent so far. So I'll just relay that message. There's a bit of a time zone difference and hopefully, I can get on the plane over there," Kuhnemann said.

"I'm feeling really good, really grateful with how it sort of progressed in the last week. It's healed really well, and the surgery went excellent. Very fortunate and lucky so far that I'm sort of in a position to be able to bowl and bat and catch a few balls. Everything's gone to plan so far. There's not much pain at all any more, and no pain bowling and batting."

To protect his injured right thumb, Kuhnemann now wears a custom plastic splint, which he can use during games since it's on his non-bowling hand.

## Rohit, Jaiswal, Pant and Gill fall for single-digit scores on Ranji Trophy return

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JAN 23

The sixth round of the Ranji Trophy had increased in anticipation due to Indian Test team stars like captain Rohit Sharma, Yashasvi Jaiswal, Rishabh Pant and Shubman Gill joining their respective state teams.

The star quartet playing in the Ranji Trophy came after the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) made it compulsory for international players to participate in domestic cricket as part of its new policy.

But on day one of the competition's second leg, all four of them were dismissed for single-digit scores. At the MCA Sharad Pawar Cricket Academy ground in Bandra-Kurla Complex, Mumbai, Rohit's much-anticipated return to the Ranji Trophy after



ten years was short-lived, lasting just 19 balls as he was dismissed for just three runs by J&K fast-bowler Umar Nazir.

Nazir, bowling with discipline and accuracy, troubled Rohit with consecutive maidens before having a length delivery outside off taking Rohit's leading edge as he went for a pull and was caught at extra cover. This dismissal extended Rohit's lean patch in red-ball cricket after he averaged

only 10.93 in the 2024/25 Test season for India.

On the other hand, Jaiswal fell for four to Aaqib Nabi, who exploited the morning nip to the fullest and trapped the left-handed lbw with a sharp delivery jaggling back in. In Bengaluru, opening for Punjab, Gill was dismissed for four off eight balls after being caught behind off Karnataka pacer Abhilash Shetty, as the visitors were dismissed for just 55 at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

## ILT20 SEASON 3: AUSTRALIA SPINNER ADAM ZAMPA JOINS SHARJAH WARRIORZ

AGENCIES  
SHARJAH, JAN 23

Sharjah Warriorz are delighted to announce the signing of the Australian international cricketer Adam Zampa, who will replace the Sri Lankan wicket-keeper batter Kusal Mendis, for the remainder of the ILT20 season 3.

Zampa, who has had a short stint in the ILT20 in its inaugural season, has played close to 400 T20 games in his career. The Australian has an economy rate of less than eight runs per over and has bagged 117 wickets in 95 T20s and 355 wickets in 291 T20s. He has also registered four five-wicket hauls in T20 cricket. The 32-year-old, who is inspired by the legendary Shane Warne, is also the first Australian bowler to bag 100 wickets



in T20s and is currently the most prolific bowler for his national team.

He was also a key figure in Australia's T20 World Cup triumph in 2021, finishing second on the wickets chart with 13 from 7 games at an economy of 5.81, and best figures of 5-19, which was also the best bowling performance in the overall tournament.

Interestingly, the 2021 T20 World Cup was played in UAE and Oman, and Zampa's experience from those matches will surely be beneficial for the Sharjah Warriorz at the ILT20.

The spinner joins the side with plenty of experience in T20 cricket and franchise leagues and has turned out in the Big Bash League in Australia, the

IPL in India, the Caribbean Premier League, The Hundred and the Vitality Blast in the UK, and Major League Cricket in the USA.

In the Sharjah Warriorz squad, Zampa will join the likes of Adil Rashid, Harmeet Singh, Mohammad Jawadullah, captain Tim Southee and Adam Milne, among others in the bowling unit.

"I am delighted to be returning to the UAE and joining the Sharjah Warriorz for Season 3 of the ILT20. The Warriorz are among the best franchises in the tournament and I am looking forward to working alongside the likes of Adil Rashid, Tim Southee and JP Duminy. I am confident that, we will do well as a team and produce some fantastic performances for our fans in the second half of the

tournament," said Zampa.

"Adam Zampa is a brilliant bowler, and a player that every team would love to have. We are delighted to have him join our squad, and believe that he will be crucial to our progress in the tournament this season. He is one of the most dangerous bowlers in the format, and we are confident that can have a solid impact for the Sharjah Warriorz in the UAE, a country that has happy cricketing memories for him," said JP Duminy, coach, Sharjah Warriorz.

"The Sharjah Warriorz is elated to have Adam Zampa join the squad for the third season of the ILT20. His never say die attitude is something that always uplifts any team, and the Warriorz would definitely not mind more of the fighting spirit."

## Even if it's death over or powerplay, my focus will be on process: Chakaravarthy

AGENCIES  
NEW DELHI, JAN 23

After bamboozling England with an incredible 3-23 and setting the stage for India to win the T20 series opener by seven wickets at the Eden Gardens, wrist-spinner Varun Chakaravarthy stated that his focus will always be on making progress in his bowling, irrespective of the phase of the game he's in.

Chakaravarthy's spell included him castingling Harry Brook and Liam Livingstone in quick suc-

cession, before taking out captain Jos Buttler to break the back of England's batting, as they were bowled out for 132.

"95% of my focus is on myself because if I remove it from myself and put it on the batter, I'll miss my process and end up bowling a full toss or a short ball. Even if it's the death over or the powerplay, my focus remains on my process. I don't think much about what the batter is going to do, but it does run in the back of my mind," said Chakaravarthy to Disney+ Hotstar.



He also revealed he's trying to make his deliveries harder to predict by adding variations to the pace he bowls at, apart from continuing to bowl with over-spin. "I've

worked on trying to vary my pace. I don't want batters to line me up because I'm bowling at the same speed every ball. That's what I've worked on, and I'm trying to perfect it further."

"After the 2021 World Cup, I analysed my bowling. I realised I was bowling more sidespin, so I was not able to beat the batsman with the sidespin. I figured out that I had to beat them through bounce, so I started working on my overspin bowling, and that's working now. If it bounces more,

the chances are it'll spin more."

Asked if he's instructed to hunt for wickets or restrict runs from the Indian team, Chakaravarthy said, "It has always been to look for wickets. Even if you get hit for a six, you look for a wicket with the next ball and keep attacking the stumps. That's what has been told to me."

Chakaravarthy signed off by expressing happiness over coming good at a venue he knows by the back of his hand, as it's the home ground of his

IPL team Kolkata Knight Riders. "It's very nice. Playing against England, a top side, at Eden (Gardens) is challenging. It's a small ground. I was nervous in the morning looking at the pitch and the boundary size, but I thought if I stick to my process, I'll be able to do well."

India have a 1-0 lead in the five-match series and will take on England in the second T20I at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai on Saturday, which is the home venue of Chakaravarthy and Washington Sundar.

## Clarke backs Konstas to retain opener's spot on Test tour of Sri Lanka

AGENCIES  
SYDNEY, JAN 23

After being unveiled as the 64th inductee into the Australian Cricket Hall of Fame, former captain Michael Clarke has backed young Sam Konstas to retain his spot in the playing eleven as an opener in the upcoming Test tour of Sri Lanka. With Australia considering to have Travis Head as the opening partner alongside Usman Khawaja, it would mean that Konstas may miss out on a

spot in the playing eleven for the first Test starting in Galle on January 29.

But Clarke believes Australia should avoid tinkering with the batting order that won them Tests at the MCG and SCG against India. "I think he (Konstas) would be happy to play. I don't think we need too much (change) in terms of structure."

"We've just come off a win. Conditions are very different but Trav has been extraordinary through the middle order.

## U19 WC: West Indies secure Super Six spot with 53-run win over hosts Malaysia

AGENCIES  
KUALA LUMPUR, JAN 23

Captain Samara Ramnath picked a four-wicket haul as West Indies secured their Super Six spot in the 2025 ICC U19 Women's T20 World Cup with a convincing 53-run victory against hosts Malaysia at the Bayuemas Oval on Thursday.

In a must-win match for the West Indies, they were asked to bat first. But they did not have a smooth ride as runs were very hard to come by in the early stages of the game. By the time they reached the ten-over mark, West Indies were 37/1, with Nur

Dania Syuhada, Suabika and Marsya bowling accurately and were backed up well in the field by their teammates.

Opener Asabi Callender was the first to find fluency and struck four fours in a crucial innings of 30, before being dismissed by a beautiful ball from Nur Izzatul Syafiq. Jahzara Claxton smashed a quick 19 to raise her side to 112/7, as the West Indies also benefitted from Malaysia conceding 27 runs in extras.

In the chase, despite offering stubborn resistance in the start, Malaysia were 38/3, before losing their remaining

seven wickets for nine runs. Skipper Samara wreaked havoc by taking four wickets while conceding just six runs, and was backed up well by Erin Deane (2-7) and Najjanni Cumberbatch (2-14).

West Indies, now at third place in Group A, will see who between India and Sri Lanka finishes on top of the group when they face-off in the final group stage game of the tournament. They will play their Super Six game against Australia on Saturday, while Malaysia will now prepare to play Nepal in the playoff match on Friday.

## SHARDASHRAM MAKE A WINNING STAR ON OPENING DAY OF MI JUNIOR SEASON 5

AGENCIES  
MUMBAI, JAN 22

Defending champions Shardashram Vidyamandir made a winning start as Mumbai Indians launched the fifth edition of MI Junior, its inter-school cricket tournament, on Wednesday in their home city under their Education and Sports for All (ESA) initiative. The tournament is being organised in association with the Mumbai Cricket Association and the Vidarbha Cricket Association, with the Nagpur leg scheduled to start next week.

On the opening day

of action, Shardashram Vidyamandir triumphed over Sister Nivedita in the U-15 Girls' category. Shardashram Vidyamandir (Dadar) showcased a commanding performance to defeat Sister Nivedita School (Dombivli) at the Matunga Gymkhana Ground. Chasing a target of 81 runs, Shardashram achieved victory in just 8 overs.

Vaidai Tanavade was the standout batter, scoring a brisk 38 laced with seven boundaries. Kartika Poojary delivered a stellar all-round performance, contributing 20 runs and multiple wickets. Earlier,

Sister Nivedita struggled with the bat, managing just 80 runs. Swara Surve top-scored for the Dombivli side with a fighting 28.

MI Junior's previous seasons have played an integral role in providing quality competition at iconic venues to Maharashtra's budding cricketers in the cities of Mumbai, Pune, and Nagpur.

The tournament will feature participation from boys and girls across the Boys U14, Girls U15, and Boys U16 categories. The opening ceremony took place at the Matunga Gymkhana on Wednesday in the presence of officials

from the Mumbai Cricket Association.

Among the key highlights and new additions for this edition is the 'MI Junior Rising Stars' phase, which will follow the regular competition stage. After the regular season concludes, the best talent from both the boys' categories and the girls' category will participate in the MI Junior Rising Stars phase. The second phase of the competition will feature four teams in the boys' category and 2 teams in the girls' category, which will be formed based on the performances of players in the MI Junior 2025

season.

Like every year, winners of the tournament will get an opportunity to participate in a training session designed to provide exposure, hone skills, and prepare them for the next level of their cricketing journey with Mumbai Indians support staff. MI Junior is one of the many initiatives undertaken by Reliance Foundation (CSR arm of RIL) for grassroots development under the Education and Sports for All (ESA) initiative, which aims to create opportunities and inspire the youth through sports and education.

## DM Chess Championship concludes at Poonch

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
POONCH, JANUARY 23

The DM Chess Championship wrapped up successfully today after three days of intense competition at DNRM Girls Higher Secondary School, showcasing remarkable talent from both male and female contestants. Deputy Commissioner Vikas Kundal engaged with the participants at the closing ceremony, extending his congratulations and support.

Programme Officer ICDS Khalid Hussain Wafa, DYSSO, Mool Raj Uttam, Prof. Shamim Bandy, Principal Anjuman Shaheen and PEM Vijay Kumar and others were present.

The championship saw a total of 57 registered contestants. In the female category, Heena



Mir secured the top position, with Vanshika Raina and Arya Kouser earning second and third prizes, respectively. In the boys' category, Saravjot Singh claimed the first prize, followed by Deeraj Sharma securing second place and Nitin Sharma taking third.

Later, the Deputy Commissioner presented prizes and cheques to the winners, commending their hard work and dedication towards the game. The event not only highlighted the skills of the players but also fostered a spirit of camaraderie and sportsmanship within the community.

## MVD organises Road Safety Awareness, medical checkup camp at General Bus Stand Jammu

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, JANUARY 23

A Road safety awareness and medical checkup camp was organized by J&K Motor Vehicles Department at General Bus stand Jammu in collaboration with Health Department, J & K Bank and Transport Unions under the aegis of National Road Safety Month 2025 being observed across the country from Jan 1-2025 to Jan 31-2025.

The event was inaugurated by Member Legislative Assembly Jammu East Yudhvir Sethi in presence of DIG JKS Range Shiv Kumar Sharma and Transport Commissioner J&K Vishesh Paul Mahajan.

Among others present were Jt. Transport Commissioner J&K Vinay Samotra; RTO Jammu Pankaj Bhagotra; ARTO (HQR.) Rehana



Tabassam and ARTO(FS) Bipen Singh Charak.

The programme included a health check-up camp where more than 200 drivers underwent medical examinations. Alongside, detailed sessions were held to educate drivers about the benefits of Ayushman Health Cards and accidental insurance, enabling them to avail these crucial facilities.

MLA Jammu East Yudhvir Sethi called for joint effort of all the stakeholders to create awareness about road safety in the

society so that lives of people can be saved.

Speaking on the occasion, the Transport Commissioner emphasized the importance of road safety and driver's responsibility. He urged drivers to avoid drunken driving, ensure proper rest, and maintain updated documents. He reiterated that neither any work nor any assignment can be accomplished without the contribution of the drivers' fraternity. This noble profession must be valued by observing traffic regulations. The

goals/achievements of the people have been accomplished with the contribution of the driver who transported the passengers to their place of exam or test or destination.

DIG JKS Range also addressed the gathering, highlighting the significance of road safety and the collective responsibility of all stakeholders to prevent accidents and ensure a safe driving environment.

The event witnessed active participation from drivers and stakeholders, marking another step towards fostering a culture of safety and awareness in the transport sector.

Teams from Medical & Health Education Department, J&K Bank, AAYUSH and MVIs, SMVIs and other officials also attended the programme.

## DC Shopian assesses progress under HADP, Daksh Kisan portal, KKGs



JJ NEWS SERVICE  
SHOPIAN, JANUARY 23

The Deputy Commissioner of Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar, convened a meeting today with representatives from the Agriculture and allied departments to assess the registrations related to HADP, Daksh Kisan portal, and Kisan Khidmat Ghars.

During the meeting, the Deputy Commissioner expressed concern regarding the sluggish progress in farmer registrations

and course applications under the Daksh Kisan initiative, urging for a swift enhancement of efforts to achieve the target.

The departments and Krishi Udhymis associated with Kisan Khidmat Ghars were tasked with raising awareness among farmers about the operations of KKGs throughout the district and the agricultural services available for their benefit.

He emphasized that KKGs should serve as the central hub for agri-

cultural activities within the panchayats moving forward and encouraged all stakeholders to collaborate in bolstering the agricultural economy of the district.

Additionally, the meeting included an evaluation of the units established under the HADP initiative within the district.

The meeting was attended by ADDC Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, heads of allied agricultural departments, Tehsildars, and Krishi Udhymis.

## Adult BCG Vaccination Campaign launched in Ramban under NTEP

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
RAMBAN, JANUARY 23

The Health Department Ramban, under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary, today launched the Adult BCG Vaccination Campaign as part of the National Tuberculosis Elimination Programme (NTEP). The campaign aims to target specific adult groups to strengthen the fight against tuberculosis and improve public health outcomes in the district.

The main event was organized at District Hospital Ramban, where the campaign was formally inaugurated by MLA Ramban, Arjun Singh Raju. Addressing the gathering, the MLA lauded the initiative and emphasized the importance of preventive healthcare measures

in achieving the goal of a TB-free India. He urged eligible individuals to come forward and get vaccinated, highlighting the government's commitment to eradicating tuberculosis.



The campaign focuses on vaccinating adults meeting the following criteria, with their consent, Adults above 60 years of age, Adults aged 18 to

60 years who fall under any of the following categories, Diabetic patients, Smokers, Individuals with a history of tuberculosis in the last five years, Close contacts of TB patients, Individuals with a Body Mass Index (BMI) less than 18. The campaign is expected to cover a significant population in the district, particularly those at higher risk of developing

tuberculosis. The CMO, in his message, emphasized the importance of community participation and awareness to make the campaign a success. He also reiterated the administration's commitment to achieving the national goal of TB elimination by 2025. The launch event saw the active participation of senior health officials, including Chief Medical Officer Ramban, Kamal Ji Zadur, Medical Superintendent District Hospital Ramban, Vrinder Trishal, and other healthcare professionals. The Health Department has set up vaccination facilities across the district to ensure maximum coverage. Awareness drives and community engagement activities will also be conducted to educate the public about the benefits of the campaign.

## DC Shopian reviews dev works of Superbazars

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
SHOPIAN, JANUARY 23

The District Cooperative Development Committee (DCDC) meeting was today held at Mini Secretariat, Shopian under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar in order to approve the calendar of activities for International Year of Cooperatives-2025 (IYC-2025) & to review the ongoing infrastructure works.

During the meeting, Deputy Registrar, Cooperative Shopian presented the overall scenario of the cooperative sector in the district with particular focus on ongoing infrastructure development works of Super Bazar at Shopian & Keller.

It was given that diverse activities shall be undertaken to celebrate the year, including awareness & training camps in collaboration with agriculture allied departments, inauguration of superbazars at Shopian and Keller, micro food processing units at CMS Kachdoora and PACS Rahmoo among others.

The DC Shopian directed for expediting the development works of Superbazars at Shopian and Keller and instructed on strengthening the cooperative sector in the district by involving the local communities in diverse economic activities. The meeting was attended by ADDC, Dr. Nasir Ahmad Lone, officers of RDD, Cooperative & J&K Bank, NABARD, Animal & Sheep Husbandry, Health and other concerned departments.

## DC Kulgam flags-off couple from DH Pora on Kartavya Path tour

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
KULGAM, JANUARY 23

Deputy Commissioner Kulgam Athar Aamir Khan today flagged off a couple-Rais Ahmad Rather & his spouse for Kartavya Path tour to New Delhi for special guests at Republic Day Celebrations.

During the flag off program, DDC was apprised by the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti DH Pora that the special invitee is the chairman of village Water & Sanitation Committee who belongs to village DH Pora.

## Swachhta Abhiyan MC Udhampur hosts Nukkad Natak presentations to mobilise public participation



JJ NEWS SERVICE  
UDHAMPUR, JANUARY 23

Municipal Council Udhampur on Thursday organized a series of Nukkad Natak presentations in different parts of the town to promote Swachhta Abhiyan. The drive was conducted under the directions of Deputy Commissioner Saloni Rai and supervised by CEO Rajinder Dagra.

Interacting with the residents, the CEO Municipality sought their cooperation in making the

campaign a success. "It is the duty of every citizen to keep his surroundings neat and clean," he said and appealed civil society members to cooperate with the administration in making the district clean and polythene free. He emphasized the role of community involvement in achieving sustainable cleanliness goals and encouraged citizens to adopt proper waste segregation practices, avoid littering and contribute to keeping the town clean and green.

## Republic Day celebration: Screening Committee finalises cultural items at Poonch

JJ NEWS SERVICE  
POONCH, JANUARY 23

The Screening Committee constituted to

finalize the Cultural items for district level Republic Day function met here today.

Comprising PO ICDS

Khalid Hussain Wafa, Additional SP Mohan Sharma, DYSSO Mool Raj Uttam, DEPO, Mukhtar Manhas,

Prof. Shamim Bandy, Anchor Pardeep Khanna and Principal Anjuman Shaheen, the Committee conducted a

thorough review of presentations by the school students representing various educational institutions.



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- ◆ Fresh Permit
- ◆ Transfer of Permit
- ◆ Temporary Permit
- ◆ Additional MV Tax
- ◆ Permanent surrender of Permit

- ◆ Duplicate FC
- ◆ Permit Application
- ◆ RC Particulars Against Fee
- ◆ Duplicate Permit
- ◆ Issue Of Duplicate DL
- ◆ Issue of Conductor Licence
- ◆ Change Of Address In DL
- ◆ Change Of Biometrics In CL
- ◆ Change Of Biometrics In DI
- ◆ Renewal of DL
- ◆ Issue Of Learners Licence

- ◆ Change Of Biometrics In DI
- ◆ Change Of Name In CL
- ◆ Change Of Name In DL
- ◆ Change Of Name In LL
- ◆ DI Extract
- ◆ Endorsement To Drive vehicles carrying Hazardous Material
- ◆ Replacement Of DL
- ◆ Surrender Of Cops In DL
- ◆ Updation Of Mobile Number In RC/DL

DIP/J-9458/24 Date: 23-1-25