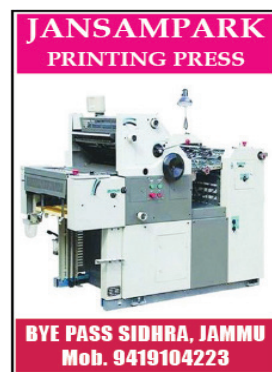


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DAILY | JAMMU | VOL NO: 12 | ISSUE NO: 22 | PAGES: 12 | PRICE: Rs 2/- | RNI NO: JKENG/2013/49471 | POSTAL REGD. NO. L-29/JK-497/25-27 | dailyjindrahimages.com/Epaper.php | jindrahimages123@gmail.com

121 kilos of narcotic substances seized in Srinagar destroyed

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 24

Jammu and Kashmir police on Friday destroyed 121 kilos of narcotic substances that were seized from the summer capital.

The destroyed substances included heroin, brown sugar, crystal meth, fukka, charas, and codeine phosphate, among others.

Police said the Drug Disposal Committee of Srinagar district destroyed 121 kilograms of seized narcotic substances as part of the nation-wide campaign initiated by the Home Minister of India.

These drugs were confiscated in

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

J&K Police seize 4.258 Kgs of narcotics

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 24

J&K Police in its drive against the menace of drug trafficking, have seized 4.258 Kgs of narcotics and apprehended four peddlers in two separate incidents in South Kashmir's Anantnag district, officials said.

Police said during a checking operation at Bonpora Uranhal in south Kashmir's Anantnag

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Sincere efforts, policy interventions turning J&K into vibrant startup hub: LG Sinha



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 24

Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Friday said the sincere efforts and policy interventions of the government have turned J&K into a vibrant startup hub.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of 'BRICS Youth Council Entrepreneurship Run-up Event' at Indian Institute of Management (IIM) here, LG Sinha, according to the news agency highlighted the transformative initiatives of the government through the Department of Industries & Commerce that have redefined innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem and empowering youth of the UT.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

J&K Raj Bhawan celebrates Uttar Pradesh Foundation Day

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 24

Raj Bhawan Jammu Kashmir today celebrated the Foundation Day of Uttar Pradesh. Senior Government officials, Students, and the people of Uttar Pradesh currently living in the UT were the special invitees.

The Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha extended his heartiest greetings and best wishes



to the people of Uttar Pradesh.

He paid tributes to the freedom fighters, great

revolutionaries and luminaries from Uttar Pradesh and recalled their

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

LG releases Manu Khajuria Singh's book titled 'Mountain Goddesses'

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 24

Lieutenant Governor Shri Manoj Sinha today released a book titled 'Mountain Goddesses: Finding Feminine Power from an Unexpected Place', written by Smt Manu Khajuria Singh.

The Lieutenant Governor congratulated the author and wished her success in the future

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4



Kashmir's Vande Bharat Express arrives in Jammu Tawi station

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 24

Ahead of formal operations in Kashmir, the rake of the specially designed Vande Bharat Express train arrived at Jammu Tawi railway station, drawing a large crowd eager to witness the historic moment.

According to the news agency, the train, arriving at platform number 1 of the stations, is set to commence operations between Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra station and Kashmir, offering seamless, all-weather travel options to passengers.

As the train arrived, the Jammu Tawi railway station echoed with a unique announcement: "Yatrigan kripya dhyani dein, Vande Bharat train sankhya 244027 Kashmir jane ke liye platform number ek par khadi hai."

This train, compared to the other 136 Vande Bharat Express trains operating nationwide, features climate-specific enhancements to address operational challenges and passengers' needs in Jammu and Kashmir's extreme weather conditions.

Key features include advanced heating systems to prevent freezing of



water and bio-toilet tanks, warm air for vacuum systems, and optimized air-brake functionality for smooth operations in sub-zero temperatures. Embedded heating elements in the windshield ensure clear visibility by defrosting the driver's front lookout glass during harsh winters.

Additionally, the train boasts all standard Vande Bharat amenities, such as fully air-conditioned coaches, automatic plug doors, and mobile charging sockets.

By linking the Kashmir Valley to the national railway network, this train underscores India's commitment to bridging geographical and economic gaps, while promising a world-class travel experience on the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project.

Operated by the Northern Railway zone, this is the third Vande Bharat train for the region, following two successful routes connecting Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra with Delhi.

Route and launch details

Sporting an orange-and-grey colour scheme, the ultra-modern train will operate between Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra and Srinagar. Commercial services are expected to begin in February 2025, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi likely to flag off the inaugural journey in the first week of the month. The Railway Board is yet to finalize the exact date and time.

Train timings
Covering over 150 km in just 2 hours and 30 minutes, the Vande Bharat Express is set to

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

Whole world knows who promotes terrorism: MEA to Pak

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 24

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), on Friday said that Pakistan is responsible for promoting cross-border terrorism and the international community is fully aware of it.

MEA spokesperson, Randhir Jaiswal while addressing a news conference in New Delhi, according to the news agency, said, "The whole world knows who is promoting terrorism. In India, when we face ter-



ror-related attacks, the source is clear, and we all understand the genesis of cross-border terrorism."

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Sigh of relief: Patients from Badhaal recovering as investigation progresses

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 24

After nearly 50 days of uncertainty and fear, positive news is emerging from the Badhaal area of Rajouri district as patients admitted to various hospitals are showing signs of recovery.

According to officials who spoke to the news agency, 14 patients from the affected village are under medical care in different hospitals, and all are reported to be recovering. Meanwhile, other residents of the village remain under strict observation as authorities continue efforts to address the

mysterious health crisis.

Principal of GMC Rajouri, Dr Amarjeet Singh Bhatia told KNO that 11 patients from Badhaal are currently admitted to the hospital, 10 of whom belong to three already-affected families. Among these, two patients are in the ICU, while the remaining nine are under close observation. "The good news is that all of them are recovering," Dr Bhatia said.

"This is a fight against an invisible enemy, and we are implementing various measures to manage the situation. People should not panic," he added.

Dr Bhatia said recent

adjustments to the patients' medications have shown positive results, and all patients are now stable. He urged the residents of Rajouri to visit the people of Badhaal, who remain under surveillance, and to boost their morale.

"These residents have been living in forests and are used to moving freely day and night. The restrictions on their movement could affect their mental well-being. It is our duty to support them emotionally," he said. "Be assured, this is not a virus or influenza—you can interact with them safely."

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

Republic Day Celebrations in New Delhi

190 achievers from J&K, Ladakh invited as special guests

J1 NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JAN 24

Around 120 achievers from Jammu and Kashmir and 70 from Ladakh have been invited as special guests to be a part of the 76th Republic Day celebrations at Kartavya Path in New Delhi.

According to the details accessed by the news agency, these achievers have been drawn from various fields of life and include students, artists, best performing PM-Vishwakarma Yojana beneficiaries, beneficiaries of



PM Surya Ghar Yojana, construction workers, residents of Vibrant Villages and best performing Water Warriors among

others. "Each of these invitees represents a story of courage and determination

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 4

Snowfall melting comes to rescue amid deficit rainfall in J&K

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 24

Amid an ongoing deficit in rainfall and declining water levels in the river Jhelum and its tributaries, the melting of snow in higher altitudes has provided a much-needed lifeline for the Jal Shakti Department (JSD) to maintain drinking water supplies.

According to data obtained by the news agency, the water level in the Jhelum River has slightly increased but remains low overall. At Sangam, the Jhelum is currently flowing at -0.91 feet, while at Ram Munshi Bagh, it is at 3.56 feet, and



at Asham, it measures 0.78 feet.

The situation has been exacerbated by a rainfall deficit. From January 1 to January 22, Jammu and Kashmir recorded only 11.4 mm of precipitation, compared to the average

of 60.5 mm for the period—a shortfall of 81%.

Despite the deficit rainfall, the melting of snow in the upper reaches, spurred by a rise in temperatures, has eased the crisis.

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JK sees 3rd highest dropout rate in North India

J1 NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JAN 24

With a dropout rate of more than 13 percent at secondary school level, Jammu and Kashmir is grappling with worst 'abandonment' student rate in north India

The recent official figures further reveal that the dropout rate at secondary level in Ladakh was 19.84 which is highest in states across the northern region of India.

According to the news agency, "The dropout rate at Secondary level in Jammu and Kashmir is 13.42 while the Ladakh territory was staggering at 19.84 percent."

The official figures also said that the dropout rate at Primary Level in Jammu and Kashmir was 1.6 percent and 4.3 percent in Ladakh.

It also reveals that the dropout rate at Upper Primary level in Jammu and Kashmir was 3.2 percent and the Ladakh territory was facing a dropout rate of 5.8 percent.

Earlier this month, KNO reported that 12 percent learners at senior secondary level quit studies midway.

The official figures had revealed that "The retention rate at Primary level in Jammu and Kashmir was 82.70 and 88.42 at senior secondary level."

NRLM makes Rajouri lady job provider, earns praise

HT NEWS NETWORK
RAJOURI, JAN 24

A woman from Rajouri district of Jammu division has become a job provider from job seeker by starting a spices factory in her locality.

Qamar-un-Nisa, a resident of Rehtal area in Rajouri district, started her spice factory in 2022 and currently around 26 local women are working at her factory where they are earning their livelihood.

Speaking to the news agency, Nisa said that they were struggling to manage their life due to

financial issues as there was no earning hand in their family.

"We were planning to start a business but the financial issues played spoilsport for a long time," she said. "In 2022, I came to know about the Self Help Groups of NRLM department and instantly joined it and after some time availed a loan where guarantor isn't required," she added.

After getting a loan, Nisa said that she purchased a machine for spices so as to pack spices and sell them in the market.

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Republic Day-2025: Full dress rehearsal held across Jammu division

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 24

In preparation for the 76th Republic Day 2025 celebrations, Full Dress rehearsal events were held across the Jammu Division featuring colourful cultural presentations and impressive March Past by contingents.

At Kathua: Full Dress rehearsal was held with great enthusiasm at Sports Stadium. Additional District Development Commissioner Surinder Mohan took salute at an impressive march past comprising contingents drawn from Police, CRPF, Forest Protection Force, NCC cadets besides formation of Police Band.

Students presented scintillating cultural items based on patriotism, cultural traditions and folk dances which were applauded by the audience present on the occasion.

ADC Ranjit Singh; ASP Rahul Charak; CPO Ranjit Thakur; ACR Vishav Pratap Singh and district heads of line departments, school staff, students and members of civil society were present to witness the full dress rehearsal.

At Poonch: In a grand display of preparations, the Full Dress Rehearsal for the Republic Day 2025 celebrations was held at the Sports Stadium. Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Tahir Mustafa Malik took the salute and hoisted the National Flag, marking the significance of the upcoming national celebration.

The rehearsal featured a meticulous inspection of the parade, showcasing the dedication and discipline of the participating contingents. Accompanying the ADC was Additional Superintendent of Police (Add.SP) Mohan Lal Sharma.

The parade was commanded by Deputy Superintendent of Police (DYSP) Sayed Aqeel Shah, with Inspector Mukhtiar Ahmed serving as the second-in-command.

At Doda: The full dress rehearsal for the 76th Republic Day celebration was successfully conducted at the Sports Stadium Doda. The rehearsal began with the hoisting of the National Flag, followed by the rendition of the National Anthem, instilling a deep sense of patriotism and unity among the participants and attendees.

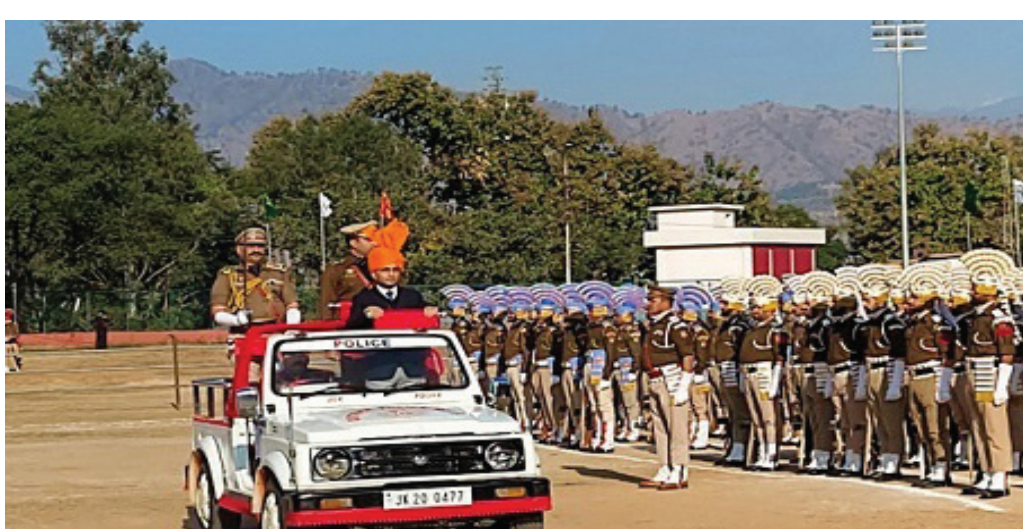
The highlight of the event was the meticulously organized march-past parade, featuring contingents from the police, paramilitary forces, forest department, and school students, all displaying exceptional discipline and coordination. Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Sudershan Kumar inspected the parade and hoisted the Tricolour.

Meanwhile, the full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day celebrations was also conducted at the New Bus Stand, Kotli Baderwah., Tehsildar Kamal Preet Singh unfurled the national flag and took the salute at an impressive march past presented by contingents of JK Armed Police, NCC Senior Division of Government Degree College (GDC) Baderwah, and NCC Junior Division teams from Boys and Girls Higher Secondary Schools. At Reasi: Full Dress rehearsal in connection with the celebrations of Republic Day 2025 was held with great enthusiasm at General Zorawar Singh Sports Stadium.

ADC Rakesh Kumar took salute at an impressive march past comprising contingents drawn from Police, CRPF, platoons of NCC cadets, School, besides formation of Police Band.

Students presented a scintillating cultural program featuring patriotic songs, folk dances and skits conveying social awakening messages.

ACR Anshumali Sharma; ASP Iftikhar; DySP Neeraj Padyar; DySP DAR Rohit Chahal; DFO, CEO, DSWO,



ARTO, Youth Sports OFFICER, XEN PWD and PMGSY, DIO(info) and other district officers were present on the occasion.

At Kishtwar: A comprehensive full dress rehearsal was conducted here at the historic Chowgan Ground, setting the stage for the grand celebrations of the 76th Republic Day in 2025.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Pawan Kotwal hoisted the tricolor and took the salute at the march past comprising contingents from the CRPF, Police, CISF, IRP, NCC (Sr. Div.) of GDC Kishtwar, Forest Protection Force, Homeguard, and schoolchildren. The parade was led by Parade Commander Dy. SP Sumit Kumar.

The schoolchildren and local performers presented

a colorful cultural program, showcasing theme-based performances that captivated the audience with patriotic enthusiasm. The event was carried out with strict adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

The event was attended by ASP Pawan Sharma; PO ICDS Rishi Kumar Sharma; CPO Shahnawaz Bali; ACR Idrees Lone; SDM Paddar Amit Kumar; DSWO Zubair Ahmed and other officers and staff from civil and police administration officials.

At Udhampur: In preparation for the Republic Day celebration, a full dress rehearsal was held here at Government PG College Boys.

Additional District Development Commissioner Rajinder Singh hoisted the National flag at 9:55 AM and took salute at

an impressive march past comprising contingents drawn from District Police, SKPA, ITBP, NCC etc.

Additional Deputy Commissioner Dr Gurvinderjeet Singh; Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Dr Umesh Shan; Additional SP Sandeep Bhat and other district heads were present to witness the event.

At Rajouri: The full dress rehearsal was held at the District Police Lines where Additional Deputy Commissioner Rajiv Kumar Khajuria unfurled the National Flag and took the salute at an impressive Parade comprising contingents from CRPF, IRP, JKP, FPF and school squads, besides Police band. The ADC inspected the parade, observed the band drill and reviewed the contingents' march past

Among others present at

the event were ASP Vikram Kumar; DSEO, Sandeep Sharma; DIO Ashiq Rafiq Malik; CEO Bishamber Dass, Tehsildar Varinder Sharma, EXEN PDD Mohd Rashid; EXEN PWD(R&B) Rajouri, Sardar Khan and other officers.

At Ramban: The Full Dress Rehearsal for the 76th Republic Day celebrations was held with patriotic fervor here at the District Police Lines. Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Varunjeet Singh Charak unfurled the National Flag and took the salute at an impressive Parade

The ADC meticulously inspected the parade led by Dy. SP DAR Imtiyaz Ahmed, with contingents from Police, IRP, Forest Protection Force, Women Contingent of J&K Police.

The parade was followed

by a vibrant cultural program, featuring performances by local artists and students from educational institutions.

The prominent attendees included Additional SP Gourav Mahajan; ACR S. Harpal Singh; ACP Ashfaq Ahmed; CEO Bikram Singh; DSWO Rahul Gupta; Dy. SP Om Prakash; XEN PWD Abhishek Gupta, Tehsildar, heads of various departments, and other officials.

At Samba: The full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day Parade 2025 was conducted here at Rani Suchet Singh Sports Stadium in a patriotic and spirited atmosphere. Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma, unfurled the national flag, inspected the parade and took the salute at the impressive march past.

SSP Samba Virender Singh

Manhas; ADC Jagdish Singh and other senior officers from Samba Police and the Civil Administration were also present.

The parade was commanded by DySP Bisham Dubey consisting of contingents from District Police Samba (Male, Female, and SPO contingents), CRPF, IR Battalion, Forest Protection Force, and VHG Contingent. Additionally, contingents of students from various educational institutions across the district added to the grandeur of the event. The function concluded with vibrant cultural programs by students and local artists, showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the region and adding charm and spirit to the occasion.

National Girl Child Day celebrated at Kishtwar

JI NEWS SERVICE
KISHTWAR, JANUARY 24

The District Administration Kishtwar, in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare, celebrated National Girl Child Day by organising a series of engaging activities aimed at empowering young girls and raising awareness about their rights.

The event featured motivational lectures on the theme "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao," encouraging the protection and education of girls. Scintillating cultural performances, including solo and group dance besides musical acts by girl students representing different educational institutions added to the grandeur of the Event. The event also showcased singing and dance performances by the girls of "PARISHA" Home for Girls. A remarkable skit, pre-



sented by Kishtwar Act Production, highlighted the importance of girls' education and their empowerment.

Adding to the celebration, Nidhi Aryan, winner of Kishtwar Idol Season 2, captivated the audience with her performance, leaving a lasting impression. A special segment of the event featured inspiring stories from girl entrepreneurs who have achieved remarkable success in their respective

fields. Among them were Ruhana Sheikh, a talented calligrapher; Mehwish Tak, a skilled makeup artist; Azma Bhat, a home baker and cloud kitchen entrepreneur; and Sudarshana Devi, a successful mushroom cultivation entrepreneur.

Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Kumar Shavan underscored the government initiatives to promote the empowerment of women and girls,

including establishment of the Women Empowerment Cell, the Mission Yuva Scheme Registration, and facilitating loan opportunities for girl entrepreneurs.

He emphasized the administration's commitment to the uplift of the girl child and women's rights, as well as the need for stricter actions against domestic violence and the role of women in combating the growing drug menace.

District Social Welfare Officer Zubair Ahmed, also spoke about the significance of providing education to the girl child and supporting their career aspirations across various fields.

Samridhi Sen, International Gold Medalist Singer from Kishtwar, was also present and added to the

event's vibrancy.

The Deputy Commissioner, along with other dignitaries, felicitated women achievers, including ALC Mamta Sudershan, Samridhi Sen, Sapna Thakur (Media) and other participants.

The winners of the painting competition, which was held to commemorate the day, were also honored at the event.

All the dignitaries also participated in the signature campaign on the Dream Wall established by the SWD.

The event, saw the participation of senior officers, including DIO Kishtwar Dr. Kuldeep Kumar, ALC Kishtwar Mamta Sudershan, TSWO Kishtwar Rajesh Kumar Sharma, students, Officers and officials from DHEW Mission Shakti Kishtwar, teachers, parents, Anganwadi workers, and other community members.

DDC Shopian reviews sector wise works of District Capex



JI NEWS SERVICE
SHOPIAN, JANUARY 24

To review the physical and financial progress of developmental projects and works under the District Capex Plan for the ongoing year (2024-25) in the district, the District Development Commissioner (DDC) Shopian, Mohammad Shahid Saleem Dar today chaired a meeting of officers at Mini Secretariat Shopian.

The DDC took review of physical and financial progress of ongoing developmental projects and works under execution in the district pertaining to various departments.

During the meeting, Shahid Saleem emphasized the need for efficiency in the project lifecycle, urging officers to expedite the execution process and improve the financial progress immediately.

Different development projects including roads, bridges, water supply & power augmentation works, drainage networks, playgrounds & recreation facilities, irrigation works, street lights and other infrastructure development works in schools, health centers & rural development works, etc are under execution in the district under the District Capex.

DC Reasi reviews Change of Land use cases

JI NEWS SERVICE
REASI, JANUARY 24

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Nidhi Malik chaired a meeting of the District Level Committee today to review applications seeking Change of Land Use cases in the district. Three cases were assessed. After scrutiny and through assessment the applications were found lacking in meeting the set criteria and were set aside.

The Deputy Commissioner asked for consulting the Housing and Urban Development Department and the Revenue Department to ensure all the change of land use cases are taken into consideration after thorough scrutiny. She emphasised diligence and transparency in the processing of CLU cases to uphold the integrity of the change of land use policy.

The meeting was attended by key officials, including ACR Anshumali Sharma, DFO Reasi Sunil Manhas, CAO Harbans Singh, and XENs from Jal Shakti, JPDCL and PMGSY, as well as the Tehsildars and other relevant officers.

DC inspects arrangements for Republic Day 2025 at Sports Stadium Poonch

JI NEWS SERVICE
POONCH, JANUARY 24

Deputy Commissioner Poonch Vikas Kundal conducted an on-site inspection at the Sports Stadium Poonch to review the arrangements for the upcoming Republic Day 2025 celebrations at the venue. He was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Tahir Mustafa Malik and other civil and Police Officers.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner meticulously assessed the preparations, focusing on various aspects including seating arrangements, stage setup, security measures, and logistical support to ensure the event proceeds smoothly. Emphasizing the importance of detailed planning, he stated that the celebration should reflect the grandeur and discipline befitting the significance of the occasion.

"The Republic Day celebrations are a testament to our unity and patriotism," said DC Vikas Kundal. "It is imperative that we ensure public convenience, especially for dignitaries, school children, and participants in cultural programs."

The Deputy Commissioner directed all line departments to work in close coordination to finalize the arrangements well in advance. He underscored the administration's commitment to making the event a grand success, showcasing the spirit of the district.

Republic Day-2025: Full Dress Rehearsal held at MA Stadium

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 24

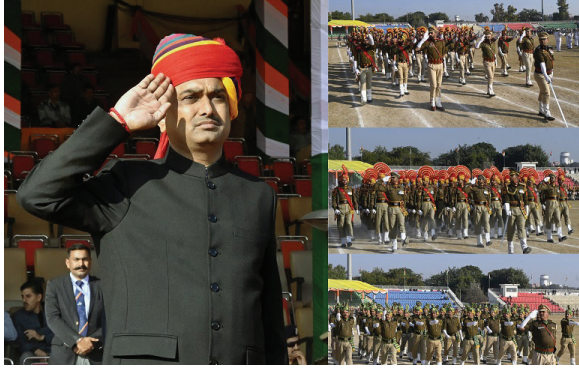
The full dress rehearsal for UT level celebration of Republic Day-2025 was held at M A Stadium Jammu, today.

The parade consisted of men and women contingents from Army, BSF, CRPF, JKP, JKAP, IRP, SSB, NCC cadets, Bharat Scouts and guides, Ex servicemen, J&K Forest Protection Force, UTDRF, JK Fire & Emergency Services and school students.

Pipe and Brass bands of BSF, JKP, JKAP, Army and school students played tunes to the march past.

Divisional Commissioner Jammu, Ramesh Kumar inspected the Parade and took the salute at the impressive March Past and hoisted the tricolor.

School children and art-



ists of J&K Academy of Art Culture and Languages presented a colorful cultural programme featuring theme based presentations. Dare Devils of Jammu and Kashmir Police mesmerised the audience by their spectacular and thrilling performances.

The cultural items depicted national integration, unity in diversity, harmony and composite culture of Jammu Kashmir UT, besides

featuring patriotic songs, folk music and dance.

Tableaux on themes celebrating cultural diversity of J&K, PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijli Yojna, Swarnim Bharat Ki Virasat: Sahkar se Vikas, Fit India Movement, War Against Drugs, highlighted initiatives and achievements of the Government.

Senior officers from UT administration, Nodal officers and the in-charges were also present.

DLRC meeting held at Kupwara

JI NEWS SERVICE
KUPWARA, JANUARY 24

The District Development Commissioner (DDC), Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan, today, chaired the meeting of District Level Review Committee (DLRC) at Meeting Hall of DC Office Complex here to review the performance of line departments and banks with regard to saturation of different government schemes in the district.

Addressing the meeting, the DDC emphasized the concerned officers and bankers for financial inclusion and saturation of various centrally sponsored schemes so that the people especially marginalized sections of the community get benefited at large.

She directed all the banks and the sponsoring agencies to work with greater coordination and cohesion to achieve the



goals and targets of financial inclusion, besides, generation of employment for unemployed youth of the district.

The DDC further directed banks for early disposal of financial assistance cases and instructed line departments to sponsor cases to respective bank branches strictly as per service area, within the stipulated time frame.

Ayushi stressed the need for grassroots awareness of financial and social security schemes sponsored by the Government and directed the departments to hold awareness

camps for the people in coordination with respective MLAs.

She directed the bankers and line departments to maximize the coverage of social security schemes in the district and enroll Asha Workers, Anganwadi Workers, MGNREGA and other marginalized workers so that they can be benefitted in large.

While highlighting the overall performance for FY 2024-25 under annual district credit plan, Lead District Manager, Kupwara, Tariq Ahmad Jan informed the house that achievements under ACP

2024-25 for the district stood at Rs.1276 Crores till the end of second quarter which constitutes 78% against target of Rs.1637 Crores.

The achievements under priority sector advances were to the tune of Rs.560 Crores against target of Rs.1411 Crore for ACP 2024-25 which constitutes 40% while as under non-priority sector the achievements are to the tune of Rs.716 Crores against target of Rs.226 Crores which constitutes 317%.

Rs.166.38 crore have been disbursed by the banks amongst 10021 beneficiaries under PM Mudra Yojana scheme with J&K Bank being the main contributor in credit disbursement.

Officers from line departments, representatives from different banks and other concerned were present in the meeting.

Shab-i-Meraj preparations reviewed at Budgam



JI NEWS SERVICE
BUDGAM, JANUARY 24

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Akshay Labroo today chaired a meeting to finalize arrangements for the ensuing auspicious occasion of Meraj-ul-Alam in district Budgam.

The meeting discussed threadbare preparations to be made for the celebrations of Shab-i-Meraj and responsibilities were assigned to different departments.

At the outset, the DC directed District police to ensure proper security at the religious places including Peth Makhama, Charar-i-Sharief and Pakherpora shrine and other major shrines of the district during the celebrations of the festival.

Further, he directed KPDCI Budgam for uninterrupted power supply

and ensuring functioning of street lights at all significant places.

He instructed EOs of concerned Municipal Committees to carry out special cleanliness drives and proactive measures for proper sanitation in all areas.

Health authorities were instructed to ensure availability of staff and ambulances at all sub centers and ensure medical assistance at all designated places.

With regard to availability of ration, the DC directed AD FCS&CA to ensure timely supply and distribution of food grains, besides ensuring availability of essential commodities to the general public.

The DC also directed the ARTO to ensure hassle free availability of transport facility on the auspicious days and directed him to coordinate with the traffic

department so that bottlenecks in smooth flow of traffic are removed.

During the meeting, the DC directed the Department of PHE to ensure uninterrupted drinking water supply. They were also directed to provide additional water tankers at identified locations to augment the capacity.

To check illegal profiteering and hoarding in the markets, the DC directed SDMs to constitute squads which will monitor and conduct market checking drives to ensure sale of quality food items and check any hoarding or overpricing. Besides, ADC Budgam, CPO, SDMs, DFO, CMO, Executive Engineer PDD, PHE, AD FCS&CA, AD Fisheries, DSP HQ, Budgam, Animal and Sheep Husbandry, Cooperatives and EOs of Municipal Committees were present in the meeting.

CS for developing Jambu Zoo at par with international standards

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 24

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today visited the Jambu Zoo to take first hand appraisal about the works being executed there besides assessing the facilities being extended to the visitors.

The Chief Secretary was accompanied by PCCF/Chief Wildlife Warden, Sarvesh Rai; Regional Wildlife Warden, Jammu, Jyotsana; Additional Director, Jambu Zoo, Anil Atri and other senior officers of the department.

During his visit, the Chief Secretary inspected various animal enclosures, visitor's facilities and reviewed the ongoing developmental works at the zoo.

The Chief Secretary expressed his vision for Jambu Zoo to achieve recognition at par with other prominent zoos of the country and of the international standards. He emphasised the need for devising a comprehensive developmental plan for future expansion of the zoo including creation of other educational, recreational and animal welfare facilities and enhancement of overall appeal of the zoo.

To ensure that Jambu



Zoo meets global standards, the Chief Secretary suggested deputing zoo officers to prominent national and international zoos for training and exposure for advanced management practices and technology intervention. This will enable them to contribute significantly towards achieving excellence in zoo's development and management, he added. The Chief Secretary also stressed the importance of increasing the Zoo's footfall through innovative strategies and public engagement programs in addition to animal collection in the zoo.

During the interaction, the Chief Secretary was apprised by the zoo management regarding the need to further augment the field staff there supported by a dedicated engineering team too. It was added that enhancing battery operated vehicle fleet and veterinary expert

team for the zoo would increase the appeal of this facility manifold. The Chief Secretary assured his support in addressing these issues and instructed the concerned authorities to complete the new animal collection process including completion of species specific infrastructure at the earliest.

Earlier, the Chief Secretary was briefed by the

Chief Wildlife Warden about the existing 17 enclosures in which different species of wild animals like tiger, lion, leopard, himalayan black bear, black buck, snake chambers and crocodile have been kept for public display. He was also informed that 13 different animal enclosures have been undertaken for construction during 2024-25. The prominent species to be housed in these enclosures will be hippopotamus, ostrich, indian gaur, hyena, wolf, fishing cat etc. A walk through aviary is also in the construction stage where number of beautiful native as well as exotic species of birds shall be kept.

NORTHERN RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE			
Tender Notice No.- 301-2024-25-Sr-DENC-FZR		Date: 23.01.2025	
Sr.DEN-C/FZR acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites open tenders (E-Tenders) against below titled tenders and available on www Ireps.gov.in with closing date 14/02/2025 up to 15:00 Hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids up to closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offers received shall be ignored.			
Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through only payment modes available on www Ireps.gov.in portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand draft/Banker cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed. For more information login to www Ireps.gov.in .			
Tender Type	Tendering Section	Bidding System	
Open	Works	Single Packet System	
Date of Uploading Tenders	Bid Starting Date	Bid Closing Date/Time	
22/01/2025	31/01/2025	14/02/2025 15:00 Hrs	
S.No.	Tender No.	Details of Tender	
1.	301-2024-25-Sr-DENC-FZR	Manufacturing and supplying of 80,000 cum 65 mm gauge stone ballast (Mechanically broken) duly stacked and loading into Railway Wagons/Hoppers in quarry siding in Depot at Mukerian on SCPD-PTKC section under ADEN/JRC.	
		Advertised Value (Rs.)	Earnest Money/ Validity of Offer / Period of Completion
		7,60,00,000/-	5,30,000,000/- 60 Days 12 Months
Special Technical Criteria:- "Supply of machine crushed stone ballast for Railway/Highway/Roads			
Note 1. Before bidding, bidders to check for any corrigendum issued against the tender. 269/2025			

Mission Shakti SWD, CRC Jammu join hands to celebrate National Girl Child Day with Specially Abled Children

J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 24

Mission Shakti Social Welfare Department, in collaboration with Composite Regional Centre (CRC) Jammu, organized a heart-warming and vibrant celebration to mark National Girl Child Day, focusing on empowering specially-abled girls. The event not only highlighted the talents and achievements of these young girls but also underscored the values of inclusivity, empowerment, and

gender equity. The program was thoughtfully designed to celebrate the abilities and dreams of specially-abled children. Alongside plantation, a signature campaign, cultural performances and speeches, the Mission Shakti, under its BBBP initiative, distributed school bags, Tiffins and water bottles to the children as a gesture of encouragement and support for their educational journey. The children enthusiastically presented cultural

items, recited poetry and displayed their craft items. The parents of the children also attended the event, lending their wholehearted support and admiration. Speaking on the occasion, District Mission Coordinator Shagun Manchanda stressed the importance of such initiatives in fostering confidence among these girls and reaffirmed Mission Shakti's unwavering commitment to advocating for their rights and education. She acknowledged the incredible syn-

ergy between Mission Shakti and CRC Jammu, which made this celebration exceptional. Adding her perspective, Dr. Rohnika Sharma, Director CRC, commended the event for being a beautiful showcase of strength, potential, and the indomitable spirit of these young girls. She highlighted the need for continued efforts to ensure that every specially-abled child gets an equal opportunity to succeed. Sub Divisional Magistrate Akhnoor Subhan-

kar Pathak was the Chief Guest. In his address, he applauded Mission Shakti's proactive efforts under the SANKALP initiative for improving the socio-economic conditions of women and children, particularly in underrepresented groups. He emphasized the transformative potential of empowering one girl and its ripple effect across future generations. Officials from Mission Shakti's SANKALP wing, representatives from CRC Jammu, and families of the

children celebrated the occasion together, marking a milestone of unity and collaboration. The presence of parents further reinforced the message that true empowerment begins with family and community support. This celebration was yet another testament to Mission Shakti's resolve in championing the rights of the girl child. By focusing on these children, the event sent a powerful message of inclusion, equity, and encouragement.

DC Kupwara reviews arrangements for celebration of auspicious Shab-e-Meraj



J1 NEWS SERVICE
KUPWARA, JANUARY 24

In connection with celebration of upcoming Meraj-un-Nabi (SAW), the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kupwara, Ayushi Sudan today chaired a meeting of Officers at DC Office Complex here, to finalize the arrangements in being made by all line Departments for smooth conduct of the auspicious religious occasion.

Ayushi sought feedback from concerned Officers regarding the arrangements of electricity, water supply, cleanliness, fire service, transport, parking and medical facilities being put in place for celebration of the Shab-e-Meraj.

The DC directed the Officers of all line departments to ensure special arrangements for smooth observance of the auspicious occasion at the shrine of Muqam Shahwali and other prominent religious places for the devotees particularly during the intervening night (Shab) and on Friday following.

With regard to adequate supply of water, the DC directed the PHE Department to ensure adequate water supply at the prominent religious places so that devotees do not face any inconvenience. Similarly, Executive Engineers of PDD

were directed to ensure uninterrupted power supply during the auspicious occasion.

The MC officials were directed to ensure proper cleanliness around the mosques and shrines falling in Municipal areas of Kupwara and Handwara. Similarly, BDOs will ensure cleanliness in rural areas where large congregations of devotees are expected. Concerned DFOs were directed to arrange sufficient firewood for heating requirements.

The Tehsildars were directed to intensify market checking in all major markets of the district to ensure no illegal hoardings and overcharging is done.

The CMO Kupwara was asked to keep ambulances standby at main sites where large congregations are expected as per past practice.

With regard to Traffic and Parking facilities, the DC directed the ARTO Kupwara and Traffic Police authorities for ensuring hassle-free traffic movement of the devotees, besides making adequate facilities at the designated place for parking of the vehicles. ADC Kupwara, M Rouf Rehman; ACR, CMO, Executive Engineers of PDD/PHE, EOs of Municipalities, Tehsildars and other concerned officers attended the meeting.

FROM THE PAGE 1...

Sincere efforts, policy...

INDUSTRIAL ECOSYSTEM WITNESSED UNPRECEDENTED SURGE

"In the past few years J&K's Industrial ecosystem has witnessed an unprecedented surge, supporting the culture of innovation, research & development and scientific advancements. I want to see our youth among top-notch entrepreneurs of the country, contributing to its growth," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Referring to the industrial revolution taking place in Jammu Kashmir, the Lieutenant Governor said the result of the Central Sector Industrial Development Scheme is now visible in J&K.

The Lieutenant Governor also emphasized on the role of educational institutions and youth in developing India as knowledge economy and realising the vision of Viksit Bharat.

"Over the past few years numerous industries have been established, with many more in the pipeline," he said, adding, "Jammu and Kashmir has witnessed an unprecedented industrial boom. The government is committed to ensuring that the youth of J&K emerge as top-notch entrepreneurs, contributing significantly to India's economy."

COLLABORATION BETWEEN ACADEMIA, INDUSTRY MUST

He stressed the critical need for collaboration between academia and industry to drive technological advancements. "The synergy between educational institutions and industries is essential to foster innovation and develop cutting-edge technologies that will propel India further on the global stage," he said.

The Lieutenant Governor also shared the key initiatives including Mission Yuva to develop a business support ecosystem for the enterprising youth of J&K. He said, reforms are being made in the education sector with a dedicated focus on skilling the youth in the technology of Industry 4.0. "We continue to focus on policies to promote incubation centres and to provide better resources and support to set up new start-ups. I want our youth to dream, dedicate and develop dynamic J&K and propel its growth trajectory to new heights," he said.

He said the Youth entrepreneurship mission today is important not only for India but the entire world and the countries from both Global North and Global South are looking at their massive demographic dividend to meet the biggest developmental challenges of 21st century.

RESPONSIBILITY OF YOUTH TO TAKE COUNTRY TO NEW HEIGHTS

He said, "India was known as a global knowledge hub in the past and now it's the responsibility of the youth to take country to the new heights."

LG Sinha hailed the New Education Policy by terming it as a revolutionary roadmap to shape India's educational and technological future. "The NEP is our guide and will play a pivotal role in aligning our education system with global standards," he remarked.

The Lieutenant Governor congratulated the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports, the Global Counter Terrorism Council (GCTC), IIM Jammu and all other associate departments for providing a dynamic platform for innovators, aspiring entrepreneurs, youth leaders to showcase innovative business ideas and entrepreneurial initiatives.

Prof. BS Sahay, Director IIM Jammu shared the vision of IIM Jammu to develop the youth as business leaders and entrepreneurs.

A detailed presentation highlighting the key objectives of Mission Yuva was also presented on the occasion.

J&K Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo, former DGP J&K SP Vaid; Heads of Departments, senior officials, members of Global Counter Terrorism Council, young entrepreneurs, innovators, youth leaders and industry experts were present on the occasion—(KNO)

LG releases Manu...

literary endeavours.

'Mountain Goddesses' follows the author, through her discovery of the deep-rooted feminine power within her motherland in Jammu.

Smt Manu Khajuria Singh is a freelance writer and commentator from Jammu Kashmir. A native of Jammu region, her focus is the region's history, culture and current issues. After moving to the United Kingdom and seeing the younger generation become influenced by contemporary female icons, the author was inspired to document the vast yet lesser-known female-centric stories from her homeland. These empowering tales offer alternative indigenous role models and an illuminating perspective on femininity.

Kashmir's Vande...

revolutionize travel in Kashmir with its cutting-edge features and reduced travel time. The train's design

and speed have been developed by the Chennai-based Integral Coach Factory (ICF).

The commissioner of Railway Safety has approved the train's operation on the Katra-Baramulla section, with the Railways completing the 272-km Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) project. This development is expected to boost connectivity between Jammu and Srinagar, enhance tourism, and provide a more convenient travel experience.

USBRL inauguration

The USBRL section is set to be inaugurated in February 2025. Ahead of the launch, Northern Railways' North circle directed its Firozpur division to move USBRL Vande Bharat rakes for trials between SVDK and Baramulla on January 24 and 25, 2025.

Over the past month, Indian Railways has conducted six trial runs on the USBRL section, which includes engineering marvels such as India's first cable-stayed rail bridge, Anji Khad Bridge, and the iconic Chenab River arch bridge.

The Anji Khad Bridge, a critical part of the USBRL project, features a 331-metre-high single pylon, making it one of the world's two highest railway bridges alongside the Chenab Bridge at Kauri, the latter standing 359 metres above the river bed and 35 metres taller than the Eiffel Tower in Paris. KNO

Whole world knows...

His remarks came in response to Pakistan's Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) statement, which accused the Indian Army of politicization after the Army Chief linked terror activities in Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan.

Jaiswal while dismissing the accusations of politicization levelled by Pakistan as irrelevant, said that the global community is well aware of the countries responsible for fostering such activities.

He reiterated India's position that Pakistan has consistently failed to dismantle terror networks operating from its territory. "Everybody knows there are people and countries responsible for cross-border terrorism, and we call upon Pakistan to take strict action to stop it," he added. KNO

Sigh of relief: Patients...

Principal of GMC Jammu, Dr Ashutosh Gupta said three siblings admitted to the hospital are showing improvement, including one patient who had been on a ventilator but has now been extubated and is stable.

Dr Gupta confirmed that a patient sent to PGI Chandigarh is also recovering, and senior doctors there are collaborating with their counterparts in Jammu to monitor the situation.

"We are 100% certain this is not caused by any virus or influenza," he said. "Whether toxins or poison are involved is a matter of investigation and time. National agencies are involved in this case, and reaching a conclusion requires patience."

Dr Gupta called for upgrading diagnostic infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir. "Facilities like metagenomics, RT-PCR, next-generation sequencing, and other modern diagnostic tools are essential," he said, adding that these are being established at GMC Jammu to facilitate better patient care.

The Jammu & Kashmir Police have formed an 11-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) to probe the mysterious illness. Investigations at multiple levels are ongoing, with all departments on high alert and working around the clock to handle the situation.

Authorities have also implemented measures to "break the food chain" in the affected village by providing residents with monitored food and water supplies.

While the cause of the mysterious illness remains unknown, the recovery of patients offers hope for the people of Badhaal. Authorities, along with national health agencies, are working tirelessly to identify the root cause and prevent further incidents. KNO

190 achievers from...

and serves as an embodiment of the spirit of contributing towards the cause of nation building," said an official.

"The people of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh have time and again demonstrated that if one is committed and dedicated towards their cause, no obstacles can stop them from achieving what they want to," he said, adding that the government has made special arrangements for accommodation and other logistical support for these special invitees and no stone is being left unturned to ensure a memorable and comfortable experience for them.

The official said that around 10,000 special guests from different regions of the country have been invited to witness the Republic Day Parade. These guests are achievers and best performers in their respective areas and are the architects of Swarnim Bharat. KNO

Snowfall melting...

Chief Engineer of the Jal Shakti Department, Brahmajyoti Sharma, confirmed that snowmelt has played a crucial role in maintaining the water supply.

"There is no shortage of drinking water as the melting of snow has helped ensure adequate supply to consumers," Sharma said. He added that while the rainfall deficit persists, the melting of recent snowfall has mitigated its impact. KNO

NRLM makes Rajouri...

"We worked hard and started packing different spices and selling them in the market and our current income is more than 3 lakh," she said.

"Around 26 local women are associated with us who too are earning their livelihood very well," she said, adding that whatever they are today is only because of the NRLM department.

She requested every woman to join SHGs and take benefit of other government schemes as well to start their units at a small level and that will help them to become financially independent.

Qamar-un-Nisa said that joining an SHG is a better option for the women folk as they can continue their work at their home and start small units to stand on their own legs to become financially independent.

Self-Help Groups have proven to be an effective mechanism for poverty alleviation and women's empowerment.

Through their collective strength, SHGs have provided access to finance, built livelihood opportunities, and fostered social inclusion for continued success of women.

There are hundreds of women in rural areas who are dependent on their family for everything but they must take advantage of the government schemes to become financially independent, she said.

She said that by joining NRLM, she isn't earning livelihood for her family but helping others too. KNO

121 kilos of...

connection with multiple FIRs registered across Srinagar, police said in a statement.

It added that the destruction process was carried out after obtaining the necessary orders from the competent court.

The committee, comprising senior officers from various wings of the police, conducted the operation at the designated incineration facility in Lassipora, Pulwama.

"This initiative underscores the commitment of the Srinagar Police to eradicate drug abuse and contribute to the broader national effort to create a drug-free society," the statement said.

J&K Police seize...

district, it intercepted an auto-rickshaw and during a search, 2.8 kilograms of charas powder-like substance was recovered from the possession of three individuals traveling in the vehicle.

The accused have been identified as Zubair Ahmad Dar a resident of Khanabal Batangoo, Muzafar Ahmad Dar of Uranhal, and Umar Majeed Ganie of Chee Anantnag.

In another incident, a police party intercepted a suspicious individual carrying a bag while approaching Chek Poshkreeri towards Poshkreeri. The individual attempted to escape upon spotting the police party but was swiftly apprehended.

Upon questioning, the suspect disclosed his identity as Mohd Shafi Ganie, a resident of Chek Poshkreeri. A search of his belongings led to the recovery of 1.458 kilograms of cannabis powder from his bag.

In this regard, two separate cases have been registered at Police Station Bijbehara and Srigufwara respectively and further investigation is in progress.

Police reaffirm their commitment to eradicating the drug menace from the Anantnag district and ensuring the safety and well-being of its citizens, they said.

J&K Raj Bhawan...

valuable contributions to nation's growth and building of a modern India.

He said the blessed land of great revolutionaries like Mahamana Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Mangal Pandey, Chandra Shekhar Azad, Rani Lakshmi Bai, Begum Hazrat Mahal, is a confluence of cultural heritage, patriotism and innovation which is guiding the society since time immemorial.

"One of the most ancient cradles of Indian culture, Uttar Pradesh is the land of pilgrimage, spiritualism, knowledge, literature and an ultimate destination for seekers, intellectuals, travellers and historians. The state is blessed by sacred rivers and home to ancient civilizational cities. May the state of Uttar Pradesh scale new heights of progress. I pray for the good health and well-being of all," the Lieutenant Governor said.

Sheep & Wool workers condemn defamatory allegations against deptt



J1 NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JAN 25

A meeting on virtual mode of all the office bearers of All J&K Sheep & Wool Workers Association including District Presidents of Jammu province has been organised under the Chairmanship of Mohd. Rafiq Malik U.T. President All J&K Sheep Wool Workers Association accompanied by Mr. Sunil Sharma Provincial President regarding the news published in some newspapers by some self-style leaders / black sheep defaming the reputation of the Sheep Husbandry Department Jammu levelling false & baseless allegations and

intentionally interfering the smooth functioning of the Govt. Work.

All the Sheep & Wool Workers Association condemned the all the baseless contents published in some newspapers of Jammu Division about the smooth functioning of Sheep Husbandry Department Jammu and request the concerned authorities to take strict action and defamation case may be registered against them.

Further, All the Sheep & Wool Workers Association fully convinced with the working of the department without any doubt about the integrity of the official and officers of the department.

CS asks to devise mechanism for periodical monitoring of SBM-G assets

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 24

Chief Secretary, Atal Dulloo, today chaired a meeting of Rural Development Department (RDD) to review progress on implementation of Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen (SBM-G) across the Union Territory.

During the meeting, the Chief Secretary emphasized the importance of regular monitoring of community assets created by the Rural Sanitation Department. He directed the department to devise a robust mechanism for tracking the functional status of these assets including community sanitation complexes, compost pits, segregation sheds, soak pits and drainage facilities.

He further instructed that ground level staff be tasked with uploading of geo-tagged photos and videos of these assets periodically to ensure updat-



ed information is readily available to the authorities.

Dulloo called for making budgetary provisions to establish Gobardhan units in all districts and stressed their optimal utilisation to benefit rural communities. He highlighted the need for a comprehensive Operations and Maintenance (O&M) policy to ensure sustainable management of community sanitation assets and encouraged active public participation in their upkeep. He stated that if these assets are made greatly beneficial for the public they would in turn find it interesting to adopt them for proper management.

The Chief Secretary underscored the signifi-

cance of establishing faecal sludge treatment facilities in various districts, deeming them crucial for maintaining clean and ambient rural surroundings. He also advocated creation of carbon-neutral panchayats across the Union Territory and urged the department to certify such initiatives to validate their impact.

He directed the department to further strengthen the IEC activities in the UT for affecting the much required behavioural change among the population. He advised for consistent promotion of SBM-G initiatives in the region. He told them to focus on disseminating success stories, raising awareness and ensuring regular engage-

ment with stakeholders to sustain momentum of the mission thereby guaranteeing its success in the UT.

Secretary, RDD, Aijaz Assad, provided an overview of the department's achievements under the Swachh Bharat Mission-Grameen. He informed the meeting that the Government of India has approved Rs 245 crore as the Annual Implementation Plan (AIP) for 2024-25, supplemented by contributions from the UT.

Director General of Rural Sanitation, Anoo Malhotra, apprised the meeting of significant progress made during the current financial year. She reported that all 6,650 villages in J&K have been declared ODF+ Model, with 81% (5,407 villages) approved by third-party verification. The meeting was apprised that under SBM-G, community assets created included 13,879 compost pits, 2,800 segregation sheds, and 7,600

segregation bins for solid waste management.

Additionally, 13,870 community soak pits and 2,800 drainage facilities have also been established for greywater treatment, along with numerous individual assets benefiting households across the UT.

Regarding utilisation of funds received so far, it was disclosed that of the total available funds of Rs131.15 crore, Rs124.70 crore have been utilised, leaving a balance of just Rs 6.45 crore in SNA. It was revealed that efforts are underway to complete 135 plastic waste management units across the blocks of J&K soon. It was reiterated that the RDD is committed to ensure the success of SBM-G and improving the quality of life in rural areas. The stakeholders were urged to work collaboratively for effective implementation of this significant programme in the length and breadth of the UT.

DDC Kulgam chairs DLTC meet

JI NEWS SERVICE
KULGAM, JANUARY 24

A meeting of District Level Technical Committee (DLTC) was today held under the chairmanship of the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kulgam, Athar Aamir Khan, to finalize the Scale of Finance for the year 2025-26 for Agriculture, Horticulture, Floriculture, Fisheries, Animal and Sheep Husbandry, Floriculture at mini-sectariat here.

The participants deliberated on various factors like input prices and market prices of commodities for assessing the Scale of Finance for providing short term loans to the farmers in the shape of Working Capital for various field crops.

Information was shared with the attendees on the prices of various sub items such as fodder, fertilizer, pesticides, labour value addition and manure, etc for growing the crops and maintenance of dairy animals.

Keeping in view the inflation rate and the cost



of inputs, the scale of finance for each crop was decided.

The Convenor DLTC Kulgam briefed the meeting that the rates finalised by the Chairman of the Committee will be forwarded to the State Level Technical Committee for approval.

Chairman Committee (DDC) while speaking on the occasion said that agriculture and allied sectors are the backbone of sustenance and an important economic activity and the credit facility to the farmers will be instrumental in boosting the sector. He directed the banks to be liberal in lending these

small loans to farmers without any delays.

DC emphasized the line departments to send the revised work sheet feedback to Convenor DLTC at the earliest so that it can be forwarded to SLTC on time.

The meeting, convened by Nodal Officer ACC Bank Anantnag/Kulgam was attended by Chief Agriculture Officer, Chief Horticulture Officer, Chief Animal Husbandry Officer, District Sheep Husbandry Officer, District Floriculture Officer, Cluster Bank JKB, A D Fisheries, Manager SBI, Manager EDB, DDM NABARD, KVK Pombay among others.

National Girl Child Day celebrated in District Ramban with enthusiasm

JI NEWS SERVICE
RAMBAN, JANUARY 24

District Ramban celebrated National Girl Child Day with great enthusiasm under the overall guidance of Deputy Commissioner Ramban Baseer-Ul-Haq Chaudhary. The event, held at the Conference Hall, District Administrative Complex generated awareness about the importance of empowering the girl child and promoting gender equality in society.

A series of activities were organized by the Social Welfare Department and District Legal Service Authority across the district to mark the occasion, including awareness programs, seminars, cultural events, and interactive sessions highlighting the significance of educating and nurturing girls.

The government departments, educational



institutions, and social organizations collaborated to spread awareness about the rights and opportunities available for girls under initiatives such as Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP), Mission Shakti, and Mission Vatsalya.

Secretary DLSA Ramban Priyanka Mahajan, was

also present at the event and highlighted the legal provisions and rights available for the empowerment of girls. She emphasized the importance of ensuring justice and protection for girls, encouraging them to seek legal aid whenever needed.

Addressing the gather-

ing at the event, officials emphasized the need for equal opportunities in education, healthcare, and skill development for girls.

District Social Welfare Officer Rahul Gupta, in his address, stressed the importance of collective efforts in ensuring a brighter future for the girl child and reiterated the district administration's commitment to effectively implement various government schemes.

Several initiatives were showcased during the event, including Career counseling sessions for school and college-going girls, Health and hygiene awareness campaigns conducted by medical teams, Skits and cultural programs performed by students advocating gender equality, Distribution of educational materials to

underprivileged girls to encourage their participation in schooling.

Boxing kits were given away to 20 National Level Boxing Champions and participants, encouraging them to continue excelling in sports and bringing laurels to the district. The initiative aimed to motivate young girls to pursue sports as a career and enhance their physical and mental strength.

A special rally was also organized, featuring students, Anganwadi workers, and volunteers, carrying banners and placards advocating for the empowerment of girls with the slogan "Educate, Empower, Celebrate!"

The event concluded with the felicitation of meritorious girl students and achievers in various fields, acknowledging their contributions and encouraging them to aim higher in life.

JKRLM "Lakhpati Didis" to witness Republic Day Parade-2025 at New Delhi as prestigious guests

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 24

In a proud and historic moment, Lakhpati Didis associated with the Jammu & Kashmir Rural Livelihood Mission (JKRLM) have been invited as "prestigious Guests" to witness the 76th Republic Day Parade 2025 at Kartavya Path, New Delhi.

A delegation of nine Lakhpati Didis accompanied by their spouses from both the divisions, will attend this prestigious national event. This honor recognizes their relentless efforts in promoting entrepreneurship, driving economic growth, and creating a positive impact within their communities. By featuring them on this grand stage, their achievements are

being showcased at the national level. Speaking about this achievement, Mission Director JKRLM Dr. Shubhra Sharma described the invitation as a "historic milestone" for the SHGs under the mission. She stated, "This invitation symbolises recognition and appreciation for the hard work and dedication of our self-help groups. It is a celebration of their success stories and a testament to their resilience and determination to overcome challenges and break barriers." Dr. Sharma further emphasized the significance of this recognition, adding, "This opportunity will not only inspire our SHG members but also serve as an inspiration to countless women across the country. It highlights the transforma-

tive impact that women can create when empowered with the right opportunities and support." The presence of these SHG members at the Republic Day Parade reflects the progress made in empowering women in Jammu & Kashmir. It serves as a beacon of hope and encouragement for women nationwide to pursue their dreams and contribute meaningfully to society. The MD said that the JKRLM is committed to empowering women through initiatives focused on economic independence, skill development, and leadership. This honor bestowed upon the SHG members stands as a testament to the mission's dedication to fostering inclusive growth and social upliftment.



DC Budgam holds meeting with bankers, instructs 100% coverage of Smart Kisan Credit Cards

JI NEWS SERVICE
BUDGAM, JANUARY 24

The Deputy Commissioner (DC) Budgam, Akshay Labroo, chaired a meeting today to review the saturation of Smart Kisan Credit Cards (KCC) in the district.

The meeting aimed to strategize and expedite the process, ensuring maximum benefits for the farming community.

During the meeting, the DC assessed the current status of Smart KCC saturation and directed all concerned departments and banks to ensure 100% coverage of eligible beneficiaries within the stipulated time frame.

He emphasized the need for proactive measures by the banks, including issuing smart cards, to eligible beneficiaries.

The DC further directed for close coordination among banks, agricultural officers, and other stakeholders to accelerate the registration process and ensure seamless linkage of beneficiaries with the smart cards.



He stressed the need for efficient and transparent operations to guarantee that every eligible farmer in the district avails the scheme's benefits.

To monitor progress, the DC instructed the Chief Planning Officer (CPO) to coordinate interdepartmental activities, assign clear responsibilities, and provide daily updates.

Special emphasis was placed on the timely resolution of challenges, fostering collaboration among all stakeholders, including representatives from linked banks.

The DC said that the

successful implementation of the Smart KCC initiative would contribute significantly to the holistic development of the farming sector in Budgam, enhancing financial inclusion and empowering the agricultural economy of the District.

The meeting was attended by CPO Budgam, Chief Agriculture Officer Budgam, Lead District Manager (LDM) Budgam, representatives from all linked bank branches in Budgam and officers from other concerned departments.

Promoting Skill Development JKEDI, Dogra Degree College Samba sign MoU to make students industry ready

JI NEWS SERVICE
JAMMU, JANUARY 24


Jammu and Kashmir Entrepreneurship Development Institute (JKEDI) and Dogra Degree College Samba signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) here on Friday to work together for entrepreneurship development and startup related services.

The MoU aims at helping the students enhance their skills and knowledge with regard to entrepreneurship, innovation and startups. The MoU was signed in a formal ceremony held at JKEDI, Baribrahmana campus and was attended by key officials from both the institutions. The signatories were Rajinder Kumar Sharma, Director JKEDI and Dr. Bela Thakur, Principal Dogra Degree College, Samba, Dr. Dharamveer Sharma, Dean, Dogra Educational Trust, Amarpreet

Kaur, Convenor and Ashish Thakur, Social Media Coordinator, IIC Dogra Degree College along with the officers/officials of JKEDI were present on the occasion.


Speaking on the occasion, Director JKEDI Rajinder Kumar Sharma highlighted the importance of working together and focusing the efforts on cooperation within the areas of entrepreneurship, skill based training, educational research and promotion of startup and innovation culture. He stressed that JKEDI shall extend support for internships to students of the college, based on recommendations through proper channels subject to suitable positions and criteria fulfilment. The students shall also be trained in emerging technologies in order to bridge the skill gap and make them industry ready."





Territory of Jammu and Kashmir
Office of the Divisional Union Forest Officer
Kathua Forest Division

Email Id: dfokathua@gmail.com & dfokathua@jknic.in
Office Address: Forest Complex College Road Kathua Ph / Fax No. 01922-294875



E-TENDERING

Short Term Tender Notice

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir, e-tenders are invited from approved and eligible contractors registered with J&K Govt./Central Govt. Organizations for the following works:

S. No.	e-nit No. and date	Name of work	Adv. Cost (Rs. In lac)	Class of Contractors	Cost of Tender Document	Receiving/Opening Authority
1.	91 of 2024-25 dated: 23-01-2025	Development of Herbal Park including Landscaping at Jugain Closure under Nagar Van Yojna Scheme for the year 2024-25.	11.50	A,B,C & D	Rs. 600/-	Tender Opening Committee

The e-NIT consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities, (B.O.Q), Set of Terms & Conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental Website- www.jktenders.gov.in

- Position of funds: Available.
- Position of AA: **Accorded.**
- Position of TS: **Accorded.**

Publishing Date	23-01-2025
Download Start Date	23-01-2025
Bid Submission Start Date	23-01-2025
Bid Submission End Date	29-01-2025 at 6:00 PM
Date of opening of Technical Bid	30-01-2025 at 01:00 PM
Date of opening of Financial Bid	30-01-2025 at 01:30 PM

The Bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the Website: - <https://jktenders.gov.in>. Bid documents contain qualifying criteria for bidder, specifications, bill of quantities, conditions and other details.

(Dr. Rajan Singh) SFS
Divisional Forest Officer
Kathua Forest Division,
Kathua

DIP/J-9480/24
Date: 24-1-25

EDITORIAL

Tawi Lake Project:
A Dream Deferred

The ambitious artificial lake project on the River Tawi in Jammu, once envisioned as a transformative initiative for the city, has become a symbol of unfulfilled promises and bureaucratic lethargy. Announced with much fanfare, this project was supposed to boost tourism, enhance urban aesthetics, and provide much-needed recreational spaces for the residents of Jammu. However, years later, the project remains mired in delays, with no clear resolution in sight. The proverbial light at the end of the tunnel seems as elusive as ever. The project's trajectory has been marked by a series of missed deadlines and lackluster progress. Initially conceived over a decade ago, it has faced numerous hurdles, including technical challenges, funding bottlenecks, and administrative apathy. Each new deadline comes and goes, leaving the public increasingly disillusioned. The promise of a picturesque lake that would elevate Jammu's profile as a tourist destination now feels more like a distant dream than an impending reality. One of the primary issues plaguing the project is the apparent lack of accountability. Despite repeated assurances from authorities, there has been little transparency about the specific reasons behind the delays. Is it a matter of inadequate planning? Or are vested interests obstructing progress? The absence of clear answers only fuels public frustration. Moreover, the financial burden of these delays cannot be overlooked. With each passing year, the cost of completing the project escalates, placing additional strain on already stretched public resources. The environmental concerns linked to the project also merit attention. Critics have long questioned the ecological viability of creating an artificial lake on the Tawi River, citing potential disruptions to the river's natural flow and the risk of water stagnation. These issues demand thorough and honest evaluations, which seem to have taken a backseat amid the administrative muddle. The people of Jammu deserve better. This project is not just about building an artificial lake; it is about honoring commitments made to the public and fostering trust in governance. To salvage what remains of this initiative, the government must take immediate and decisive action. A comprehensive audit of the project is essential to identify the root causes of the delays and to hold those responsible accountable. Furthermore, timelines must be realistic and adhered to, with regular progress updates shared with the public to ensure transparency. The Tawi lake project holds immense potential to transform Jammu's urban and economic landscape, but only if it is pursued with the urgency and sincerity it deserves. The continued neglect of this initiative risks reducing it to yet another case study in failed urban planning. It is high time for the authorities to demonstrate the political will and administrative competence needed to bring this project to fruition. The people of Jammu have waited long enough—their patience should not be mistaken for apathy.

ASMITAL

Finance Minister Nir-mala 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 Khan-auri 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 ITL Group, Vice-Chairman of the Punjab Economic Policy and Planning Board, Chairman of ASSOCHAM Northern Region Development Council. Views expressed 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 multi-faceted 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 sus-

tainable water use.

Women are encouraged to participate in meetings, training and leadership roles, ensur-

ing 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 management 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)

Lose weight, cut chronic disease risk with new 'non-industrialised' style diet

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 24

A novel diet that mimics traditional eating habits created by using non-industrialised style food can be key to reducing the risk of several chronic diseases, while also helping lose weight.

Industrialised diets -- high in processed foods and low in fibre -- have contributed to a substantial rise in chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes, and heart disease.

The new diet titled "NiMe" (Non-industrialised Microbiome Restore) diet is inspired by the eating habits of non-industrialised societies.

It consists of plant-based focus, but is not vegetarian.

It is primarily made up of vegetables, legumes, and other whole-plant foods. It also includes one small serving of animal protein per day (salmon, chicken, or pork) with no dairy, beef, or wheat.

The international study led by Irish researchers showed that the NiMe diet enhanced short-term persistence of *L. reuteri* -- a beneficial bacterium prevalent in the gut of people with traditional eating habits.

"Industrialisation has drastically impacted our



gut microbiome, likely increasing the risk of chronic diseases," said Professor Jens Walter, scientist at the University College Cork in Ireland.

The NiMe diet is also very low in processed foods that are high in sugar and saturated fat,

and is fibre-rich. The fibre content was 22 grams per 1,000 calories -- exceeding current dietary recommendations.

In a strictly controlled human trial, the team found that the new diet led to significant metabolic and immunological improvements in a human intervention study.

In just three weeks, the diet promoted weight loss; decreased bad cholesterol by 17 per cent; reduced blood sugar by 6 per cent; and reduced C-reactive Protein (a marker of inflammation and heart disease) by 14 per cent, revealed the results published in the journal Cell.

These improvements were linked to beneficial changes in the participants' gut microbiome.

Moreover, the NiMe diet also improved microbiome features damaged by industrialisation, such as reducing pro-inflammatory bacteria and bacterial genes that degrade the mucus layer in the gut.

Notably, the participants also lost weight, although they did not consume fewer calories.

The study shows that targeting the gut microbiome through specific diets can help improve health and reduce disease risk.

UN confirms US will leave World Health Organisation in 2026

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, JAN 24

The United States is set to officially withdraw from the World Health Organisation (WHO) in January 2026 after the UN body received a formal letter from US President Donald Trump this week.

UN deputy spokesperson Farhan Haq said on Thursday that the withdrawal was now set in motion after Trump pledged on Monday -- his first day in office -- to withdraw the US from the WHO and to put an end to future funding of the organization, Al Jazeera reported.

"I can confirm we have

now received the US letter on the WHO withdrawal. It is dated 22 January 2025. It would take effect a year from yesterday, on 22 January 2026," Haq said.

Trump also ordered Secretary of State Marco Rubio and the director of the US government's Office of Management and Budget to "pause the future transfer of any United States Government funds, supports, or resources to the WHO".

According to reports, Washington has recalled all US government personnel working with the WHO and ordered them to cease participating in negotiations on a WHO-led global treaty on dealing with

panemics.

The US contributes about 18 percent of the organisation's funding, which amounted to about \$261m between 2024 and 2025. That contribution is followed in second place by China at \$181m. The WHO's loss of its top donor will impact the global health agency's ability to address major crises from tuberculosis to HIV/AIDS and global pandemics, according to experts. Trump had accused the WHO of mishandling the COVID-19 pandemic during his first term in office and had sent a request to withdraw from the organisation in July 2020.

Your resolution to stay healthy in 2025 may take about 2 months to form

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 24

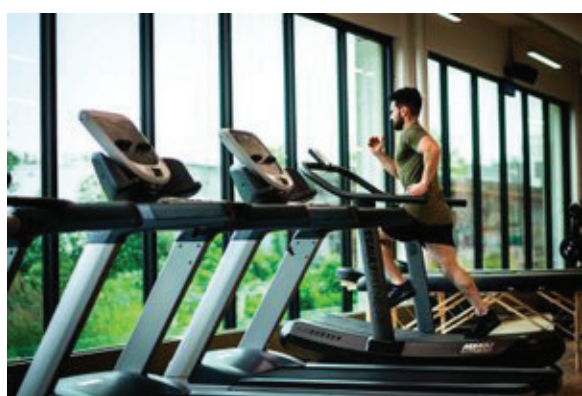
Struggling to stay afloat on your New Year's resolution 2025 to follow healthy habits? It may take about two months to form, and almost a year to establish, according to a study on Friday.

The study, led by researchers from the University of South Australia, challenges previously assumptions that healthy habits can set in 21 days.

Contrary to popular belief, healthy habits take far longer than three weeks to lock down, said researcher Dr Ben Singh, from the varsity.

"Adopting healthy habits is essential for long-term well-being but forming these habits -- and breaking unhealthy ones -- can be challenging," Dr Singh said.

"At the beginning of the year, many of us are setting



goals and making plans for the months ahead -- things like being more active, cutting back on sugar, or making healthier food choices -- but while common wisdom suggests that it takes just 21 days to form such habits, these claims are not evidence-based," he added.

Following healthy habits is key to a healthier life. Many conditions, including type 2 diabetes, heart disease, lung diseases and stroke, can be prevented

by changing unhealthy habits or lifestyle factors. The team conducted a systematic review and found that new habits can begin forming within about two months (median of 59-66 days) but can take up to 335 days to establish.

It's an important finding that could inform health interventions to promote healthy behaviours and prevent chronic disease.

"In our research, we've found that habit formation starts within around two

months, but there is significant variability, with formation times ranging from four days to nearly a year," Singh said, urging people switching to healthier habits to "not give up at that mythical three-week mark."

The team also conducted a study on more than 2,600 people and found that certain factors like "frequency of the new activity, the timing of the practice, and whether we enjoy it or not" can influence successful habit formation.

Singh noted that data shows that adapting the new practice "to the morning routine" can help people stick to it.

While more research is needed, researchers say that these findings can guide public health initiatives and personalised programmes that support sustained and healthy behaviour change.

AGENCIES
DAVOS, JAN 24

Even as plastic waste continues to pose an urgent global challenge, seven more countries have joined the fight against plastic pollution, taking the total to 25 at the recently concluded World Economic Forum's annual meeting here.

The seven new countries -- Angola, Bangladesh, Gabon, Guatemala, Kenya, Senegal, and Tanzania -- will contribute to WEF's Global Plastic Action Partnership (GPAP) by scaling up systemic plastic waste management solutions and fostering greater sustainability and climate resilience worldwide.

These will also drive systemic solutions to key challenges such as advancing sustainable materials, strengthening recycling systems, tackling greenhouse gas emissions, and

more. "Reaching this 25-nation milestone is not just a celebration of numbers, it's a testament to the growing global determination to tackle one of the world's most pressing challenges," said Clemence Schmid, Director of GPAP, World Economic Forum. "These partnerships are not just symbolic, they represent concrete commitments to rethinking how plastics are pro-

WEF 2025: 25 countries unite to fight against global plastic pollution, climate change

AGENCIES
DAVOS, JAN 24

duced, managed, and reused. Together we are charting a path towards a circular plastics economy that benefits people and the planet," Schmid added.

The GPAP has already mobilised \$3.1 billion in investments, created safer jobs for informal waste workers, and supported countries in achieving measurable progress on sustainability and climate

resilience. About 6 million tonnes of plastic waste enters oceans each year and over twice that amount pollutes land, mismanaged plastic waste is severely disrupting ecosystems, harming biodiversity, and threatening human health and livelihoods across the world.

Besides curbing plastic pollution, GPAP also contributes significantly to climate change. Plastic pollution is responsible for an estimated 1.8 billion tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions annually.

GPAP's systemic approach to waste management can drastically reduce landfill emissions such as methane -- over 80 times more potent than CO2 in the short term. It aims to promote circular systems and to contribute to cutting emissions from the plastics sector while fostering economic growth through green jobs.



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Hyd: Apollo Hospitals launches Multi-disciplinary Center for Foot & Ankle Care

AGENCIES
HYDERABAD, JAN 24

Apollo Hospitals, Hyderabad, has taken another significant step in advancing healthcare with the launch of its state-of-the-art Multi-disciplinary Center for Foot & Ankle Care here on Friday.

This innovative Center provides world-class orthopaedic care, offering advanced treatments and specialized services for a variety of foot and ankle conditions, includes the Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Diabetic Foot Management, which focuses on addressing the complex challenges faced by diabetic patients prone to foot-related ailments, the Hospitals said in a release here.

The Center's multi-disciplinary team includes

experts in Orthopaedic Surgery, podiatric surgery, vascular surgery, orthotics and physiotherapy, offering a holistic approach to treatment.

The facility is equipped with cutting-edge technology including robotic surgery, advanced arthroscopy systems, and custom-made devices for diabetic foot reconstruction.

Services range from trauma care and sports injury management to specialized procedures such as Charcot foot reconstruction, total ankle replacement, and treatment for conditions like plantar fasciitis, bunions, and Achilles tendinopathy.

The Center of Excellence for Diabetic Foot Management addresses a critical need in India, where diabetes preva-

lence is high. With advanced diagnostic tools and evidence-based treatment protocols, the Center offers services that span from primary prevention to tertiary care for severe cases.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Srinivas Seshabhatteru, a leading Podiatric Surgeon at Apollo Hospitals, said "Large part of foot and ankle problems arise due to diabetes. Diabetes leads to weakness of nerves called neuropathy, the other problem is reduced blood supply called Ischaemia. When nerves get debilitated it leads to foot deformation, injuries leading to infections, lack of sensation, and other problems. We now with the help of Dr Venu providing special care for advanced neuropathy called acute charcot disease.

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Zoonotic infections threat to human health: WHO ex chief scientist

AGENCIES
KOCHI, JAN 24

Highlighting major challenges to human health amid a series of issues, including climate change and anti-microbial resistance, Soumya Swaminathan, former Chief Scientist of the World Health Organisation (WHO), on Friday said that most of the emerging viral threats are zoonotic infections transmitted from animals to humans.

She was speaking after the launch of various initiatives undertaken as part of a major research project on water quality assessment of Vembanad Lake and waterborne infectious diseases at ICAR-Central Marine Fisheries Research Institute (CMFRI).

Swaminathan, who is also the former Director General of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), empha-



sised the critical role of integrated research, including data from weather, climate, health, and environmental sources, to predict and prevent future outbreaks.

Most of the health threats today originate from environmental factors, she said and hence suggested establishing an Environmental Health Regulatory Agency in India. Swaminathan further pointed to dietary

risks as the number one health threat in the country.

"Half of Indians cannot afford a nutritionally sufficient healthy diet," she added.

Kerala and Tamil Nadu are experiencing a concerning rise in obesity and non-communicable diseases, alongside persistent issues like malnutrition, anaemia, and micronutrient deficiencies, all stemming from unhealthy

dietary habits, added the top scientist.

Emphasising the potential of marine resources as a healthy diet component to improve nutrition, she said: "We are yet to fully utilise these resources to address critical dietary issues.

She underscored the devastating impact of climate change, saying that India is one of the most vulnerable countries to this challenge.

"Almost the entire population of the country is being exposed to at least one of the climate hazards such as floods, droughts, cyclones, and extreme heat.

Heat is most dangerous to both physical and mental health. The weakest section of the society bears the brunt of these hazards," she said.

"During COVID-19, I believe nobody anticipated the development of

vaccines within a year. It was a remarkable achievement facilitated by unprecedented collaboration and data sharing among research institutions and scientists. During my time at the WHO, I witnessed first-hand this extraordinary level of networking and data sharing. Scientists prioritised the rapid dissemination of findings over individual publication which paid off ultimately," said Swaminathan.

Referring to the challenge of information flooding, she said that in the digital age, misinformation is fast spreading across social media platforms which can hinder scientific progress and public health efforts.

"This was evident during the COVID-19 pandemic when everybody disguised as 'experts' and offered advice to the people," she said.

percent of the total cases, followed by Okongo and Engela, each with 13 percent, and Nkurukuru with 12 percent," Nangombe said.

According to Nangombe, more than half of Namibia's population lives in malaria-endemic areas, particularly in rural regions. "We are talking about the regions of Kavango East, Kavango West, Kunene, Ohangwena, Oshana, Oshikoto, Otjozondjupa, Omusati and Zambezi," Nangombe said, adding that certain groups, such as children under five, pregnant women and nomadic communities, are at higher risk of severe malaria due to delayed access to healthcare.

"Eenhana district accounts for 24 per-

K'taka Govt-run Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology achieves milestone of 1,000 robotic surgeries

AGENCIES
BENGALURU, JAN 24

The globally-renowned Kidwai Memorial Institute of Oncology (KMIO), a premier cancer treatment centre in India, run by the Karnataka government, has achieved a historic milestone by successfully completing 1,000 robotic surgeries.

Kidwai was among the first few government hospitals to adopt robotic technology and has integrated the advanced Da Vinci robotic surgical system, achieving this remarkable milestone.

Among government institu-

tions, Kidwai stands out as one of the few offering robotic surgery facilities.

Sharan Prakash Patil, Minister for Medical Education, Skill Development and Livelihood, stated on Friday that Kidwai's accomplishment of completing 1,000 robotic surgeries is commendable.

"The hospital offers world-class cancer treatment at no cost or at affordable rates to patients. Adopting innovative medical technologies has enabled Kidwai to deliver high-quality care promptly," he stated.

Over the past nine years, the use of robotic technology has

made 1,000 surgeries possible, marking a historic achievement.

"Kidwai remains at the forefront of patient care, establishing itself as a leading cancer treatment centre in India and globally. The institute's efforts and achievements are noteworthy," minister Patil underlined.

Under the Ayushman Bharat Arogya Karnataka scheme, the institution has emerged as the hospital providing the highest number of treatments.

Kidwai is also recognised as the only super-specialty hospital offering extensive inpatient care. Additionally, it houses Karnata-

ka's sole bone marrow transplant (BMT) unit, where both allogeneic and autologous bone marrow transplants have been successfully performed.

A separate committee has been established to reduce treatment costs for families lacking BPL benefits or facing financial constraints. Kidwai has also decided to offer cashless treatment for KSRTC employees. Developed by the U.S.-based Institute for Surgical Research, the Da Vinci Surgical System is an advanced robotic technology and Da Vinci Xi, the latest version, has been implemented at Kidwai.

Namibia strengthens malaria response amid rising cases in northern regions

AGENCIES
WINDHOEK, JAN. 24

Namibia's Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) has intensified efforts to combat a malaria outbreak that has killed 28 people, with 5,898 confirmed cases reported as of Jan. 19, officials said Friday.

MoHSS Executive Director Ben Nangombe said during a press briefing in Windhoek that 20 out of the country's 26 malaria-endemic districts have surpassed the epidemic threshold, with the majority of cases reported in the northern regions. "Eenhana district accounts for 24 per-

cent of the total cases, followed by Okongo and Engela, each with 13 percent, and Nkurukuru with 12 percent," Nangombe said.

According to Nangombe, more than half of Namibia's population lives in malaria-endemic areas, particularly in rural regions. "We are talking about the regions of Kavango East, Kavango West, Kunene, Ohangwena, Oshana, Oshikoto, Otjozondjupa, Omusati and Zambezi," Nangombe said, adding that certain groups, such as children under five, pregnant women and nomadic communities, are at higher risk of severe malaria due to delayed access to healthcare.

Samajwadi Party is spreading false propaganda about Maha Kumbh: CM Yogi

AGENCIES

AYODHYA, JAN 24

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday hit out at the Samajwadi Party (SP) for allegedly spreading false propaganda regarding the Maha Kumbh, stating that while millions of people are participating in the holy event, the SP is playing with the faith of the people. He accused the party of misleading the public through deceptive claims.

On Friday, CM Yogi visited Milkipur to campaign for the Assembly bye-election to be held on February 5. He expressed confidence that the BJP will win every booth of the Milkipur Assembly constituency.

During his visit, he launched a strong attack on the SP stating, "The President of the Samajwadi Party is spreading false propaganda about Maha Kumbh every day."

"This is an attack on



the faith of the nation. Even when Ram Lalla was enthroned on January 22, 2024, the Samajwadi Party opposed it. The hands of the SP are stained with the blood of innocent Kar Sevaks," he alleged.

He further criticised the SP for opposing various developmental initiatives, including the naming of Ayodhya International Airport after Maharishi Valmiki, the development of Maharishi Valmiki's birthplace in Lalapur, and the development of Rajapur, the birthplace of Sant Tulsidas.

"When our government beautified Maharaja Bijli Pasi's fort in Lucknow, the

the support for Moin Khan by the Ayodhya MP and condemned it. "Ayodhya Dham has only one message -- unity. Only through unity can this country remain united. The Maha Kumbh also carries this message -- unity is the strength of this nation," he emphasised.

Yogi Adityanath urged people to reject those who support people like Moin Khan, claiming that such individuals pose a threat to the safety of daughters. "Moin Khan's supporters should not be allowed to win elections. These people, who respect Moin Khan, are a danger to the safety of our daughters," he said.

The Chief Minister also reflected on the significance of the Maha Kumbh, saying, "We took the benefit of virtue by bathing in Prayagraj Maha Kumbh. Devotees from all over the world came, and 10 crore people bathed in just 10 days. The population of many countries is not even

10 crore, and over the next 35 days, a total of 45 crore people will visit. There are only two countries in the world with more than 45 crore people."

He asserted the privilege of being born in India, saying, "People from every caste and class are benefiting from the Kumbh."

The Chief Minister also accused the SP of focusing solely on their family's interests rather than the public good.

"Today is January 24, and in two days, we will celebrate the Amrit Mahotsav of the Constitution created by Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar. The Samajwadi Party opposes the Constitution created by Babasaheb," he claimed.

Yogi Adityanath also took a dig at the previous government, saying, "Today, the roads of Ayodhya are five to six lanes wide. What was the condition of Ram Ki Paidi during the time of the Samajwadi Party?"

PM Modi to inaugurate Utkarsh Odisha conclave on January 28

AGENCIES

BHUBANESWAR, JAN 24

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit Odisha on January 28 to inaugurate the 'Utkarsh Odisha-Make in Odisha Conclave 2025'.

Addressing a press conference, Balasore MP Pratap Chandra Sarangi said, "PM Modi has visited Odisha several times. He is scheduled to visit Odisha to address the Utkarsh Odisha-Make in Odisha conclave which will be held at Janata Maidan in Bhubaneswar."

"The party will accord a grand welcome to PM Modi upon his arrival at Bhubaneswar Airport at 10.35 a.m.," added Sarangi.

The senior BJP leader also said that PM Modi will address different sessions at the Utkarsh Odisha conclave which will be attended by around 4,000 to 5,000 investors from India and outside.

He noted that for the first time in the history of



Odisha, several national and international events are being organised in the state under the BJP government.

Sarangi said that PM Modi's participation will boost investment opportunities in the state as his special focus is on Odisha.

"PM Modi is visiting Odisha often, realising the need for a significant contribution from Odisha towards a new India," said Sarangi.

The Odisha government will host the two-day con-

clave in Bhubaneswar to showcase investment opportunities and attract investors from across the globe.

On January 27, as a precursor to the conclave, five sessions of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) National Council will be held, with participation from 200 council members.

The conclave will highlight the achievements of 60 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) entrepreneurs aged under 40.

On January 29, Chief Minister Mohan Charan Majhi will felicitate two young entrepreneurs from each district as part of the celebration.

The conclave will focus on five key sectors: IT, renewable energy, textiles, chemicals, and food processing. Twelve countries, including Australia, Malaysia, Japan, Germany, Poland, and Cuba, have been invited as 'Countries of Focus' to participate in the conclave.

Ensure max members are elected in local, civic body polls: Ajit Pawar tells NCP workers

AGENCIES

MUMBAI, JAN 24

NCP President and Deputy Chief Minister, Ajit Pawar has exhorted the cadres to work hard so that the maximum number of the party's members get elected in the upcoming local and civic body elections in Maharashtra.

"The timeline may seem long, but days pass by quickly. Work diligently and attentively," he appealed in his speech late on Thursday evening when around 250 office-bearers from various parties from 50 villages of the Naigaon constituency in Nanded district joined the NCP.

Ajit Pawar spoke largely about the upcoming local self-government elections and called for collective efforts to strengthen the party's image and reach.

"We are working to bring new and dynamic workers into the party



the party would ensure its workers remain active and motivated, promising well-structured work plans.

He stressed that the NCP focusses on politics and understanding and resolving issues affecting all communities. He assured that those working within the NCP would never feel overwhelmed or unsupported.

In his address, the state unit chief Sunil Tatkare asked the cadres to take a futuristic approach and fulfil Ajit Pawar's vision for the party's consolidation in the state.

He highlighted the importance of empowering grassroots workers to ensure success in the upcoming local self-government elections.

He expressed confidence that active members would be registered in the Nanded district and assured them of the party's full support.

to maintain a positive image among the people. Efforts should be made to strengthen the party's presence in Nanded district and the city. The party and government will provide all necessary support for these efforts," he said adding that similar effort should be made in other districts also.

He referred to the NCP's membership drive saying that more members should be enrolled.

Citing the success in the legislative Assembly elections, he stated that it is the party's responsibility to address the people's issues effectively.

Ajit Pawar assured that

DELHI POLLS: CM ATISHI ASKS EC TO RESTORE PUNJAB POLICE PROTECTION FOR KEJRIWAL

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 24

Delhi Chief Minister Atishi, in a letter to the Election Commission on Friday, accused a conspiracy to physically harm AAP National Convener Arvind Kejriwal. She criticized Delhi Police for lapses in security and called for the reinstatement of his Punjab Police protection.

Addressing a press conference, CM Atishi alleged lapses by Delhi Police in protecting Kejriwal, who has a Z-plus security cover, and blamed BJP workers for attacking the former CM and his vehicle during campaigning on several occasions since October.

"Delhi residents love Kejriwal and they will not pardon the BJP for these acts. Every attack on Kejriwal adds to the love of the public for him," she said, seeking restoration of



Punjab Police security for Kejriwal.

She said BJP workers and the Delhi Police are working together to cause harm to Kejriwal. "Not a single person has been arrested for attacks on Kejriwal. No action has been taken against any Delhi Police personnel," she said, seeking an audit of Kejriwal's security arrangement and threat to him.

Atishi mentioned several instances of attacks and breach of security of Kejriwal including October 24

in Vikaspuri, November 30 in Malviya Nagar, January 18 in New Delhi constituency, and in Hari Nagar on Thursday.

Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Singh Mann said police from his state provided security to Kejriwal as there was credible input of threat to Kejriwal's life in Punjab and Delhi.

"A Z-plus security proctee needs to be provided security wherever he goes in the country," he said.

CM Mann said that the AAP has no faith in Delhi

Police and their personnel are helping the BJP candidates.

Mann said we have approached the ECI seeking "free and fair" ground for contesting the election. "We have said that we are not satisfied with the security being provided to Kejriwal. Since the security set up in Delhi is stretched for protecting the city ahead of R-Day, we want permission to provide our security," he said.

The Punjab Chief Minister also dismissed allegations of rival parties in Delhi that vehicles from his state were being used in the AAP campaign in the city. "They are losing the elections and their hatred for Punjabis is visible in such remarks. Are all vehicles in Delhi with number plates of other states carrying goons?" he asked.

Earlier, Punjab DGP Gaurav Yadav said on Thursday that following instructions from the EC and the Delhi Police, they have withdrawn components of the Punjab Police deployed for the security of the former Chief Minister.

"From time to time, we get reports of threats to Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and Arvind Kejriwal and we share them with agencies concerned. Following the directions of the Delhi police and the Election Commission today, we withdrew the component of the Punjab police in the security of Kejriwal ji," Director General of Police Gaurav Yadav told the media in Patiala.

Delhi Assembly elections will be held on February 5 and the results will be declared on February 8.

10 Oppn MPs suspended for 'disrupting' Waqf Bill discussion in Parliamentary Committee

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JAN 24

The Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) meeting on the Waqf Amendment Bill on Friday turned chaotic as opposition MPs were suspended for the entire day following a heated argument. It happened during a discussion on the Waqf Amendment Bill 2024.

At the same time, the Opposition MPs alleged that they were not given sufficient time to study the

draft which was brought up for discussion.

Chaired by BJP MP Jagadambika Pal, the panel meeting was in fact set to hear a delegation led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq from Kashmir. But before the process, the meeting was disrupted by opposition MPs who raised concerns about "the speed with which the government wanted to pass the bill", "especially considering the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections".

As the disruption esca-

lated, BJP MP Nishikant Dubey proposed the suspension of 10 opposition MPs for the day. The panel subsequently accepted Dubey's proposal.

MPs namely Kalyan Banerjee, Mohammad Javed, A. Raja, Asaduddin Owaisi, Nasir Hussain, Mohibullah, M. Abdullah, Arvind Sawant, Nadimul Haque, and Imran Masood were among the suspended members. Dubey accused the opposition of using unparliamentary language. He alleged that



they were trying to suppress the majority's voice. Mirwaiz Umar Farooq,

who appeared before the committee after the suspension, expressed his

strong opposition to the Waqf Amendment Bill, stressing that the government should not intervene in religious matters. Farooq further pointed out they hoped their suggestions would be heard and implemented. The aim should be to ensure that Muslims do not feel marginalised by any proposed changes, he remarked.

Before being suspended, opposition MPs, including Kalyan Banerjee of TMC and Congress member Syed Nasir Hus-

sain, walked out of the meeting.

They accused the proceedings of becoming a "farce." They demanded that the meeting be postponed until January 30 or 31 to allow for a detailed, clause-by-clause discussion.

Banerjee even described the atmosphere as resembling an "undeclared emergency" where the chairman was not listening to anyone.

Dubey meanwhile claimed that the oppo-

sition's behaviour was against parliamentary traditions, and their attempts to disrupt the meeting were an affront to democratic norms.

Arvind Sawant, a Shiv Sena (UBT) MP, flayed the "hasty handling" of such an important Bill, which, according to him, could potentially cause unrest in the country. He asked as to why the Bill was being rushed through the committee process when there should be a proper discussion.

JP Nadda assured me of BJP's support: Sriramulu amid 'infighting'

AGENCIES

BALLARI, JAN 24

Former minister B. Sriramulu, who recently offered to resign from the BJP, claimed on Friday that party President J. P. Nadda dialled him and assured him of support.

Sharing the details of the conversation to the media in Ballari, Sriramulu stated that Union Health Minister Nadda telephoned him on Thursday and advised him to resolve the matter "within the four walls".

He claimed that the Union Minister invited

him to Delhi to discuss the issues.

The political development comes close on the heels of Karnataka in-charge Radha Mohan Das Agarwal remarks against Sriramulu after which he offered to quit the party.

On his 'quitting remark', Sriramulu said: "Credibility is important in politics and one should not lose it. I raised my voice as my self-respect was challenged. I will go to New Delhi. All I ask from the party is to respect my work and not to humiliate me."

Sriramulu also said that



he briefed Union Minister Nadda about matters raised by Agarwal in the party's core committee meeting.

"Union Minister Nadda told me that he is working in the interest of backward

classes and his concerns are already communicated to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah," Sriramulu said.

"Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, who hails from the state, also called me and advised me to call Nadda. However, before, I could contact him, I got a call from him," Sriramulu claimed.

Sriramulu claimed that Union Minister Joshi told him that Agarwal was ready to withdraw his remarks.

He claimed that Agarwal humiliated him during

a recent state core committee meeting. According to Sriramulu, Agarwal blamed him for the party's defeat in the by-election for the Sandur Assembly constituency.

Meanwhile, Minister for Agriculture N. Chaluvarayaswamy stated in Mandya on Friday that if Sriramulu is willing to join the Congress, he will welcome it.

"The talks were on in the party that Sriramulu would come to our fold during the Lok Sabha election. Somehow, he decided to stay with the BJP," the Minister said.

Part of under-construction terminal of Andhra's Rajahmundry Airport collapses; report sought

AGENCIES

AMARAVATI, JAN 24

A portion of the under construction terminal of Rajahmundry Airport in Andhra Pradesh's East Godavari district collapsed on Friday and a report on the incident has been sought by the Union Civil Aviation Minister.

A tragedy was averted as workers were not present at the site when the portion of the terminal collapsed and consequently no one was injured in the incident.

A few iron grills of the

under-construction building collapsed in the afternoon. It was immediately not clear how the collapse occurred. The officials, however, heaved a sigh of relief as the mishap did not result in any casualties.

The new terminal is being constructed next to the existing terminal of Rajahmundry, which was re-named as Rajamahendravaram in 2015.

Union Civil Aviation Minister K. Ram Mohan Naidu spoke to Rajahmundry Airport and Airports Authority of India (AAI) officials

and sought a report on the incident.

The minister had recently visited the airport to review the progress of the new terminal work.

The foundation stone for the new terminal was laid in December 2023 by then Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia. Andhra Pradesh tourism

To be built at a cost of Rs.350 crore, the new terminal at Rajahmundry Airport will have an area of 17,029 square metres, which will be four times the size of the existing terminal.

US President Trump calls for 'immediate' talks with Putin to end Russia-Ukraine war

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, JAN 24

US President Donald Trump has told reporters that Russia "should want to make a deal" with Ukraine to end the "horrible war" and emphasised he would meet with Russian President Vladimir Putin immediately.

"So, I think Russia should want to make a deal. Maybe they want to make a deal. I think from what I hear, Putin would like to see me. We'll meet as soon as we can. I'd meet immediately. Every day we don't meet soldiers who are being killed in the battlefield," Trump said during an Oval Office signing ceremony.

Trump described the conflict as one of the deadliest conflicts since World War II, emphasising that millions of lives have been lost on battlefields and

farmlands, and that millions of soldiers are being killed.

While virtually addressing the World Economic Forum (WEF), Trump said, "Our efforts to secure a peace settlement between Russia and Ukraine are now hopefully underway. It's so important to get that done, millions of soldiers are being killed. Nobody has seen anything like it since World War II. They are laying dead all over the fields, farmlands... It's time to end it."

He added, "I really would like to be able to meet with President Putin soon and get that war ended."

That's not from the standpoint of economy or anything else. It is from the standpoint of millions of lives that are being wasted. Beautiful, young people are being shot on the battlefield. I have seen



pictures of what has taken place and it is a carnage. We really have to stop that war, that war is horrible."

When asked whether Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is open to negotiating, Trump responded: "He's lost a lot of soldiers, and so has Russia," before adding, "But Russia has lost more."

Earlier this week, Trump posted on Truth

Social that he would impose high tariffs and further sanctions on Russia if Putin fails to end the war in Ukraine.

President Trump on Thursday said peace efforts between Russia and Ukraine are "hopefully" underway while speaking virtually at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

"Our efforts to secure a

peace settlement between Russia and Ukraine are now hopefully underway," the US President said while speaking virtually at the forum in Davos on Thursday.

"It's so important to get that done," the President added.

"That is an absolute killing field. Millions of soldiers are being killed."

And as the Russia-Ukraine war enters into its fourth year, Western officials assess Russia's incremental gains along the frontline add as many as 1,500 deaths and injuries a day, and the toll nears 700,000 casualties for the war, according to the UK Defence M

Trump's remarks came even though he vowed to end the war on the first day of his administration.

Trump missed that deadline, though the media previously report-

ed that the US President is trying to set up a call with Russian President Vladimir Putin to discuss a potential in-person meeting.

He repeated his desire to meet the Russian President while speaking on Thursday: "I really would like to be able to meet with President Putin soon to get that war ended."

Trump however was critical of Putin while speaking with reporters in the Oval Office on Monday, saying the Russian leader is "not doing so well."

Those remarks are a departure from the typically complimentary rhetoric Trump has for the Russian strongman.

He added that he believes Ukraine "is ready to make a deal".

The US President said he would seek the assistance of Chinese President Xi Jinping to secure peace in Ukraine.

Singapore eases monetary policy for first time since 2020

AGENCIES
SINGAPORE, JAN 24

The Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS) announced on Friday a slight easing of its monetary policy, marking the first such move since 2020 and the first adjustment in two years. The authority said it would reduce the slope of the Singapore Dollar Nominal Effective Exchange Rate (S\$NEER) policy band slightly, while maintaining the width of the policy band and the level at which it is centered.

The decision comes amid a slowdown in Singapore's economic growth momentum and faster-than-expected moderation in core inflation this year, it said. The MAS forecasts core inflation, which excludes the costs of accommodation and private transport, to average 1.0 per cent to 2.0 per cent in 2025, while CPI-All Items inflation is projected to average 1.5 per cent to 2.5 per cent.

Singapore's core infla-

tion, measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI), eased to 1.8 per cent year-on-year in December, down slightly from 1.9 per cent in November, according to official data released on Thursday.

The decline was attributed to a moderation in services inflation, the Ministry of Trade and Industry and the Monetary Authority of Singapore said.

On a month-on-month basis, the core CPI rose by 0.5 per cent. The core CPI excludes private transport and accommodation costs to provide a more accurate measure of household expenses.

For the full year of 2024, core inflation averaged 2.7 per cent, a decline from 4.2 per cent in 2023.

Meanwhile, all-items inflation in Singapore held steady at 1.6 per cent year-on-year in December. The authorities noted that "lower core and accommodation inflation was offset by a milder decline in private transport costs."

Mexican President rules out early US-Mexico-Canada treaty review

AGENCIES
MEXICO CITY, JAN 23

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has said that there is no need to expedite a review of the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) which was proposed by her US counterpart Donald Trump.

Speaking at her daily press conference at the National Palace in Mexico City late Thursday, local time, Sheinbaum emphasised that "according to the decrees signed by President Trump," a review of the agreement could begin in 2026, not sooner.

"What typically begins is a consultation process involving business leaders, workers and various societal sectors to assess the agreement's implementation. Again, the best approach is to adhere to what is written in the decrees," she said.

An article in The Wall Street Journal, citing sources close to Trump, reported Tuesday that



the US President wants to renegotiate the USMCA by leveraging tariff increases on Mexico and Canada. The primary goal appears to be revising automotive regulations to compel car manufacturing plants to relocate to the United States, Xinhua news agency reported.

In response to Mexican business leaders' calls to prepare for potential tariffs, Sheinbaum said "there is nothing concrete" so far, stressing the importance of awaiting the outcome of the "dialogue already established with the US government."

Sheinbaum said

Wednesday that Mexico and the United States have started formal talks on bilateral issues, such as immigration and security.

The talks began Tuesday after the newly-appointed US Secretary of State Marco Rubio telephoned his Mexican counterpart, Juan Ramon de la Fuente, said the President.

"It was a very good, very cordial conversation. They talked about immigration issues and security issues," said Sheinbaum.

Rubio's first call as Secretary of State "was to Mexico," stressed the President, "and it was a very

cordial call, the Foreign Minister (De la Fuente) informed me yesterday."

In a statement published Wednesday, Rubio outlined his department's priorities, with immigration topping the list.

Since his reelection campaign, US President Donald Trump has threatened to take a tough stance on the flow of undocumented migrants and drug trafficking, and on his first day in office he signed a slew of executive orders that directly impact Mexico, including ending the so-called CBP One Mobile Application programme that offered migrants a way to schedule an asylum hearing with US immigration authorities without having to travel to the border.

Trump also reinstated an immigration policy from his first term known as 'Remain in Mexico', which forces asylum seekers to stay in Mexico while their case makes its way through US immigration courts.

Merely a 'small preview', insists White House after US immigration arrests 538 illegal migrants, deports hundreds

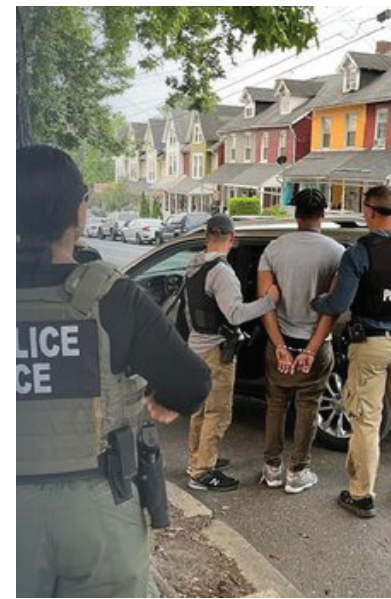
AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, JAN 24

Citing the latest daily immigration enforcement report received from the US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), the White House on Friday morning, India time, revealed that over 500 illegal migrants have been arrested and hundreds of illegal immigrant criminals deported "via military aircraft" in a major ongoing operation to crack down on undocumented immigrants in the country.

"Today: The Trump Administration arrested 538 illegal immigrant criminals including a suspected terrorist, four members of the Tren de Aragua gang, and several illegals convicted of sex crimes against minors. The Trump Administration also deported hundreds of illegal immigrant criminals via military aircraft. The largest massive deportation operation in history is well underway. Promises made. Promises kept," White House Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt posted on X.

Detailing "examples of the criminals arrested", ICE said that the authorities in Buffalo arrested Luis Alberto Espinoza-Boconsaca, who has been convicted of rape, on Thursday.

The enforcement agency added in a series of posts: "On January 23rd, 2025 ICE Buffalo arrested



Pedro Julio Mejia who has been convicted of sexual conduct against a child. On January 23rd, 2025 ICE St. Paul arrested Cristofer Alexander Ramirez-Olivia who was convicted of 3rd degree criminal sexual conduct with a minor. On January 23rd, 2025 ICE Denver arrested Magdaleno Zenen Hernandez Garcia who has been convicted of continuous sexual abuse of a child aged 14 or younger".

The White House, while revealing all the details, mentioned that this is merely a "small preview" into the

work the Trump administration is doing to secure the nation's borders.

In an Executive Order signed immediately after assuming office on January 20, US President Donald Trump had emphasised that, over the last four years, the prior administration "invited, administered, and oversaw" an unprecedented flood of illegal immigration into the United States.

"Millions of illegal aliens crossed our borders or were permitted to fly directly into the United States on commercial flights and allowed to settle in American communities, in violation of longstanding Federal laws," it said.

"Many of these aliens unlawfully within the United States present significant threats to national security and public safety, committing vile and heinous acts against innocent Americans. Others are engaged in hostile activities, including espionage, economic espionage, and preparations for terror-related activities," the order stated.

Earlier on January 22, the ICE had arrested four Bangladeshi nationals in New York, marking one of the first actions in the new era of heightened immigration enforcement. Bangladeshi media reported that the arrests took place in the Brooklyn borough as scores of undocumented Bangladeshi immigrants are currently living in fear of deportation.

Moscow's air defence repels Ukrainian drone attacks

AGENCIES
MOSCOW, JAN 24

Moscow's air defence systems were actively engaged in repelling a wave of Ukrainian drone attacks in the early hours of Friday, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin wrote on his Telegram channel.

Drone attacks occurred in multiple locations surrounding Moscow, including the Kolomna and Ramensky urban districts, southeast of the capital, where air defence forces successfully intercepted the drones, Sobyenin wrote.

Preliminary reports indicate no significant damage or casualties from falling debris. Emergency

response teams were immediately dispatched to the affected sites, he wrote.

In the Podolsk urban district, two additional drones were shot down by air defence systems as they approached Moscow. Russian forces also neutralized a drone in the Troitsky Administrative District and another in the Shchyolkovo urban district of Moscow, according to the mayor.

As a precautionary measure, temporary restrictions on aircraft arrivals and departures were imposed at Moscow's Vnukovo, Domodedovo and Zhukovsky airports.

Earlier this week, Andriy Kovalenko, head

of the Centre for Countering Disinformation at Ukraine's National Security and Defence Council claimed that Ukraine's military had attacked a Russian aviation plant in Smolensk region in western Russia.

Kovalenko said on Tuesday that the plant participates in the production of military aircraft, particularly Su-25 attack aircraft, and is also involved in the overhaul and maintenance of aviation equipment.

"This plant is closely connected to other enterprises of the Russian defence industry, supplying components or participating in cooperation to create modern aviation systems," he said.

Insecurity, inflation in Syria raise humanitarian concerns: UN

AGENCIES
UNITED NATIONS, JAN 24

UN Humanitarians continue to voice their insecurity concerns in Syria's north and northeast, including attacks near a Euphrates River dam, and nationwide economic challenges which stifle cash assistance.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said the insecurity concerns were raised by continuing reports of artillery shelling and other incidents affecting the northeast of Syria, including Al-Hasakeh Governorate, and near the Tishreen Dam in northern Aleppo Governorate.

OCHA said the eco-



nomical challenges include nationwide price hikes and the lack of regional banking services, constraining cash assistance programmes and disrupting people's livelihoods and humanitarian operations.

Because of high fuel

and transportation costs, humanitarian partners reported that most of their mobile teams remain in urban areas, leaving rural and remote regions deprived of services such as counseling and psychosocial support.

In Damascus, high

transportation costs are resulting in a significant shortage of teachers and education personnel.

Heating fuel prices have increased by 50 per cent to 80 per cent in some areas, mainly in northwestern Idlib Governorate, where 1.5 million people live in displacement camps. Those living in tents have limited access to heating, making this winter season particularly difficult.

OCHA made a Turkey to Aleppo city mission on Thursday to engage with caretaker authorities on the dire situation in camps, particularly in winter. Last year, more than 12,000 family tents and shelters in camps across Idlib and Aleppo were damaged by

fires, flooding, wind and other incidents.

The office said it completed a field visit to the western rural areas of Aleppo, where its partners implemented cash-for-work, peacebuilding and education activities funded by the Syria Humanitarian Fund, Xinhua news agency reported.

Humanitarians said their visit showed a significant increase in the number of people returning to the area, many of whom were displaced to northwest Syria. Families are now living in damaged and looted houses, often lacking basic infrastructure such as doors and windows.

Donald Trump criticises 'unfair' trade relationship with China, stresses on 'level playing field'

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, JAN 24

US President Donald Trump, affirmed hope of having a "very good relationship" with China under his administration, while also stressing the need to have a "level-playing field" regarding the trade situation.

Virtually addressing the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Trump said, "He (Xi Jinping) called me. But I see it very good. I think that we are going to have a very good relationship," Trump said, noting that the US has been facing significant trade deficits with China, a situation he

attributed to former President Biden's policies.

Calling the relationship "unfair", Trump said the US doesn't want to take any advantage but wants fairness.

He also criticised the Biden administration for allowing the trade deficit to go "out of hand".

"It is just an unfair

relationship. We have to make it just fair...All we want is fairness. We just want a level playing field. We don't want to take advantage. We have been having massive deficits with China. Biden allowed it to get out of hand...It is just an unfair relationship. We have to make it just fair. We don't

have to make it phenomenal, we have to make it a fair relationship. Right now, it's not a fair relationship," he said.

Trump pointed out that the US has been running large deficits with many countries, particularly in Asia, and stressed the need to address these imbalances.

"The deficit is massive as it is with other countries, a lot of Asian countries. But we have deficits that are very big and we can't keep doing that. So, we are not going to keep doing that," he said.

Despite these trade issues, Trump expressed his personal admiration for President Xi, describ-

ing their relationship as generally positive, even during strained moments, such as the outbreak of Covid-19 in Wuhan.

"I like President Xi very much, I have always liked him. We always had a very good relationship," Trump said.

"It was very strained with Covid coming out of

Wuhan...But we always had a great relationship, we look forward to doing very well with China and getting along with China. Hopefully, China can help us stop the war with, in particular, Russia-Ukraine.

They have a great deal of power over that situation," he added.

CII lists 8-point agenda for job creation, economic growth in tourism sector

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 24

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on Friday said that in order to tap the potential of tourism sector and generate employment-intensive growth, customised interventions for capacity building is needed, like developing lesser-known tourist destinations.

The apex industry body suggested an eight-point agenda for promoting tourism, some of which can be actioned in the forthcoming Union Budget.

"First, is to expedite the promulgation of a National Tourism Policy 2022. The draft policy, prepared after extensive stakeholder consultations, provides a framework for engagement with various ministries, state governments and other stakeholders in giving effect to the policy objective of achieving tourism GDP of \$1 trillion by 2047," the CII said in a



statement.

Second, the government should consider creating an Inter-ministerial group headed by Cabinet Secretary or PMO, which could coordinate with various central Ministries and State Government, to step up tourism in the country.

"Third, new lesser-known tourist destinations should be developed. Government has earlier announced the development of 50 new tourist destinations. Given the huge tourism potential of

categories is important for boosting tourism.

Currently, three-star or higher category classified hotels located outside cities with population of more than 1 million have been granted infrastructure status.

The grant of infrastructure status to the hotel sector should be delinked from geographical or population criteria.

"Fifth, steps should be taken to include tourism in the concurrent list, to elevate the sector on the national agenda and to enable the Centre and States to effectively legislate and work together on the sector," according to the statement.

Sixth, deemed export status should be provided to foreign exchange earnings accrued from foreign tourists and GST should be exempted from such earnings to boost the sector's competitiveness and growth.

"Seventh, given the

success of the Incredible India Campaign the government should announce the Incredible India 3.0 or Atulya Bharat campaign. The campaign should include the launch of a national and international marketing multi-channel marketing campaign, showcasing India's diverse tourist attractions, in collaboration with industry to promote inbound and domestic tourism," according to the CII statement.

Finally, perception and confidence vis-a-vis tourist safety is an important component of tourism promotion.

To address this, the government should consider launching Mission Suraksha by assigning dedicated Tourist Police and round-the-clock security at major tourist destinations. Further, Crisis Management plans should be framed to handle emergencies, thereby ensuring tourists' safety and trust, the CII noted.

South Korean stocks close higher over hopes for rate cuts

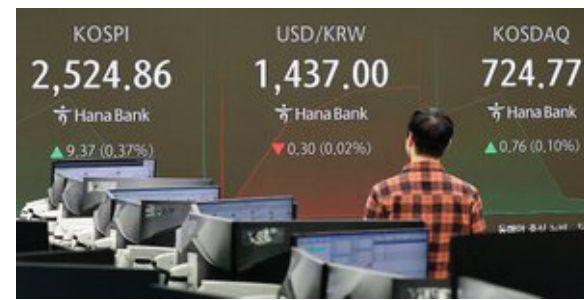
AGENCIES
SEOUL, JAN 24

South Korean stocks finished higher on Friday as US President Donald Trump's call for interest rate cuts boosted appetite for risky assets. The local currency gained against the US dollar.

The stock market will reopen next Friday after the Lunar New Year's holiday, which runs through Thursday. The benchmark Korea Composite Stock Price Index (KOSPI) added 21.31 points, or 0.85 per cent, to close at 2,536.8, rebounding from a 1.24 per cent drop the previous day, Yonhap news agency reported.

Trade volume was moderate at 576.9 million shares worth 9.83 trillion won (\$6.87 billion), with winners outnumbering losers 542 to 321.

Foreigners purchased a net 203.8 billion won and institutions scooped up a net 70.6 billion won. Individual investors sold a net



380.1 billion won.

Overnight, US stocks rallied after Trump called for cuts in interest rates and oil prices during his video message for the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

In Seoul, semiconductor, steel, bio and entertainment stocks led the daily gains.

Chip giant Samsung Electronics stayed flat at 53,700 won and its rival SK hynix climbed 0.68 per cent to 221,000 won.

Steel giant POSCO Holdings advanced 0.77 per cent to 261,500 won, while Hyundai Steel went up 2.63 per cent to 23,450 won.

Bio tech giant Samsung

Biologics vaulted 3.23 per cent to 1,087,000 won, with leading pharmaceutical firm Celltrion adding 0.61 per cent to 180,200 won.

Entertainment giant CJ ENM increased 0.57 per cent to 52,900 won, and Hybe, a record label behind global superstar BTS, climbed 2.07 per cent to 221,500 won.

Top carmaker Hyundai Motor lost 1.91 per cent to 205,000 won, while its sister Kia declined 0.97 per cent to 101,700 won.

The local currency was trading at 1,431.3 won against the US dollar at 3:30 p.m., up 6 won from the previous session.

61 pc of equity MFs in India outperform respective benchmarks in Dec 2024

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JAN 24

About 60.8 per cent of equity mutual funds (MFs) in India outperformed their respective benchmarks in December 2024, a report said on Friday.

The report, which is based on an analysis of 291 open-ended diversified equity funds, found that 177 funds delivered returns above their benchmarks in December 2024.

The assets under management (AUM) of equity mutual funds saw a slight growth of 0.41 per cent, rising to Rs 25.84 lakh crore in December, from Rs 25.74 lakh crore in November 2024, the report by PL Wealth Management, a part of Prabhudas Liladhar said.

Among the various cat-

egories of funds, Flexi Cap Funds were the top performers, with 79.49 per cent of the schemes beating their benchmarks.

Large Cap Funds and Multi Cap Funds followed closely, with 71.88 per cent and 71.43 per cent of their schemes outperforming their respective benchmarks during December, the report mentioned.

On the other hand, Value, Contra, and Dividend Yield Funds were the least performing category, with only 36.36 per cent of the funds in this group managing to outperform their benchmarks.

Other categories, such as Equity Linked Savings Schemes (ELSS), also showed strong performance, with 69.05 per cent of the schemes outperforming their bench-

marks.

However, Small Cap Funds and Mid Cap Funds had a more modest performance, with 41.38 per cent and 48.28 per cent of their schemes, respectively, beating their benchmarks.

"Investors are advised to stick to their SIP investments and keep a long-term focus. SIPs over the past 3-years have yielded a return in excess of 15 per cent per annum on an average for the top quartile equity funds," the report by PL Wealth Management said.

Actively managed equity mutual fund inflows saw over 14 per cent monthly growth at Rs 41,155.9 crore in the month of December, according to latest data by the Association of Mutual Funds of India (AMFI).

Tata Electronics acquires 60 pc stake in Pegatron India to boost local iPhone production

AGENCIES
MUMBAI, JAN 24

In a fillip to the government's 'Make in India' initiative, Tata Electronics on Friday acquired a controlling 60 per cent stake in Pegatron Technology India, which produces Apple products like iPhones. The acquisition boosts the company's position as a major player in India's electronics manufacturing industry.

This follows Tata Electronics' acquisition of Taiwanese electronics manufacturer Wistron's India operations (based in Narsapura, Karnataka) for \$125 million less than a year ago, furthering Tata Sons' Chairman N Chandrasekaran's vision of significant investments by the



Tata Group in electronics manufacturing.

Both Tata Electronics and Pegatron would integrate their teams, with Pegatron undergoing a rebranding as part of the collaboration as the part of the deal.

"The acquisition of a majority stake in Pegatron Technology India Private Limited fits into Tata Electronics' strategy of growing our manufac-

turing footprint," said Dr Randhir Thakur, CEO and MD of Tata Electronics.

We look forward to a new era of AI, digital, and technology-led manufacturing as we bring up these new facilities and expand our operations in India, he added.

Pegatron's India plant has nearly 10,000 employees, and the company manufactures iPhone 13 and 14 devices.

Earlier this month, Tata Electronics received approval from the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to proceed with the stake acquisition. This move is part of Tata Electronics' strategy to grow its presence in Apple's iPhone production network in the country.

As part of the deal, Pegatron India will undergo rebranding to reflect its new ownership structure and business direction while continuing to deliver high-quality electronics manufacturing services.

Established in 2020 as a greenfield venture of the Tata Group, Tata Electronics currently employs over 50,000 people and has significant operations in Gujarat, Assam, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka.

The iPhone contract manufacturers in India now include Foxconn, Tata and Pegatron.

Riding on the production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme and growing premiumisation trend, Apple clocked Rs 1 lakh crore in iPhone exports from India in the calendar year 2024.

According to early industry estimates, Apple exported more than \$12 billion worth iPhones last year, which is more than 40 per cent growth from 2023.

Apple's domestic production has surged nearly 46 per cent from a year ago, as per estimates.

The Apple ecosystem has also created 1,75,000 new direct jobs in four years with "over 72 per cent women".

Mumbai, Delhi among top cities in Asia Pacific for FDI in real estate: CBRE report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 24

Mumbai and New Delhi rank among the top 10 most preferred markets for cross-border real estate investment in the Asia Pacific region, a report said on Friday.

While Mumbai ranked fifth after Tokyo, Sydney, Singapore and Ho Chi Minh City, New Delhi was tied for the eighth spot along with Seoul, Osaka and Hanoi, according to the report by property consulting firm CBRE.

In India, the total net buying intentions reached 3 per cent, with developer, owner, operator, real estate fund, and institutional investors display-

ing the strongest buying intentions. The report further pointed out that investor sentiment in India is driven by asset classes, including office, residential, industrial and data centres, the report states.

India recorded robust foreign equity investment inflows in 2024 calendar year, with countries like Singapore, the United States, and Canada dominating the foreign equity investments. These three countries cumulatively contributed more than 25 per cent of the total equity investments in the country's real estate in 2024, the report said.

Singapore accounted for nearly 36 per cent share of the total foreign



equity investments, followed by the United States (29 per cent) and Canada (22 per cent).

Investments from the UAE also witnessed a significant uptick throughout 2024 compared to 2023. Total equity investment in Indian real estate recorded an all-time high of \$11.4 billion in 2024, increasing by

54 per cent year-on-year, according to the report.

Anshuman Magazine, Chairman & CEO - India, South-East Asia, Middle East and Africa, CBRE, said, "Investment in India's real estate market reached a record high in CY2024. While the landscape was primarily dominated by domestic investors, foreign

equity investments and a significant resurgence of capital deployment across asset classes by overseas investors stand as a testament to India's growing prominence as a global real estate destination.

"This trend is anticipated to continue with consistent capital flowing into both established and new sectors of the real estate market," he added.

Investors who are investing in Delhi and Mumbai are more inclined to look at value-added and opportunistic strategies which involve a higher risk/return profile than core and core-plus strategies.

Those chasing value-added strategies in India will

potentially explore core office products in tier-1 cities such as Mumbai and Delhi, while those looking at more development plays across these markets, with some examples including the acquisition of land sites for either residential (build-to-sell) development or data centre development, the report added.

The survey also shows that Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) initiatives remain the key focus for investors looking at new investments in India, with 56 per cent keen on acquiring or developing green buildings and 46 per cent of them looking at retrofitting existing assets.

India records 39 per cent surge in investments to Rs 32 lakh crore in 9 months of FY 25

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 24

India has recorded a robust 39 per cent surge to Rs 32 lakh crore in domestic investments announced by public and private sector companies during the first nine months (April-Dec) of the current financial year (FY25), compared to the corresponding figure of Rs 23 lakh crore for the same period of the previous financial year, according to data compiled by the State Bank of India (SBI).

The sector-wise analysis in the SBI report shows that the manufacturing sector accounts for the highest number of projects, with 1,493 announcements amounting to Rs 5,97,921 crore in investments during the first nine months of FY25. The power sector attracted the largest investment value, with 1,172 projects worth Rs 13,58,783 crore.

The mining sector recorded 72 projects with a total investment of Rs 56,628 crore, while the oil and gas sector saw 62 projects worth Rs 35,623 crore.

The sector-wise anal-

Hiring in Indian travel & hospitality sector to see 8.2 pc growth in FY25 second half: Report

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 24

Hiring in the travel and hospitality sector in India is likely to see 8.2 per cent growth in the second half of FY25, according to a report on Friday.

The report, by staffing solutions company TeamLease Services, showed that 66 per cent of companies plan to expand their workforce during the October-March period of FY2024-25.

The report also projects a net employment change

(NEC) of 8.2 per cent during this period, reflecting the sector's momentum in job creation.

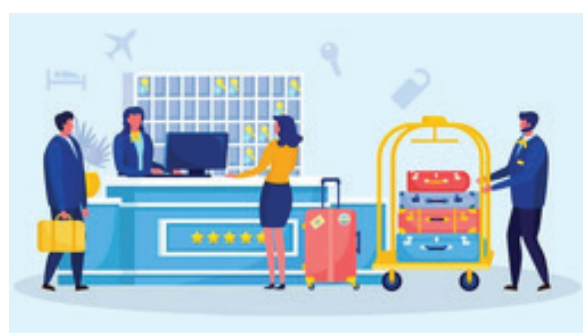
"The positive hiring intent by 66 per cent of the companies we're seeing in the travel and hospitality sector tells a compelling story about how the industry is evolving. Businesses are gearing up to meet the demands of today's economic and experience-driven travellers," said Balasubramanian A, Senior VP and Business Head, TeamLease Services.

"Our report highlights

how tier-2 and tier-3 cities in the country are stepping up as major employment hubs, alongside the usual metros, creating opportunities for talent in new regions," Balasubramanian added.

The travel and hospitality sector's growth is being fuelled by the adoption of smart tourism technologies, a revival of MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, and Exhibitions) activities, and a heightened focus on sustainable tourism practices.

These factors are



reshaping the industry landscape, creating new employment opportunities, and driving demand for skilled professionals in areas such as sustainability

coordination, smart travel experience design, and contactless technology deployment.

The report noted that the growth reflects the

broader economic significance of India's travel and tourism industry, which contributed 9 per cent to the country's GDP in 2024, amounting to over \$11 trillion, an impressive 12 per cent increase compared to the previous year.

Notably, domestic travel is also on the rise, with a surge in religious tourism and visits to Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities. Government initiatives such as the Swadesh Darshan Scheme, aimed at theme-based tourist circuit development, the PRASHAD

Scheme, focused on pilgrimage tourism, and significant investments in airport infrastructure and regional connectivity, are further catalysing the sector's expansion, said the report.

The report also highlights notable hiring intent by the survey respondents across India, with tier-1 cities like Mumbai (58 per cent), Hyderabad (54 per cent), and Ahmedabad (49 per cent) leading the demand for talent.

Simultaneously, tier-2 and tier-3 cities, including

Coimbatore, Visakhapatnam and Jaipur, are emerging as employment hubs.

Meanwhile, new locations such as Pune (18 per cent), Visakhapatnam (15 per cent), and Kochi (13 per cent) are also gaining traction as significant centres of opportunity.

This dual momentum across metros and smaller cities reflects the industry's commitment to decentralising opportunities and addressing local talent pools, the report said.

BUMRAH, JAISWAL, JADEJA NAMED IN ICC TEST TEAM OF THE YEAR

AGENCIES
DUBAI, JAN 24

India opener Yashvi Jaiswal, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah and all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja have been named in the ICC Men's Test Team of the Year 2024.

Other than the Indian trio, the team features four players from England, two from New Zealand and one each from Australia and Sri Lanka.

Australia's Pat Cummins captains the ICC Men's Test Team of the Year for the second successive year, earning his place thanks to another memorable stint in which he guided his side to the ICC World Test Championship Final, overseeing victories against Pakistan, New Zealand and India,



and picking up 37 wickets in his nine Tests at an average of 24.02.

India's Jaiswal takes a spot atop the order after scoring 1,478 runs during the year at 54.74, which included double-centuries in back-to-back Tests against England in February and a sublime 161 against Australia in Perth. His opening partner is Ben Duckett, one of four

Englishmen in the team, who scored over a thousand Test runs in the year (1,149).

Century-makers litter the middle order, comprised of New Zealand's Kane Williamson, English duo Joe Root and Harry Brook and Sri Lanka's Kamindu Mendis.

Williamson notched 1,013 runs in 2024 at an average of almost 60,

while Brook's 1,100 calendar runs were headlined by a record knock of 317 in victory over Pakistan in October.

Mendis enjoyed a breakthrough year, hitting five centuries and becoming the fastest to 1,000 Test runs in 75 years, while the evergreen Root scored more Test runs (1,556) and recorded more centuries (6) than anyone else.

Jamie Smith earns a spot as the designated wicket-keeper in the Test Team of the Year, six months after making his Test debut for England, thanks to 637 runs in nine Tests which included a maiden hundred against Sri Lanka in August.

Captain Cummins is joined in the bowling group by all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja of India,

who boasted 527 runs and 48 wickets in his Test year. Also with 48 wickets is New Zealand's Matt Henry, the pacer making impressive contributions against Australia, India and England.

Completing the list is top-ranked Test bowler Jasprit Bumrah, who excelled once more with ball in hand, topping the wicket-taking charts with 71 wickets in 2024 at a sensational average of 14.92.

ICC Men's Test Team of the Year: Yashvi Jaiswal (Ind), Ben Duckett (Eng), Kane Williamson (NZ), Joe Root (Eng), Harry Brook (Eng), Kamindu Mendis (SL), Jamie Smith (Eng) (wk), Ravindra Jadeja (Ind), Pat Cummins (Aus) (c), Matt Henry (NZ), Jasprit Bumrah (Ind).

Man City 'will be back to winning many trophies', says Maresca

AGENCIES
LONDON, JAN 24

Ahead of their clash against Manchester City on Saturday, Chelsea head coach Enzo Maresca has backed his opponents to return to form and win many trophies soon.

The two sides are sitting at fourth and fifth place in the league table and Maresca's men are just ahead as they hold a two-point gap.

"It is normal, it can happen. What does not happen is the amount of years they won trophies. What is normal is what is going on now. For sure, they will be back to winning many trophies soon," said Maresca in a press conference.

Before eventually settling at Chelsea, Maresca picked up valuable experience in the Manchester



City youth system and had a brief spell with Parma before spending a year as Pep Guardiola's assistant. The 2023/24 season saw him appointed to Leicester City with the task of taking the recently relegated side back to the Premier League. Maresca did that at the first attempt, with the team finishing top of the Championship before joining the West London outlet.

Ahead of the reunion with Guardiola, the Italian

head coach stated he will always be grateful for his time with the defending champions. "My relationship with Pep and the club is very good. I have said many times my contact is very good and I will always be grateful for the trust they showed in me. Pep is strong enough. Like any human being, he needs support. In the last eight or nine years, they were always on top, always winning trophies and important things," Maresca said.

A run of four league games without a win saw Chelsea, who heading into December were sitting at second place in the PL table, fall to fourth place in the table and ten points behind league leaders Liverpool.

Maresca remained adamant that his side is not in the title race. "No, not for the title."

Sports Minister felicitates Indian PD Cricket Team, assures full support to 'Divyang' athletes

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 24

The Union Sports Minister Mansukh Mandaviya felicitated the Indian Physical Disability (PD) Cricket Team on Friday for winning the PD Champions Trophy 2025 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The team defeated England in the tournament final, demonstrating exceptional skill and resilience.

The Indian PD Cricket Team, supported by the Differently Abled Cricket Council of India (DCCI) and accessibility organisation Svayam, was felicitated at the Sports Authority of India on Friday.

Mandaviya emphasised the government's commitment to supporting athletes with disabilities, quoting Prime Minister Narendra Modi's

vision of inclusive sports participation.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assured commitment towards 'divyang' athletes. If you are a 'divyang' person, it doesn't mean you cannot make the nation proud. And your victory is a testament to that. The passion shown by the Indian PD Cricket Team, from the rigorous process of selection to the performance in Sri Lanka, brings to light your immense mettle. Winning 5 matches out of six and beating England, Sri Lanka, and Pakistan is no mean feat," Mandaviya said.

The selection process of the Indian PD Cricket Team took place in Udaipur, where over 450 cricketers from 28 states turned up for the Nationals. From the list, 56 were

picked up for the Challenger Trophy in Jaipur, and 17 were shortlisted to represent India.

Mentioning the growing list of achievements brought to the nation by the specially-abled athletes, from the Paris Paralympics to the PD Champions Trophy 2025, Mandaviya added, "Our 'divyang' athletes are giving us many reasons to be proud and pushing us to step up our support towards them. The government is with you and you have to use your success to inspire more youth through various platforms."

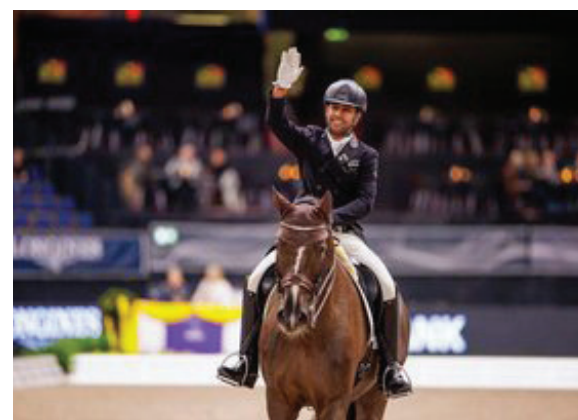
The event was also attended by the full team, coaches, DCCI General Secretary Ravikant Chauhan, Svayam Founder-Chairperson Sminu Jindal, and Sports Ministry officials.

India's first Olympic equestrian Anush Agarwalla bids farewell to his horse Manni

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 24

Indian rider Anush Agarwalla, who made history as the first Indian equestrian to compete in the dressage event at the Paris 2024 Olympics, has bid a heartfelt farewell to his trusted horse, Manni, as the 19-year-old champion enters retirement. In an emotional video shared on social media, Anush expressed his gratitude for the incredible journey he shared with Manni, a bond that transcended competition and became the cornerstone of his career.

Manni was more than just a horse to Anush; he was a partner, a teacher, and a source of unwavering support. Reflecting on their time together, Anush said, "Manni gave me my



many firsts—my first Grand Prix, my first international Grand Prix, and my first international placings. He took me to the big international shows I had only dreamed of. But most importantly, he taught me how beautiful it is when a horse and rider completely trust each other."

The duo's partnership

spanned seven years, during which Manni helped Anush scale new heights in the world of equestrian sports. From competing in prestigious Grand Prix events to achieving international recognition, Manni was instrumental in shaping Anush's historic career. In the video, Anush shared

the joy of witnessing Manni thrive, describing him as a horse who gave his 100% every single day, no matter the circumstances. Anush's rise to prominence has been nothing short of extraordinary. At the Paris 2024 Olympics, he became a trailblazer for Indian equestrianism, inspiring a generation of aspiring riders.

His career also includes a gold medal at the 2022 Asian Games in the dressage team event and a bronze medal in the individual event in equestrian dressage at the 2022 Asian Games, along with consistent success in international competitions across Europe.

In the video, he reminisced about the simple joys of their companionship, from feeding Manni

carrots every morning to hearing his welcoming neigh as Anush arrived at the stables.

As Manni retires, Anush expressed his hope that the horse will enjoy his well-deserved rest, saying, "Now it is your time to relax and enjoy the rest of your life the way you want to. I hope to enjoy your company for many, many years to come." He concluded the video with a heartfelt message: "You will always have a very special place in my heart. Thank you, Manni. You truly are the best."

As Anush continues to prepare for future competitions, he carries forward the lessons Manni taught him, a legacy of excellence that will undoubtedly inspire equestrian enthusiasts across the nation.

EMMA RADUCANU COACH NICK CAVADAY STEPS DOWN TO PRIORITISE HEALTH

AGENCIES
NEW DELHI, JAN 24

British tennis star Emma Raducanu is looking for a new coach following the departure of Nick Cavaday, who stepped down from his role to focus on his health. The announcement marks the end of a productive 14-month partnership that saw the 22-year-old return to prominence on the WTA Tour after a challenging period marred by injuries and surgeries.

Cavaday, a former childhood coach of Raducanu, rejoined her team shortly before the 2024 Australian Open. Known for his steady guidance and familiarity with Raducanu's game, he played a



pivotal role in helping her rebound from wrist and ankle surgeries that had sidelined her for much of 2023.

Under his mentorship, Raducanu climbed back into the world's top 60, showcasing glimpses of the form that saw her win the 2021 US Open as a teenage qualifier.

Reflecting on their

time together, Raducanu expressed gratitude to Cavaday. "I'd like to thank Nick for a great partnership over the last year and a bit, especially post-surgeries. I wish him all the best in his next chapter, and no doubt we'll stay in touch," Raducanu was quoted by BBC Sports as saying.

Cavaday acknowledged

the demands of the job and the toll it took on his well-being. "At this moment in time, it's important for me to spend some more time at home and prioritise getting back to full health, which is hard to do with the extensive calendar. I am glad Emma is back to being established on tour now with a ranking inside the top 60, and I look forward to seeing what she does from here."

Raducanu's coaching carousel has been a constant subplot in her career. She first made waves at Wimbledon in 2021 under Nigel Sears before teaming up with Andrew Richardson, who guided her to a historic US Open title later that year. Despite their success, Raducanu

parted ways with Richardson shortly after the tournament, sparking a series of brief coaching stints with Torben Beltz, Dmitry Tursunov and Sebastian Sachs.

The decision to bring back Cavaday, who had worked with her since she was 10 years old, seemed to offer stability. His tenure coincided with her recovery from injuries and a steady improvement in her performance. However, with his departure, Raducanu now faces the challenge of finding her seventh full-time coach.

Raducanu's immediate future includes competing in a WTA 250 event in Singapore, accompanied by her fitness trainer Yutaka Nakamura.

'We lack goals, people and options in the front line': Arteta on Arsenal's transfer plans

AGENCIES
LONDON, JAN 24

Mikel Arteta confirmed that they are hoping to secure deals in attempts to reinforce their depleted frontline but will not be making any rash decisions.

Reports suggest the Gunners are hoping to bring in Benjamin Sesko from RB Leipzig.

"My opinion is clear - we lost two very important players in Bukayo Saka and Gabriel Jesus, so we lack goals, people and options in the front line, it's clear. If we can get the right player, that's what we are actively looking at, but any player - no, we need someone that makes us better and makes an impact on the team."



"It's clear that for the period that we have lost them ideally, we need some help because we were short already and we're even shorter. The team has still coped with that but we have to do what is right for the club," said Arteta in a press conference.

Arteta also revealed that it's touch and go whether Myles Lewis-Skelly and William Saliba could be back for the

game against Wolves on Saturday. Myles was missing from the matchday squad from the Gunners' 3-0 win against Dinamo Zagreb in midweek after feeling a problem during the game against Aston Villa last week.

Meanwhile, the French international is on the brink of a comeback having sat out the last two matches with a slight hamstring issue, but Mikel is unsure exactly when he'll be given the green light to select him again.

Speaking about the pair, he said, "With Myles there is nothing serious on the scan, so it'll be a matter of having a meeting with the medical staff today. We have a training session, so we'll see whether it's too early or not."

Mandhana, Deepti included in women's ODI Team of the Year led by Wolvaardt

AGENCIES
DUBAI, JAN 24

Star Indian batter Smriti Mandhana and all-rounder Deepti Sharma were included in the ICC Women's ODI Team of the Year led by South Africa batter Laura Wolvaardt. Smriti Mandhana reigned supreme in 2024, finishing as the highest run-scorer in women's ODIs with an impressive tally of 747 runs in just 13 matches. Her year began modestly with a 29-run knock against Australia in January. However, after a six-month hiatus from ODIs, Mandhana

returned to action against South Africa in blistering form. Mandhana's consistency was evident once again in October when she ended a shaky series against New Zealand with a stunning century, becoming India's most prolific century-maker in women's ODIs. She capped off the year with another century at the WACA against Australia and delivered a strong showing against the West Indies, narrowly missing a hundred but contributing two half-centuries.

Laura Wolvaardt's 2024 was marked by dominance and

elegance, as she amassed 697 runs in just 12 matches. After a slow start against Australia, she burst into form with an unbeaten 110 and a career-best 184* against Sri Lanka in April. Wolvaardt's golden run continued against India, where she smashed a run-a-ball 135 in Bengaluru and added a half-century in the final match of the series. She ended the year with two crucial fifties against England, cementing her place as one of the top ODI performers of 2024.

Chamari Athapaththu had a stellar year, combining her

batting and bowling prowess to great effect. She scored 458 runs and took 9 wickets in just 9 matches. Athapaththu's career-best knock of 195* against South Africa in April set the tone for her year. She followed it up with a crucial 91 against the West Indies during Sri Lanka's 3-0 series sweep. Her all-round brilliance was on display in Sri Lanka's final ODI series, where she contributed 48 runs and claimed 3 wickets in the final match.

Hayley Matthews' all-round brilliance shone brightly in 2024. With 469 runs and 9

wickets in just 7 matches, she was a key figure for the West Indies. She started the year with a remarkable 140* and 141 against Pakistan, while also taking six wickets in the series. Despite missing some matches due to illness, Matthews returned with a century and impactful bowling displays in India, proving her value as one of the best all-rounders in the game.

Marizanne Kapp delivered consistent performances with both bat and ball, scoring 114 runs and taking 12 wickets in 11 matches. Her standout

moment came against India in Bengaluru, where she played a brilliant knock of 114. She also claimed crucial wickets against England, finishing the year on a high. Ashleigh Gardner was a constant force for Australia, contributing 269 runs and 20 wickets in 12 matches. She ended the year with an unforgettable all-round performance against India, scoring a fifty and taking five wickets. Her explosive batting and dependable bowling made her a vital cog in Australia's lineup.

Annabel Sutherland had a breakthrough year, scoring

369 runs and taking 13 wickets in 12 matches. Her back-to-back centuries against India and New Zealand in the final months of the year earned her Player of the Series honours and cemented her place as one of the rising stars of the game. Amy Jones combined her batting and wicketkeeping skills to great effect, scoring 382 runs and completing 15 dismissals in 12 matches. Her unbeaten knocks of 92* and 50 in crucial matches showcased her ability to anchor innings, while her work behind the stumps was as sharp as ever.

Full dress rehearsal for Republic Day held across Kashmir

JNEWS SERVICE

SRINAGAR, JANUARY 24

Ahead of 76th Republic Day, full dress rehearsal functions were held on Friday across all the districts of Kashmir, giving a glimpse of the grand spectacle to unfold on Friday.

The rehearsal is a precursor to the actual Republic Day parade scheduled to be held on January 26.

At Srinagar, a full dress rehearsal function was conducted at Bakshi Stadium Srinagar where Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri unfurled the National Flag, took salute at the March Past and inspected Parade & Band contingents.

Addressing the occasion, the Div Com highlighted developmental and administrative achievements of the region, pedaling J&K on the path of peace, progress and prosperity.

While mentioning the recent inauguration of Sonmarg Tunnel by the Prime Minister, the Div Com said that the Tunnel will ensure round the clock road connectivity to Sonmarg which will boost tourism.

Bidhuri expressed confidence that the proposed railway connection from Kashmir to Kanyakumari would be realized in the near future.

He also recounted the successful hosting of Kashmir Marathon in Srinagar & Legends League Cricket at Bakshi Stadium as the achievements of Administration to promote peace and creating opportunities for youth.

Bidhuri took pride in successful and peaceful conduct of Lok Sabha & Assembly elections during last year attributing the credit to Police, Security Forces, Civil Administration and voters.

Speaking regarding the delivery of essential services, Div Com stated that the administration has promptly restored essential services including electricity & water supply within the shortest possible time during disruptions caused by snow recently.

While highlighting the challenges, Div Com said that the administration has intensified its campaign to combat drug menace to save youth from becoming victims of drugs.

Different contingents of BSF, CRPF, ITBP, SSB, JKAP, IRP, Women Contingent, SDRF, Fire & Emergency, Forest Protection Force, NCC contingents, Pipe band, Brass band and Students from different Schools participated in march past parade.

IGP, Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Birdi; DIG Central Kashmir, Deputy Commissioner Srinagar, SSP Srinagar, SSP Traffic Srinagar, SSP Traffic Rural, SSP Security, Senior officers other security agencies including CRPF, BSF, NDRF besides HODs & staff of Divisional & District Offices were present on the occasion.

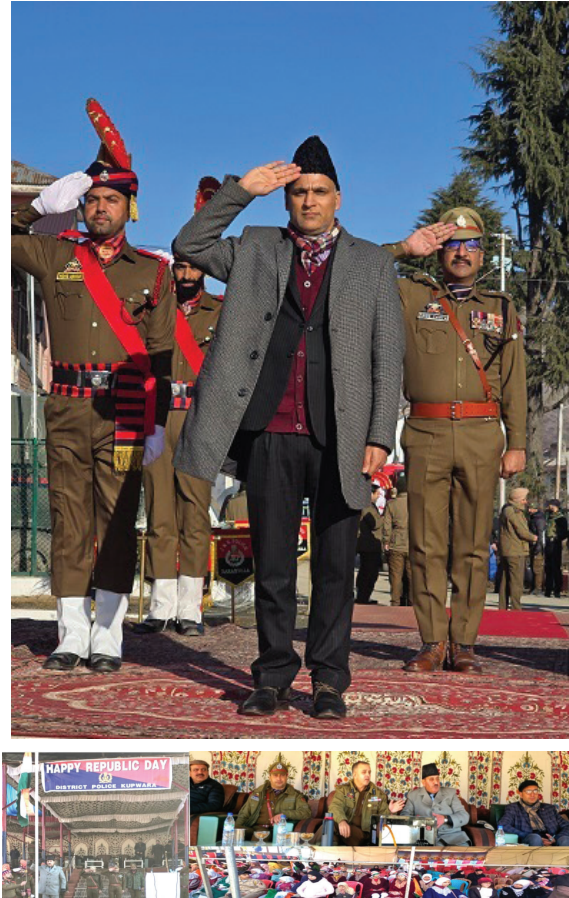
Meanwhile, colourful theme based cultural programmes were performed by students & artists to add to the fervor of enthusiastic celebrations of Republic Day.

At Ganderbal, a full dress rehearsal in connection with the forthcoming 76th Republic Day was held in Qamaria Stadium here.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Ganderbal, Shyambir unfurled the tricolor, took salute at the march-past, inspected the parade and expressed satisfaction over the arrangements made by various departments for the hassle free celebration of the national event at the venue here.

The march-past was presented by the contingents of JKP, JKAP, JKP (Ladies) CRPF, SSB, PTS Manigam, SPO Ganderbal, Home Guard, and students of various schools.

The Full Dress Rehearsal witnessed a colorful cultural show by the students who also presented patriotic songs and



folk dance. In his address, the DC complimented all civil departments and District Police engaged in preparations for hassle free celebration of 76th Republic Day. The event was witnessed by ADC, Gulzar Ahmad; CPO, ACR, GM DIC besides other district officers from civil and police department. At Anantnag, the full dress rehearsal for the Republic Day celebrations was conducted today at Shaheed Himayun Muzamil Memorial Government Degree College, Anantnag, where Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC), Abdul Aziz Sheikh took the salute at the march past. The full dress rehearsal featured an impressive march past by contingents from the CRPF, J&K Police, Home Guards, J&K Police Band, Fire & Emergency Services, NCC and students from various schools. Adding vibrancy to the event students from various educational institutions presented colorful cultural programs on patriotic themes, showcasing their talent and national pride. In his address, the ADDC highlighted the rich history of Republic Day. He underscored the significant achievements of the Anantnag district in various priority sectors under the District Capex Budget, MGN-REGA and rural development initiatives besides Macadamization and road connectivity projects, Social Welfare schemes, Self-employment programs, Nasha Mukta Bharat Abhiyan, Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) and creation of durable and sustainable assets.

He further elaborated on the importance of flagship programs and their role in transforming the socio-economic landscape of the district. The event was attended by senior officers from the district administration, including Additional Deputy Commissioners, Assistant Commissioner Revenue, Assistant Commissioner Development and Panchayat, District Information Officer, Assistant Regional Transport Officer, Executive Engineers from various engineering wings, Tehsildar Anantnag, and officers from the police department. At Bandipora, in preparations to the 76th Republic Day celebrations, full dress rehearsals were conducted across Bandipora district today, with the main event held at S.K. Stadium, Bandipora. The Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Bandipora, Mohammad Ashraf Bhatt, unfurled the National Flag. Deputy Commissioner Bandipora Manzoor Ahmad Qadri were present on the occasion. The ADDC, inspected the parade, and took the salute from the contingents of CRPF 3rd Battalion, JKP Executive Wing, IRP 21 Battalion, JKP Women Battalion, Fire and Emergency Services, SPOs, NCC Cadets, students from various government and private schools besides the event also featured a performance by the JKP Police Band. In his address, the ADDC highlighted the importance of Republic Day and presented the developmental progress

achieved in the District. He highlighted the administration's commitment to public welfare and the effective implementation of government schemes and programmes. The event also witnessed presentation of cultural performances by school students and a skit by the students of Gujjar and Bakerwal Hostel, showcasing various government initiatives aimed at public welfare. Among others, the full dress rehearsal function was attended by ADC Zaffar Husson Shawl, ACR, senior officers of District and Police Administration, District officers and officials of various departments and a large gathering of public. Full dress rehearsals were also conducted at subdivision, tehsil, and block levels across the district. At Kulgam, ahead of Republic Day celebrations 2025, a full dress rehearsal was held today at District Police lines Kulgam where Additional District Development Commissioner (ADDC) Kulgam, Bashir Ahmad Wani unfurled the national flag, inspected the parade and took a salute at the March Past. The March Past was presented by the contingents from CRPF, J&K Police, Home Guards, NCC, Women Police contingent, students and other contingents. Addressing the occasion, ADDC highlighted the importance of Republic Day and also added that slew of measures and initiatives have been taken for holistic development of the District. Moreover, he enlisted vari-

ous projects that came up in the district and said that the district has recorded immense achievements in multiple fields. He said that the District Administration is committed to strengthening the health, education and other important sectors, and is working for holistic development of the district. On the occasion colorful cultural programmes were also presented by the students which enthralled the audience. Present on the occasion were ACR, Addl-SP, ACP, CEO, Executive Engineers, and other officers and officials from civil and police administration besides locals participated in the programme. At Baramulla, the full dress rehearsal for Republic Day 2025 celebration was conducted today at the District Police Lines (DPL) Baramulla, with

Home Guard and Commandant Forces besides NCC volunteers and school children from diverse educational institutions across the district. During his speech, the ADC highlighted the district's remarkable developmental milestones and achievements, emphasizing the collective efforts of the administration and the public in fostering growth and progress. Adding to the patriotic fervor, a variety of cultural programmes were presented, which captivated the audience. Students and artists from the region delivered soul-stirring patriotic songs and vibrant cultural performances, showcasing the district's rich cultural heritage and patriotism.

At Shopian, with great enthusiasm and vibrant participation of people and display of unity, Full Dress Rehearsal was today held at DPL Shopian in a run up to the 76th Republic Day celebrations. Additional Deputy Commissioner, Dr.Zakir Hussain Faaz unfurled the National Flag, inspected the parade and took salute at the March Past presented by the contingents of JKP, JKAP, CRPF, Fire & Emergency, Forest Guards, Homeguards, NCC and students from different schools of the district at District Police Lines (DPL), Shopian. The ADC said that today's event is a testament of our collective efforts in cherishing the occasion of Republic Day while remembering the sacrifices of freedom fighters.

On the occasion, scintillating cultural performances and dramatic shows were presented by the students featuring varied art performances depicting the rich cultural norms of the society and the exhibition of patriotic fervour. The performances were presented by school children and the local artists and groups, sponsored by the Departments of Education, Information & Youth Services & Sports.

District heads of different departments and Police and Paramilitary forces were also present on the occasion, besides hundreds of employees, general public and students. At Kupwara, Full dress rehearsal for Republic Day celebration 2025 was held at District Police Lines Kupwara where Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Kupwara, M Rouf Rehman unfurled the National Flag, inspected the parade and took salute at march-past presented by contingents of JKP, JKAP, CRPF, IRP, Home Guards, FP and school children. Addressing the function, the ADC highlighted the historical background and importance of the Republic Day and the Indian Constitution.

The ADC also highlighted various major developments which have been made during the current financial year in the district. A variety of cultural programmes were presented by the school children during the function. On the occasion, SSP Kupwara, Ghulam Jeelani; ACR Kupwara, ASP, DYSP DAR, DYSP Hq, besides, Civil and Police officers were present.

Meanwhile similar functions were also held at Handwara, Lolab and Karnah sub divisions where concerned officers unfurled National Flag, inspected the parade and took salute at march past presented by contingents from JKP, JKAP, BSF, CRPF, IRP and Police band. Officers from civil administration, police department and other concerned were present on the occasion. Full dress rehearsal functions were also held in various educational institutions across the district.

At Pulwama, a full-dress rehearsal for the Republic Day celebrations was conducted today at the District Police Lines (DPL), Pulwama where Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Pulwama, Dr. S.M Ashraf, unfurled the tricolor and took the salute at the March-past. The March-past featured contingents from various security agencies, including the CRPF, District Police, JKP Women's Wing, IRP, JKAP,



Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Baramulla, Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Raina overseeing the proceedings. As part of the rehearsal, Dr. Raina unfurled the National Flag and inspected the parade. He also took the salute at an impressive march past presented by contingents of Jammu and Kashmir Police (JKP), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), National Cadet Corps (NCC), students, and other groups. The rehearsal featured vibrant cultural performances by students and local artists, showcasing the region's rich heritage and patriotic spirit. The event was attended by senior officials, police personnel, and other stakeholders. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Raina emphasized the importance of the Republic Day celebrations, urging all stakeholders to ensure the successful conduct of the main event. He commended the participants for their enthusiasm and discipline, which reflected their dedication to honoring this significant day. At Pulwama, a full-dress rehearsal for the Republic Day celebrations was conducted today at the District Police Lines (DPL), Pulwama where Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) Pulwama, Dr. S.M Ashraf, unfurled the tricolor and took the salute at the March-past. The March-past featured contingents from various security agencies, including the CRPF, District Police, JKP Women's Wing, IRP, JKAP,