

# TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2023

Daily Evening Newspaper



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## BRIEFLY

### Cop dies of suspected cardiac arrest in Anantnag

SRINAGAR, Dec 30 (Agencies): A cop died of suspected cardiac arrest in south Kashmir's Anantnag on Saturday morning, an official said.

Quoting an official, the news agency Kashmir Scroll reported that Head Constable Mohammad Jabbar Dar of Sagam Kokernag, presently posted at District Court Anantnag was found lying unconscious at his home.

"The cop was taken to a nearby hospital where the doctors declared him as brought dead due to cardiac arrest", the official added.

### Unabated cold wave despite marginal improvement in night temperatures in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Dec 30 (Agencies): Unabated cold wave continued in Kashmir valley despite marginal improvement in night temperatures on Saturday.

Dense morning fog continued to impede pedestrian and vehicular movement in the valley as motorists used flashers and headlights to signal their presence on the road.

In not in very distant past, motorists used to have powerful fog lights to pierce through thick fog, but very few such vehicles are seen on the road nowadays in Kashmir.

A MeT office statement said that Minimum temperature in Srinagar city was minus 2.8 degrees Celsius today while it was minus 2.5 and minus 4.1 in Gulmarg and Pahalgam respectively. Leh town of Ladakh region had minus 13, Kargil minus 8.8 and Drass minus 10 as the minimum temperature today.

Jammu city had 7.7, Katra 8.2, Batote 4.6, Bhandarwah 2.2 and Banihal 1.2 as the night's lowest temperature.

Kashmir is presently passing through the 40-day period of harsh winter known as 'Chillai Kalan' that starts on December 21 and will end on January 30.

## PM Modi virtually flags off second Vande Bharat Train in Katra



KATRA/JAMMU, Dec 30 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday virtually flagged off the second Vande Bharat train between Jammu and Kashmir's Katra

and New Delhi, with LG Manoj Sinha expressing hopes of a railway link between Kashmir and Kanyakumari early next year.

Union minister Jitendra Singh, who attended the

ceremony in Katra, congratulated the people of the Union territory on the New Year's gift of a second Vande Bharat train and said this was possible because of Modi's commitment

to work for the overall development of the region.

"In the coming months, the Kashmir-Kanyakumari railway link will be dedicated to the

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## India logs 743 Covid cases, highest single-day rise in 225 days

NEW DELHI, Dec 30 (Agencies): India on Saturday recorded 743 fresh COVID-19 infections, the highest single-day rise in 225 days, while the number of active cases stood at 3,997, the Union health ministry said.

Seven new fatalities — three from Kerala, two from Karnataka and one each from Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu — were reported in a span of 24 hours, according to the ministry's data updated at 8 am.

The number of daily cases was in double digits till December 5 but it began to rise again amid cold weather conditions and after

the emergence of a new COVID-19 variant.

The daily numbers were in lakhs at the peak of the pandemic, which began in early 2020. More than 4.5 crore people have been infected and over 5.3 lakh have died across the country in four years.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease stands at over 4.4 crore with a national recovery rate of 98.81 per cent, according to the ministry's website.

According to the website, 220.67 crore doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered so far in the country.

## JKRTC-Red Bus tie up to ease seat reservation for passengers

JAMMU, Dec 30 (Agencies): In a major move, the Jammu and Kashmir Road Transport Corporation (JKRTC) and online bus ticketing platform RedBus has entered into an agreement to ease seat reservation while sitting at home.

Managing Director, JKRTC Rakesh Kumar Srangal said that the JKRTC have entered into an agreement with one of the largest online booking platforms for buses, RedBus to facilitate easy booking of tickets by the travellers.

"Passengers will now be able to book seats online in JKRTC buses on the RedBus app or its website," said the Managing Director.

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## Police announces Rs 5 Lakh reward for identifying retired SSP killers

SRINAGAR, Dec 30 (Agencies): Days after a retired Senior Superintendent of Police was shot dead by suspected militants in north Kashmir, J&K Police has announced a cash reward of Rs 5 Lakh for any information in connection with the killing.

Retired SSP, Mohammad Shafi Mir, was shot dead on December 24 inside a mosque by an unidentified gunman at Gantmulla village on the Baramulla Uri highway while he was offering the call of prayers in the local mosque. While police termed it a terror incident, the official sources said the 72-year-old retired officer was killed by a 12-bore gun, a weapon which isn't usually used

by the militants. The Police made the announcement of the reward through posters that were pasted in several areas of the Gantmulla and its adjoining areas.

"It is to inform everyone that anyone who will share any information or leads about the killing of Mohammad Shafi Mir on December 24 morning by some unidentified person, will be rewarded with Rs 5 lakhs," reads a poster issued by Police.

The Police said the identity of the one who would share the information, would be kept secret.

After the killing, Police has questioned several people including some relatives of the retired

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## "Terrorism is against Humanity": Farooq Abdullah after Poonch terror attack

POONCH, Dec 30 (Agencies): Days after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's visit to Jammu and Kashmir, National Conference president Farooq Abdullah expressed condolences on the deaths of four Army personnel and three civilians, saying that "terrorism is against humanity."

Earlier on December 21, four Army personnel were killed and three others were injured after heavily armed terrorists ambushed two Army vehicles near Thanamandi in the Rajouri sector.

"Terrorism, for any reason, is against humanity. The terrorism that has happened or is happening is not acceptable in any community. Not only are jawans but



officers like Colonel and two captains have lost their lives. We regret that the civilians also lost their lives," Abdullah said.

He further expressed condolences on the demise of former senior Jammu and Kashmir Police officer Mohd Shafi, who was shot dead by terrorists while offering prayers at a mosque in Baramulla.

"This (terrorism) should be stopped. I urge my neighbouring country to stop this, as, like this, we are not heading towards friendship. Former Indian PM Atal Bihari Vajpayee also said that if we maintain the friendship, then only we can progress. I would suggest finding a solution through dialogue between India and Pakistan," he added.

## Rajasthan man arrested for cheating JK Govt Teacher of Rs 11 Lakhs

JAMMU, Dec 30 (Agencies): ADGP, Jammu Zone, Anand Jain on Saturday rewarded an investigation team from District Police Doda for arresting an online fraudster from Ajmer Rajasthan.

An official said that ADGP rewarded the investigation team with a cash reward of Rs, 5000/- to each along with Commendation Certificates for arresting the fraudster who was involved in case FIR No. 237/2023 registered at Police Station Doda.

"The fraudster, a resident of Jhunjhun Rajasthan had cheated online more than eleven lacs Rupees (11 lacs) from a Govt. teacher of Doda",

the official said. "In a function held at DPO Doda, SSP Doda Shri Abdul Qayoom while distributing the Commendation Certificates to the Police team, complimented them for their commendable job and professionalism exhibited by them during the investigation of the case and efforts made by them to arrest the absconder", the official said.

"The officers/officials who were awarded Commendation Certificates along with cash rewards included SI Mohd Shafi, ASI Tilak Raj, ASI Mush-taq Ahmed and Sgct. Shakeel Ahmed of District Police Doda", the

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## Talks with Pakistan and Militancy cannot coexist, says Devender Rana

JAMMU, Dec 30 (Agencies): Asserting that talks with Pakistan and the prevailing situation cannot coexist, Senior BJP leader Devender Singh Rana labelled Pakistan as the hub of militancy.

He said that engaging with the neighbouring state, marred by militancy and failure, holds no meaning.

Speaking to the media during the weekly public hearing at the BJP headquarters in Trikuta Nagar, Devender Rana, accompanied by Veena Khanna, BJP State Secretary, and Shalinder Vaid, BJP Additional Protocol Secretary, reiterated the national leadership's stance that



dialogue and terrorism are incompatible.

He said the advocacy of talk with Pak, coming in the backdrop of gruesome and unfortunate recent militancy-related incidents, is all the more worrisome.

"There is a need to be extra vigilant against the terror ecosystem that instantaneously jumps to provide cover to acts

of terror. A few people may try to condone or downplay the barbarism unleashed by terrorists in terms of death and devastation caused, and continuously being perpetrated, by the Pakistani lackeys but that doesn't change the ugly face of terrorism this part of the country has been witnessing. Also, engagement with sovereign countries is a central subject and those poking noses were venturing out to forbidden domains and trying to carve out an unsolicited role for themselves," he said.

Rana said that militancy emanating from Pakistan is on its last

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## Mehbooba Mufti prevented from meeting Poonch families, holds protest

SRINAGAR, Dec 30 (Agencies): PDP President and former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti faced hindrance on Saturday as she attempted to visit the families of civilians who allegedly lost their lives while in the custody of security forces in Poonch.

Accompanied by party workers from Rajouri and Poonch, Ms. Mufti set out for Topa Peer village with the intention of expressing condolences to the families of the deceased civilians.

However, her journey

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## EDITORIAL

CONSUMER  
EXPLOITATION

Generally consumers are not aware of their rights and they do not even have correct information about consumer rights, due to which they are repeatedly cheated by fraudulent traders.

Due to lack of knowledge about consumer rights, consumers are exploited one by one in the cheating system of the traders, the price of the goods or services and the quality of the product is compromised every time.

Consumer exploitation has been done in many ways. Situations of exploitation especially occur when more capitalist and powerful big companies start producing goods. Exploitation is divided into two categories-in the form of goods or commodity and in the form of service.

Deficiency in weight, quantity, weight and measurement, not being of the described or shown quality, impurity or adulteration, charging more than the prescribed price, deficiency in the expected capacity and quality of the product, the product being unsafe, defects in the product.

Not providing quality and satisfactory service on time as per service conditions, service being unsafe and faulty, causing loss instead of convenience/benefit and causing physical, mental and intellectual harm.

The organization representing agencies of consumer groups all over the world is called Consumers International. The Essential Commodities Act 1955 was enacted in India to ensure easy availability of essential commodities to consumers and to protect them from exploitation by unscrupulous traders. In which provision was made for exchange and control of production and distribution and determination of prices of declared essential consumer goods, then the responsibility of enforcement or implementation of the provisions of this Act rests with the administration of the State Governments and Union Territories.

In order to provide goods in correct measurements and weights to the consumers and to protect their interests, the Standard Weights and Measures Enforcement Act was implemented in the state on 1 April 1997. The objective of consumer cooperative is to supply goods to wholesalers at the right price and to eliminate the role of middlemen, whereas the structure of consumer cooperative was prepared at four levels, in which primary store, wholesaler or central store, state consumer association and national consumer cooperative. Unions are involved. Consumer Grievance Redressal Cell was formed in February 2002. The Food and Supplies Department has set up a national consumer helpline to provide advice to consumers.

Help can be availed by calling toll-free number 1800-11-4000, which is being run by Delhi University to provide redressal to consumers' complaints.

To protect the rights of consumers, a separate department named Consumer Affairs was created by the Central Government in the year 1997, which completely looks after the functioning of protecting their rights including consumer complaints, maintaining the standards of products and improving services.

Consumer Welfare Fund has been established with the objective of providing financial arrangements for protection and promotion of consumer interests and schemes and programs related to consumer protection.

## 2024 is almost here... Are you ready for it?

By: Shobhaa De

Wonder why we can't resist what are called "year-enders"? Mercifully, 2023 is nearly over -- just two more days to go, and the world can sigh, "Thank God it's over!" No question about it -- 2023 qualifies as the "annus horribilis" (a year of disaster or misfortune). I am not going to subject you to my personal list. Let me just make a few wild, reckless and totally irresponsible observations on the ghastly "Year of Wars" during which the earth almost self-destructed. Blink! And it could have ended -- just like that -- with a bang, not a whimper. To think that two major wars were staged and are still being waged in 2023, just as humanity was pulling out of a pandemic, is a cruel act of twisted politics. The dreaded Covid-19 eliminated millions! The ongoing wars in Ukraine and Gaza continue to claim precious lives, with no respite or resolution in sight, as the countdown for 2024 begins.

For us, here in India, 2024 is likely to be the single most significant year in the nation's history. What happens in April-May will set the country on a course which some believe may mark a journey of no return for the next 50 years. Are you ready for the road ahead? The outcome of the general election sounds like a done deal, a closed story. But who knows? Fate, history has shown us convincingly and often enough, has a way of throwing a googly when we least expect it. At this stage, it's nothing more than wishful thinking... gut feeling. But hey -- who would have believed that Donald Trump could occupy the

White House once again, given his monumental baggage? But it certainly looks like a distinct possibility right now. Matlab... Yahan bhi, kuch bhi ho sakta hai! Take heart, folks. Those who are dreading the inevitable, can do one of two things -- reconcile themselves to the poll results or start praying fervently.

I have decided to dedicate 2024 to frivolity and good cheer. Better than daily tequila shots, na? Being seriously committed to irony has its advantages. Nothing can shake the cynics. Not even the prospect of what is staring us in the face -- it's time to enjoy a good giggle over a tippie, and let those in charge of our lives -- the minders of the national conscience -- do their worst. I'm prepared for any and every absurd dispensation, including a new moral code for citizens. Dress codes for women are being rigorously enforced in certain states. Behaviour codes for minority communities are already in place. Women, being the most visible minority, are living with the fear of being further targeted and marginalised. The plight of our female wrestlers (along with the male wrestlers who supported them) is beyond pathetic. It ought to shock and shame those in authority who claim to represent the rights of women. When men in power get away scot-free after serious allegations are made against them, encourages other men to go ahead and harass defenceless women at will. With very poor representation in Parliament (just 78 female members out of 542 in the Lok Sabha, and 24 in the Rajya Sabha out of 224), there is no real lobby batting for a better deal for India's 698,192,092 million mahilas, who constitute

a hefty 48.4 per cent of the total population. 2024 may see a further deterioration.

So, dear readers, before we chorus Jai Ho! at the likely outcome of the general election, it might be a good idea to re-examine what exactly it is that civil society desires from the political leadership at this point. In one word, it is freedom. Right now, we are a mute, emasculated nation. And to those who constantly roll out impressive statistics and numbers (the Sensex hit 72K this week), is there no concern for the stepped-up multiple compromises we will be forced to make next year? Are boasts about India becoming the third largest economy in the world enough consolation to those who suffer daily indignities and discrimination? Is anyone even talking about fair play? A less hate-filled approach to vital issues that exclude millions from the national narrative? The "M" word (Muslim) will assume far greater significance in 2024. The BJP does not have a single Muslim Member of Parliament... isn't that significant and scary signalling?

Not every scenario is as dismal or depressing. Over a giddy X'mas weekend, I met a lot of incredibly wealthy and well-connected young people, who gave their vote of confidence to the BJP being in power, come 2024. These entrepreneurs are tomorrow's billionaire babalog... with impeccable academic credentials. They have spent the past two decades chasing the good life in New York, London, Dubai, Hong Kong, Munich, and travelling frequently to China, cutting mean deals across the world. I watched them emerge from their Bentleys and Aston Martins, dressed impeccably,

throwing back their heads and laughing carelessly -- the world is indeed their oyster. But, dig deeper, and you sense the narrative has changed dramatically during the past 12 months. Most are rethinking their decisions to live an international, almost nomadic life, jetting between financial hubs and dreaming the best dreams. With most European economies in tatters, America in a mess, a broke England, the choice is between Dubai and India. But hey -- Dubai is far, far more expensive to live in, especially if you have school-going kids. Why not opt for apna desh? That's exactly what's happening with the 40-somethings banking on India's sound financial health in the years to come.

On a lighter and totally silly note, there were two big reveals as 2023 reached the finishing line. Both "reveals" received hysterical coverage on the social media. The world of entertainment stood still as Aaradhya Bachchan's forehead was seen for the very first time since she made it as a legit mini-celeb on domestic and international red carpets. The attention to Abhishek and Aishwarya Rai's teenage daughter's exposed brow, unveiled at a school function, was finally surpassed by the pap-debut on X'mas day of a cherubic one-year-old -- Baby Raha -- the blue-eyed daughter of Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt. What could possibly be cuter???

Have an incredibly OTT 2024, readers. Let's hope that 2024 turns out to be an "Annus Mirabilis" -- a remarkable or auspicious year. Don't lose your sense of humour -- you are going to need lots of it after the elections in April-May. A dizzying, rollicking rollercoaster ride is guaranteed. Happy New Year, all...

## A doctor becomes a doctor after going through countless trials and tribulations



By: Vijay Garg

There is no doubt that medical science has made a lot of progress. The number of discoveries that have been made in this field have hardly been made in any other field. The findings of medical science have mostly been proven correct. Whether it is new drugs to save life-threatening diseases or surgery with robot technology, medical science has touched the heights. Every year lakhs of kids try their luck to become a doctor by giving NEET entrance test. There is no doubt that Medical education is a very expensive education. If it is called the most expensive education in India, then there is no mistake. Costing crores of rupees to become a doctor has become a trivial matter. First MBBS and after that post graduation studies cost lakhs of rupees. One thing is

as clear as glass that a poor man cannot make his children doctors, same is the case with middle class families. Even if their children are very bright, now the money crunch shatters their dream. The medical Education has remained only for the children of rich people. A doctor's child definitely thinks of becoming a doctor and his doctor parents also encourage him to go into his field. The salary and allowances of senior doctors in our country are much higher than that of junior doctors. It is natural that the children of senior doctors are able to complete this education financially. Earlier, senior doctors used to run their own private clinics or hospitals along with government jobs due to which their economic status was quite high was correct to an extent. But the Punjab government has enforced that a government doctor cannot run a private clinic or hospital while on duty. The result of which was that many doctors resigned from their government jobs and gave priority to running their own private clinics or hospitals. The largest government medical university in Punjab is Baba Farid University, Faridkot, along with Guru Gobind Singh Medical College, where medical stu-

dents are admitted. Neither are college students. During the conversation, it was learned that one has to face many hardships to become a doctor. After explaining in detail, it was learned that many children who are studying medicine become mentally ill. They lose heart, as a result they try to keep themselves calm by taking drugs. This is very worrying. That student believed that MBBS. The fee is the highest in Punjab, while the health system of Punjab is underdeveloped, in such a situation, the government can reduce the fees and maximize Children should be motivated for medicine. He said that professors put pressure on children. If ragging is happening in the college, then the college management is unaware of it or has become careless on purpose. This should also be considered. If seen, government hospitals are running on the heads of junior doctors. Along with 24-hour rigorous duty, they also do rigorous post-graduation studies. Governments are not unaware of this. A good doctor can become only if he gets a comfortable environment or some kind of training. There will be no pressure on S. If this continues, in the near future children and parents will be seen avoiding

medical studies. A student who has become a doctor by spending close to crores of money will somehow work to add to his hard-spent money. Then people like us address doctors as robbers. In 2018, the fee was directly reduced from four lakh to nine lakh. If we take the cost of the hostel, then the cost reaches about fifteen lakh. The reason behind all these is less availability of seats. During a study, it has been found that 25 children taking coaching at Kota have committed suicide in 2023 as compared to last ten years. Which is very high compared to other years. The direct reason for which has come to light is the pressure of studies and heavy expenses incurred during studies. Another study shows that 13 thousand students committed suicide in 2021. The reason for this was the pressure of studies. If the government wants to improve the welfare system of the state, doctors should be recruited, that too by paying good salaries. Doctors who do not pay their debts Can perform without any other greed.

(Vijay Garg Retired  
Principal Educational  
Columnist Malout)

## GDC R S Pura participated in Assembling Climate Clock event



### Top News Report

R S PURA, Dec 30: GDC R S Pura participated in Assembling Climate Clock to remind masses "The Clock Is Ticking - Lets Act In Time".

Climate clock is a clock that tells us how much time is left before we touch global warming of 1.5oC. The time shown depends on our carbon budget and current rate of carbon emissions across the world.

Most people will be unaware of the fact that the time left before we touch global warming of 1.5oC, from where irreversible climate change starts, is only about 6.5 years.

The world seems to be oblivious of this fact, also oblivious to the fact that it is only a matter of time before their lives get affected by catastrophic climate change.

As part of the event, Viksit Bharat Club, NSS, NCC and Eco club of GDC R. S.

Pura participated in to assemble their climate clocks and install them in the buildings so that people can see the ticking time everyday and get encouraged to take "actions for climate correction" as climate change is real and is now recognized as one of the gravest challenges facing the international community.

Currently, it is majorly affecting the poor, but the days are not far when every person, irrespective of international and monetary barriers, will suffer the casualties of climate change.

The event was organized under the able guidance of Dr. Rajni Bhagat, esteemed Principal of the college. She said that event is in line with Mission LIFE which focuses on the need to adapt a lifestyle favouring sustainability as our nurturer needs nurturing. It's responsibility of each individual to inculcate a habit of

reducing conspicuous consumption of energy and making rapid transition towards becoming energy conscious-conscious. She further added that climate is not changing it has already changed and we all need to take climate corrective measures because we all are contributor to the climate change and only switching to green and clean energy sources won't solve the problem but limiting our consumption and generating and localizing the generation can help together make the planet a better place to live in. The event was coordinated by Dr. Sunil Kumar Mangoch, Nodal officer Viksit Bharat and the faculty members who present on the occasion were, Dr. Chanchal Angral, NSS PO, Dr. Rkesh Choudhary, ANO NCC, Prof. Shifali Abrol, Convener Eco Club, Prof. Sudesh Kumar, Prof. Shelley Kalsi and Prof. Geetika Goswami.

## Khatana visits Bafliaz, extends condolences to bereaved families

### Top News Report

POONCH, Dec 30: BJP MP Rajya Sabha, Er. Gulam Ali Khatana visited the families of civilians here who lost their lives recently and also paid tributes to the martyr army jawans who were martyred in a terrorist attack in ditrict Poonch.

He said that people of Jammu and Kashmir won't allow the nefarious designs of the enemy country to succeed and would fight together to defeat the menace of the terrorism in the Union Territory.

MP Khatana said that Indian army holds an impeccable record in upholding human rights, stating that the law of the land would take its course.

He remarked on the neglect the hilly districts of Rajouri, Poonch, and Reasi endured in the past 70 years, attributing it to the "loot and scoop" practices of previous governments.

MP Khatana lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's commitment

to serving the poorest of the poor, highlighting flagship schemes such as Har Ghar Nal Se Jal, Ujjwala, PMAY, and the distribution of land to the landless in Jammu and Kashmir as exemplary initiatives. He noted that over the past nine years, the region has witnessed a significant influx of liberal grants and the sanctioning of various development projects.

He said that in a recent meeting with the Minister of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH), Nitin Gadkari, MP Khatana raised concerns about tunnels and roads in Rajouri and Poonch. Minister Gadkari assured MP Khatana that the matter would be taken up with the relevant authorities, reflecting the government's commitment to infrastructure development in the region.

MP Khatana expressed confidence in the government's dedication to bringing prosperity to the hilly districts of Jammu and Kashmir through comprehensive development initiatives.

## Farewell accorded to Sectional Officer Raj Kumar



### Top News Report

DODA, Dec 30: Farewell accorded by ICDS Department at DC Office Kishtwar to Sectional Officer Raj Kumar Chandail, on retirement.

Everyone congratulated SO Raj Kumar Chandail on his retirement and saluted his honesty. He served entire tenure in duty have spent about 15 years in District Kishtwar.

When his posting was made, he was engaged as a Junior Assistant and after that he retired as a Sectional Officer.

All his colleagues in his office honored him with gifts and also blessed him for his health and said that with your honesty, we will work in the same way as we have done our work with honesty.

Raj Kumar said, "I

have to follow honesty and taught me that my elder brother Prem Raj and I always worked with honesty wherever I got a chance to do duty."

Officers present at farewell party include Programe Officer Rishi Kumar Sharma, CDPO Kishtwar Ifat Ara, DIO Kishtwar Kuldeep Kumar, CDPO Paddar Najeeb Ahmed, and other Officer of different department.

## Day-long seminar between Travel and Tourism stakeholders of Vietnam and Leh held



### Top News Report

LEH, Dec 30: As a part of the first Cultural Exchange and Tourism Introduction Programme in Vietnam, a day-long seminar was held at Samtan Hill Dalat between the Travel and Tourism stakeholders of Vietnam and Leh Ladakh, which was presided by the esteemed Counsul General of India in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Dr Madan Mohan Sethi in the presence of Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Tashi Gyalson.

Representatives from LAHDC Leh, such as Councillor Tsering Namgyal; Councillor Lobzang Sherap; experts and stakeholders of travel and tourism sector from both Leh Ladakh and Vietnam and other concerned officials were also present.

In the seminar, President, All Ladakh Travel Trade Alliance (ALTTA), PT Kunzang; President All Ladakh Hotel and Guest Houses Association (ALHGHA), Skarma Tsering Dehlex; President All Ladakh Tour Operator Association (ALTOA), Delex Namgail presented presentation highlighting the Travel and Tourism industry of Ladakh and its potential.

Another landmark achievement was the signing of three separate Memorandums of Understandings (MoUs) between the stakehold-

ers of the two regions i.e Lam Dong Province, Vietnam and Leh Ladakh, India. The first MoU dealt with collaboration in Agriculture between Ladakh and Vietnam, which was signed by Councillor Khatse, LAHDC Leh, Lobzang Sherap representing Ladakh.

The second MoU was signed between the Travel and Tourism stakeholders of Vietnam and Ladakh and the third MoU focused on Hotel Industry and was signed between the respective stakeholders and experts of hotel industry.

Addressing the gathering, Counsul General Dr Madan Mohan Sethi appreciated the novel initiative of LAHDC Leh in promoting tourism and cultural exchange in Vietnam. Counsul General Sethi assured his full support in promotion of tourism between Ladakh, India and Vietnam. He also concurred to take up the issue of charter flight between Ladakh and Vietnam with the concerned higher authorities.

Chairman/ CEC, LAHDC Leh, Tashi Gyalson, in his address, shed light on the religious and spiritual bonding between Vietnam and India and the strong bilateral relationship shared by the two countries in different sectors. He added that Hanley in Ladakh is the

abode of the first Dark Sky Sanctuary in the whole of South-East Asia and highlighted the booming tourism in Ladakh and its potential.

He expressed gratitude to the government officials of Lam Dong Province and Samtan Hill Dalat for the support extended in successfully conducting the first cultural exchange and tourism introduction programme with immense potential and opportunities embedded in it for both the regions.

CEC also expressed heartfelt gratitude for the support and guidance provided by the Counsul General of India in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, Dr Madam Mohan Sethi. CEC Gyalson added the signing of the three MoUs would deepen the bilateral relationship between the two and bring economic prosperity and inclusive development in the respective sectors.

Further, CEC Gyalson extended warm invitation to the stakeholders of Vietnam to organise and conduct a cultural exchange and tourism promotion programme in Ladakh and expressed hope that the result of such initiative would reflect in the increase of tourists from Ladakh and India in Vietnam and vice-versa, fostering a deeper sense of connection and bond between the two countries.

## Satsang held in memory of Darshan Kumar Tugga



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 30: A Satsang by Swami Vinay Muni was organised at Chatha Gujran in memory of Late Shri Darshan Kumar Tugga. Sangat hailing from different corners participated therein.

Addressing the sangat, Swami Vinay Muni said that the Soul does not take birth nor does it die. The Soul is a permanent entity. This phenom-

enon of taking birth and dying is of the ego. It is the ego that is born and it is the ego that dies. In reality, the Soul does not die at all. Birth and death do occur; there is no question about it. We all witness its occurrence. Death takes place when all the accounts of karma of a person's life are finished. Whatever account he had bound for the current life, comes to an end and therefore death occurs, Swami added.

## Rattan Lal criticizes incumbent Govt for neglecting remote of District Udhampur

### Top News Report

UDHAMPUR, Dec 30: Rattan Lal Gupta, Jammu and Kashmir National Conference Provincial President Jammu has lambasted the incumbent Govt of totally ignoring the remote areas in every aspect with the people in these areas left to fend for themselves.

The senior NC leader expressed this while addressing a meeting of NC workers at Chenani in Udhampur district here on Saturday.

The meeting was conducted by Ram Purshotam Sharma, District President Udhampur Rural and Naresh Anthal District Secretary Udhampur Rural who apprised the senior functionaries of party about the hardships being faced by the people living in the region. He also briefed the senior leaders about the party's functioning and programmes being conducted by the party cadre in these areas.

Rattan Lal lamented that it is really an irony that the BJP's proxy Govt in J&K as well as the Union Govt are making tall claims about the equitable development of the J&K while the ground situation reveals contrary conditions. He said that the fact remains that during the present regime remote/rural areas remained completely ignored and untouched in terms of development.

He said that the deplorable conditions in remote/rural areas of J&K especially Dudu, Basantgarh, Latti, Goidi, Pancheri and Majaitta bear evidence to the Union Govt and the UT Administration's failure in reaching out to these areas for development and welfare of the people living in these areas.

Elaborating on the situation in such areas, the senior NC leader said that Ramnagar to Dudu, Chenani to Dudu and Udhampur to Panchari roads are currently in highly deplorable condition thus badly hampering the smooth connectivity to these areas. He said that people have been left to the mercy of God as there is dearth of medical and health-

## Modi govt is committed to enhance accessibility and connectivity across India: Rekha



### Top News Report

JAMMU, 30 Dec: Modi govt is committed to enhance accessibility and connectivity across India this was stated by Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) District President Jammu South Rekha Mahajan. The public gathering was held in Trikuta Nagar Mandal of Bahu Constituency in District Jammu South in connection with public Booth Jan Samvaad Abhiyaan in the presence of Ex-Councillor and Trikuta Nagar Mandal President Neeraj Puri, Ward President DP Arora, Speaker Ayush Sawhney were present on the occasion.

Rekha Mahajan addresses the common masses and highlights the quality of a country's infrastructure is a key determinant in shaping its economic trajectory. She added that the Narendra Modi-led Govt has kept infrastructure at the front and center of its development agenda including the union territory of J&K. Rekha said in the upcoming future

the nation will witness the "victory chariot" of PM Modi-led government for the third consecutive term in 2024 parliamentary election. Rekha hails that Indian railways witnessed a massive capacity expansion through line doubling and electrification and the "Vande Bharat Express", India's first indigenous Semi High-Speed trains, is a major 'Make in India' success story. 15 Vande Bharat trains are already operational and 400 Vande Bharat express trains are to be manufactured in the next three years. Rekha also added that PM Modi's visionary and vibrant leadership also introduced the new Vande Bharat Express train in J&K and Indian Railways has allocated the 49th Vande Bharat Express train to the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link (USBRL) in Jammu & Kashmir. Rekha Mahajan emphasized that Union Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnav had announced that the

USBRL will be completed by December 2023 or January 2024, and a Vande Bharat metro train will be operated between Jammu and Srinagar once the project is fully operational. Rekha enlightened that in the last nine years, the metro rail projects have reached 20 cities. In the aviation section steps were taken to make it affordable and accessible through the Udan project.

Rekha said that the country also witnessed major constructions during this period like the World's highest railway bridge, the Chenab Bridge, the World's longest highway tunnel, the Atal Tunnel, further the completion of many long-pending projects like the Saryu Nahar Irrigation Canal, Eastern, and Western Peripheral Expressway, etc. The recently implemented infrastructure development projects are accelerating the country's journey towards becoming a developed nation by 2047, she added.

## Ready to party?: As the New Year knocks on the door, here's a round-up of where you can celebrate in the tricity and make memories for a lifetime

'Celebrate endings — for they precede new beginnings'

And to bid adieu to 2023 and welcome the New Year, we bring the happening events of tricity, where friends and family members can celebrate together one last time this year! From musical evenings to sundown parties to curated food menus for the weekend, restaurants, bars and hotels are ready to host Chandigarh folks in all earnest.

Sufi night

Immerse yourself in the soul-stirring tunes of Satinder Sartaaaj as you bid farewell to the old and welcome the new in style. The event, Mehfil-e-Sartaaaj, will commence at 9 pm on New Year Eve at Radisson Red, Mohali. The ticket price covers exquisite New Year's Eve dinner and unlimited beverages. Let the Sufi music set the tone for a year filled with positivity, laughter and unforgettable moments.

Music to the ear

Punjabi singer Ninja, along with artistes Gulzar Channiwala and Renuka Panwar, will be performing live on New Year Eve at the Open Air Concert, Shalimar Ground, Panchkula.

On December 31, Armaan Bedil will perform at The Altius Boutique Hotel, Chandigarh. Also Hyatt Centric, Chandigarh, is hosting a concert with singers-performers Jassi Gill and Babbal Rai.



One can also celebrate New Year Eve with Prem Dhillon at Playboy Club Chandigarh (8 pm), whereas JW Marriott has hired Punjabi singer Amrit Maan to perform on the Eve. Titled

'Dazzle N Disguise With Amrit Maan', it will commence at 9:30 pm at the Grand Ballroom of the hotel.

Carnival feel

As part of Chandigarh Club's Countdown 2024, celebrations began last Saturday. For the New Year Eve, organisers have

planned mini-bumper tambola from 11.30 am onwards. In the evening at 7:30 pm, there will be fashion show choreographed by former Miss India finalist Aprajita Sharma. On New Year Eve, none other than veteran Punjabi singer Harbhajan Mann will be performing at Chandigarh Club while New Year Tambola will be held for the club members.

Hotel Hometel, Chandigarh, is hosting a dance-and-dine themed party called 2024 New Year Carnival. Reserved for family and couples, there will be a lavish gala dinner, unlimited snacks and beverages, DJ with LED Party and also fun games as well as activities for kids. They will also distribute special gifts and hold a lucky draw contest.

You can also celebrate the New Year Party 2024 at Gymkhana Club, Sector 3, Panchkula. There will be games, lucky draw contest and a belly dance performance. Also Singer Rimz J and Dilsher will perform, whereas DJ Yamaha will make the party people rock the dance floor.

Midnight Resolutions— the Year-End Bash with DJ Sandy is being hosted by Elante Mall, Chandigarh, and will begin at 8 pm on New Year Eve.

## Newlyweds Arbaaz Khan, Shura Khan Jet off for New Year vacation



The New Year is going to be really special for actor Arbaaz Khan as he will ring in 2024 with his wife Shura Khan.

On Saturday morning, the newlyweds were spotted at the Mumbai airport and happily posed for the shutterbugs.

In the videos surfaced online, Arbaaz can be seen wearing a black sweatshirt that he paired with blue jeans. Shura opted for a grey co-ord set that she teamed with a cool black cap.

Arbaaz and Shura got married in an intimate

nikah ceremony on December 24 at the latter's sister Arpita Khan Sharma's residence in Mumbai.

After the ceremony, Arbaaz took to Instagram and announced his sacred union with Shura via a heartfelt Instagram post.

"In the presence of our loved ones, me and mine begin a lifetime of love and togetherness from this day on! [?] Need all your blessings and good wishes on our special day!" he wrote.

For the wedding, Arbaaz wore a floral

bandhgala with beige trousers while matching with his bride Shura, who wore a floral peach-colored lehenga for the nikah ceremony.

The ceremony happened in the presence of close friends and family members.

Actors Raveena Tandon, Riddhima Pandit, Riteish Deshmukh and Genelia Deshmukh also attended the nikah ceremony of Arbaaz and Shura besides family members including Salim Khan, Salma Khan, Helen, Salman Khan, Sohail Khan, and Alvira Agnihotri among others.

Arbaaz was previously married to Malaika Arora. They separated in 2016 and officially divorced in 2017; they have a son, Arhaan. Arbaaz also dated Giorgia Andriani but the two called it quits last year.

Reportedly, he met Shura, a makeup artist, on the sets of his upcoming film 'Patna Shukla', which features Raveena Tandon in the lead role.

## Khushi Dubey play as a role of undercover Cop in Aankh Micholi

Star Plus has announced its new undercover cop saga, Aankh Micholi, starring Khushi Dubey and Navneet Malik. Produced by Shashi Sumeet Productions, Aankh Micholi promises to keep audiences hooked.

The makers of Aankh Micholi have dropped an intriguing promo for the cop drama. The promo depicts Rukhmini (Khushi Dubey) as an undercover cop fighting the goons on one side and maintaining family ties on the other. Rukhmini aspires to be a reputed official. Aankh Micholi will also be a twisted tale of a saas and a bahu. It will be interesting to witness Rukhmini's journey and how she achieves her goals.



## Rebel Wilson opens up about her upcoming memoir 'Rebel Rising'

American actor and comedian Rebel Wilson spoke about the 'gut-wrenching' process of writing her book 'Rebel Rising', which will be released on April 2. She also showed a behind-the-scenes video of herself signing books, according to People.

In the Instagram story clip, Wilson photographed printed pages from her book as she narrated the video. "This is how I'm spending the nights of my holidays," she said. "Just a few to go for the first thousand people who buy the book. I can't wait for you guys to read this," she continued about her memoir.

"You're going to see a whole new side of me.



Lots of funny and serious stuff... And hopefully, you guys will love the book as much as I've loved writing it—although sometimes it's been gut-wrenching and emotional," Wilson added.

'Rebel Rising' follows Wilson's unconventional success in Hollywood and her personal issues with fertility, weight, sexuality, and more.

She spoke to People about the scary yet exciting experience of writing her memoir in October.

"I've been writing the book for the past 18 months because when I write, I have to totally be by myself and isolated," Wilson said. "It's

just been this secret thing I've been doing by myself for 18 months. It's so exciting now that it's done."

The Australian actress also acknowledged that she was unhappy with the book's introduction since she struggled to be herself in her writing.

"I think the first few chapters were really..." Wilson said. "Then the editor was like, 'This just doesn't sound like you.' So what I started doing was I just sat there by myself as if I'm just telling the story to a friend.

I just kind of found my writing style—as if I'm sitting opposite my friend, telling all my life's deepest secrets, which is a bit scary."

## 'Witnessed a new India': Amitabh Bachchan bids emotional farewell to 'KBC 15'

Amitabh Bachchan, who has been the host of 'Kaun Banega Crorepati 15' bids an emotional farewell to the quiz based reality show, and said he has witnessed a new India on the ten seats of the stage.

The first episode of season 15 premiered on August 14. Amitabh has hosted 14 seasons of the knowledge based reality show, since the year 2000. However, the season 3 of the show which premiered in 2007 was hosted by superstar Shah Rukh Khan. The last episode of this season featured an IAS aspirant Avinash Bharti, who hails from Haiderganj, Uttar Pradesh. He won the amount of Rs 50 lakh.

The finale episode also featured Indian Pararcher Sheetal Devi and actress Vidya Balan. They were followed by veteran actress Sharmila Tagore, and her granddaughter and diva Sara Ali Khan.

In episode 100, which is titled as 'Vidai Ka

Samay', the megastar was seen giving a monologue. For the finale episode, Amitabh sported a red suit and paired it with a white shirt.

In the monologue, the 'Don' actor said: "Goodbyes are really strange. Those who bid goodbye with a smile do so with really heavy hearts. Bidding a beloved goodbye doesn't make you sad because it leaves the house vacant, rather, it makes you sad because their departure leaves a void in your heart."

The 81-year-old actor shared that he had the urge to sit in the audience seats.

"Normally, these seats are occupied by the audience and their selfless love. By people who are here to help total strangers. Prayers are invoked here. Playfulness and shenanigans are also born here. I've witnessed a new India on these 10 seats (fastest finger first seats). A glorious and progressive India," he said.



The 'Brahmastra' actor went on to say, "An indigent India with unwavering and steadfast resolve. An India, who with the ink of its hard work, penned new destinies. I've witnessed futures being adorned and histories being written. It feels as though I've witnessed an entire journey of one's life."

Amitabh said that the stage is his strength. "The resonating applause of the viewers not only honours the efforts of every contestant, but also, always, inspires me to keep going. I wish to end this

season with that very applause," he ended his speech.

In season 15, the makers had introduced a new part called 'Super Sandook' where players, after crossing the second threshold, attempt a rapid fire question round. The 50:50 lifeline was replaced with the 'Double Dip'.

Retired Squadron Leader Sushmita Sahay was the first contestant of the 15th season. Jaskaran Singh, an IAS aspirant, became the first Rs one crore winner of Season 15.

## Kusha Kapila: I have mostly essayed extremely urban characters

Actress Kusha Kapila, who plays Chhaya in the coming-of-age drama series 'Dehati Ladke', shared how she has mostly essayed extremely urban characters, and in this show, she has played a professor unlike her previous roles.

The social media personality and YouTuber, Kusha is known for her roles in 'Selfiee', 'Plan A Plan B', 'Thank You for Coming', and 'Case Toh Banta Hai'.

Speaking about her role in 'Dehati Ladke', she said, "Chhaya is a liberal and progressive woman, who is an Assistant Professor at Rajat's university.

She finds love in Rajat's mentor, Prashant. Chhaya has a mind of her own; she is a strong-headed yet amicable person, and people find it easy to open up to her.

Besides being progressive, she is also unafraid to make mistakes in life." Talking about taking up



a role unlike any other she has played in the past, Kusha said, "Interestingly, my character in 'Dehati Ladke' is unlike any other roles that I have done in the past. I have mostly essayed extremely urban characters. I've never really played a professor, especially somebody who quotes poets and imparts wisdom at the drop of a hat. So, that was very interesting."

Based on a best-selling Hindi novel, the narrative not only evokes a sense of nostalgia for college days, but also imparts valuable life lessons about embracing life to the fullest.

The series follows the journey of Rajat, a simple boy from a village, who embarks on a quest to chase his dreams in Lucknow.

This young adult series features Shine Pandey, Raghav Sharma, Tanish Neeraj, Saamya Jainn, Aasif Khan, and Kusha.

It is streaming on Amazon miniTV.

## “Our Vision Was Not Bharat-Centric After Independence Till Narendra Modi Changed It”: Amit Shah

*Amit Shah suggested that Article 370 led to the birth of separatism and terrorism until its abrogation in 2019*

AHMEDABAD, Dec 30 (Agencies): Union Home Minister Amit Shah said that after independence, those who loved the country felt bad that its vision was not “Bharat-centric” until the time that Gujarat Chief Minister Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister.

“After independence, those who loved the country and had knowledge about it and had respect for the word ‘Bharat’, felt bad that though the country is free, its vision was not Bharat-centric but on something else. This was in the minds of many for several years,” Shah said on Saturday while attending the Pujya Purani Swami Smriti Mahotsav organised by Swaminarayan Gurukul Vishwavidya Pratishthanam in Ahmedabad. “All Bharatiya Janata Party workers started working on changing this vision from 1950 onwards. Several generations of our party strived to make that happen, and many even lost their lives till the day



came when Gujarat’s Chief Minister became the country’s Prime Minister and the whole world was singing the praise of Bharat,” Shah added.

Singing praises on India’s achievements throughout the decades, the Union Minister said that the country is now on the way to being the top mobile phone manufacturer, third when it comes to start-ups and renewable energy.

“Today, we are progressing towards being the top mobile

phone manufacturer; we rank third as far as start-ups are concerned, third in renewable energy production, and no one doubts us now as far as security is concerned,” Shah said.

Amit Shah suggested that Article 370 led to the birth of separatism and terrorism until its abrogation in 2019.

“For years, we have been bearing the brunt of Article 370, which led to the birth of separatism and terrorism. On August 5, 2019, Modi brought an end to

Article 370 with one stroke of a pen,” Mr Shah said.

Speaking on the Narendra Modi government’s policy of zero tolerance towards terrorism, Shah said, “With surgical strikes and air strikes, we gave a message to those who used to take on our defence forces, otherwise, they will get a firm response from us, even within their homes. Zero tolerance towards terrorism is Narendra Modi’s policy.”

Thanking the Swami Narayan Sampradaya for its help in advancing the Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan of Gujarat, the Home Minister said, “The Swami Narayan Sampradaya has enlightened several people. I must admit that if the gurukul of Swami Narayan Sampradaya had not worked in different places in Gujarat, the Sarva Sikhsha Abhiyan of Gujarat would have been left incomplete.”

## Do people want easy rail travel or picture with ‘shahenshah’s statue’: Rahul Gandhi takes a dig at government



NEW DELHI, Dec 30 (Agencies): Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday took a swipe at the government over setting up of selfie booths at railway stations with life-size cutouts of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, asking whether people want easy rail travel or a picture with the “shahenshah’s statue”.

In a post in Hindi on X, Gandhi said, “Fares for every class of ‘Garibo Ki Sawaari’, Indian Railways have been increased. Even the fare concession given to the elderly was withdrawn. Platform ticket prices were increased and the door for privatisation was opened.”

He said, “Was this money, which is being

squeezed out of the public’s hard-earned money, for making a selfie stand? What do the people of India want? Cheap gas cylinders and easy rail travel? Or Picture with ‘shahenshah’s statue?’”

Gandhi’s attack on the government came days after Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge said setting up selfie booths at railway stations with photographs of Modi is a “brazen waste” of taxpayers’ money while opposition states await MGNREGA funds.

Kharge had also shared a copy of a reply obtained under the Right to Information (RTI) Act that listed the stations under the Central Railway where temporary and permanent selfie booths have been installed.

## Five killed as lorry hits vehicles, rams into teashop in TN’s Pudukottai

PUDUKOTTAI, Dec 30 (Agencies): Five persons, mostly devotees, were killed and 19 others injured when a cement-laden lorry hit two vehicles before knocking down a roadside tea shop at Namasamudram in the district, police said on Saturday.

The incident, which occurred in the wee hours, caught the devotees who had stopped at the tea stall unaware.

The driver of the lorry bound for Sivaganga from Ariyalur lost control of the vehicle, and



hit a car and a van before ramming into the tea shop on the Tiruchi-Rameswaram highway, police said.

Devotees from Tiruvallur, were on a trip to Omshakthi temple while the van carried Ayyappa devotees.

Four persons died on the spot while another

succumbed on the way to hospital, police said. The injured have been admitted to the Pudukottai Government Hospital. Police and Fire service personnel rushed to Namasamudram extricated the bodies and rushed the injured to the hospital. A case has been registered.

## Capt Ashutosh Shekhar flies maiden passenger plane to Ayodhya; family says proud of him

AYODHYA, Dec 30 (Agencies): It is a proud moment for the family, says 75-year-old Mukteshwar Singh as his son piloted the first commercial passenger plane to the new airport here after its inauguration by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday.

Forty-three-year-old Captain Ashutosh Shekhar is a pilot with Indigo, and after the airport was opened, his flight from New Delhi (2.40 pm) is scheduled to land here at 4 pm.

Modi also inaugurated the city’s railway station, days ahead of the consecration of the Ram temple. The event on January



22 is expected to be attended by thousands of people.

“Lord Ram has been kind to us,” said Shekhar’s mother Madhurani Singh (68).

“Since the day he entered the aviation sector, it was my dream to see him flying an aircraft to

Ayodhya. It has come true after 12 years. What could be more joyous than seeing a dream being fulfilled!” she said.

This is a “divine moment” also, said Mukteshwar Singh.

He said his family’s association with Ayodhya went back four generations when his great grandfather visited the city to become a disciple of Shri Ram Vallabha Kunj Janki Ghat.

Shekhar is a disciple of Guru Shree Ram Shankar Das ji Vedanti of the city, said the family.

“It is a very emotional moment for the whole family. I believe he came into the aviation sector

because of the blessings of our gurus. Today, he is flying the first aircraft to Ayodhya as the inaugural flight. It is a matter of great pride for the family,” Mukteshwar Singh told agency.

Shekhar’s wife Sweta Ranjan said the flight would take off from Delhi at 2.40 pm and land at Ayodhya at 4 pm. “It will start its return journey at 4.40 pm and reach Delhi at 5.55 pm,” she said.

“Both my children are very happy. We believe that our happiness and prosperity in the family is by the grace of our divine association with the birthplace of Lord Ram,” she said.

## Delhi cop dragged, beaten up after asking man to show bike documents

NEW DELHI, Dec 30 (Agencies): A head constable of the Delhi Police was dragged and beaten up by four men after he stopped one of the accused’s two-wheeler to check his licence papers, police said today.

Kuldeep, a head constable posted at the Hauz Khas Police Station in South Delhi, suffered critical injuries to his face and was admitted to a hospital, they added. The incident occurred at a police booth in the South Extension Part-II area on Friday afternoon.

At the time of the incident, Kuldeep and

Constable Mukesh were patrolling at the South Extension Part-II market, said South Delhi DCP Chandan Chaudhary. Both were in their civil dress as it was a special drive in view of the upcoming New Year celebrations, he said.

Kuldeep and Mukesh noticed a man riding his motorcycle without a helmet and in an improper manner. As the two-wheeler was also creating a loud noise due to its modified silencer, the duo stopped the motorcyclist and asked him to show his licence papers and registration certificate, Chaudhary said.



The rider -- Chayank Seeelan alias Addi (22) -- refused to show his documents, following which the police officials took him to the booth. It is alleged that Chayank called his brother Tanishk and narrated about him being stopped by the police.

After some time, Tanishk, Chayank’s father Anil and cousin Badal Chaudhary arrived at the police booth and began abusing the policemen for not letting him go. They also threatened them with dire consequences, claiming they had “relations with a

minister”.

When Kuldeep asked the four men to show him their documents, they dragged him out of the police booth and beat him up with sticks. He was later rescued by passers-by and informed the police control room of his assault.

While Chayank’s brother, father and cousin fled after attacking Kuldeep, the police caught Chayank with the help of the people.

An FIR was lodged in connection with the matter. DCP Chaudhary said strict action would be taken against the accused.

## Three die as bus hits motorcycle amid dense fog in Uttar Pradesh



GONDA, Dec 30 (Agencies): Three people died and two were injured here when a private bus hit a motorcycle from behind amid reduced visibility due to thick fog, police said on Saturday.

The incident took place on the Colonelganj-Belsar-Nawabganj

road near Chakraut under the Colonelganj police station area on Friday night.

Due to dense fog, a private bus hit a motorcycle from behind, killing two persons riding the two-wheeler.

The bus driver lost control of the vehicle after hitting the motor-

cycle and ran over a person on a footpath, said Superintendent of Police Vineet Jaiswal.

Two people were injured in the incident and are undergoing treatment at a hospital, he said.

One of the deceased was identified as Dashrath Lal Shukla (45), a resident of Pandey Chauraha. The identity of the two who were travelling on the motorcycle is yet to be ascertained, Jaiswal said.

The bodies have been sent for post-mortem examination. The bus driver is on the run and teams have been formed to arrest him, he said.

## Jharkhand woman strangles 2-year-old son for crying during her call, arrested

GIRIDIH, Dec 30 (Agencies): A woman in Jharkhand’s Giridih district allegedly strangled her 2-year-old son for disturbing her while she was on a phone call. The woman was allegedly irritated by her son’s crying while she was on a phone call with someone.

The woman, Afsana Khatoun, had married Nizamuddin six years ago and the couple had two sons, aged four and two.

Afsana’s father-in-law and complainant, Rojan Ansari said that Afsana reportedly locked herself in a room with her younger son after a fight with her husband. She was on a phone call when her son started



crying. Instead of comforting him, she strangled him, the family alleged.

Afsana didn’t open the door for a while. The matter came to light when she called her husband inside the room to sleep, and he found their son unconscious. The toddler was rushed to the hospital, but he died.

Meanwhile, Afsana, who has been arrested and sent to jail, claims that she did not intend to kill her son and that he died after she, irked over his crying, pushed him in anger, causing him to fall off the bed.

The police have sent the child’s body for post-mortem and further investigations are underway.

## Utkal Ranjan Sahu Takes Charge As Acting Director General Of Rajasthan Police

*Senior IPS officer Utkal Ranjan Sahu, who is currently the director general of Rajasthan home guards, took the additional charge after Director General of Police Umesh Mishra took voluntary retirement.*

JAIPUR, Dec 30 (Agencies): Senior IPS officer Utkal Ranjan Sahu took charge as acting Director General of Police of Rajasthan at the police headquarters here on Saturday.

The 1988-batch IPS officer, who is currently the director general of Rajasthan home guards, took the additional charge after Director General of Police Umesh Mishra took voluntary retirement on Saturday.

After assuming the charge, Sahu said that based on instructions and priorities of the state government, the police force would work towards preventing crime against women, gang war



and cyber crimes. The acting DGP said effective action will be taken against gangsters, those involved in cybercrimes and crimes against women.

Action was being taken against gangsters in the state, he said, adding that concrete steps would be taken to prevent crimes against women by holding talks with the authorities

concerned.

About cybercrime, he said if people remain alert then cybercrime can be reduced significantly and the police department is working to raise awareness among people on the issue.

Senior police officers, including Director General (Law and Order) Rajeev Sharma, Director General (Cyber Security) Ravi Mehrada, Additional Directors General Sanjay Agarwal, Govind Gupta, Anil Paliwal, Sanjib Narzary, Vishal Bansal and V K Singh were present at the police headquarters to welcome Sahu.







## Google settles USD 5 billion privacy lawsuit over tracking people using 'incognito mode'

*The search engine misled people into believing that it wouldn't track their internet activities while using incognito mode*

SAN FRANCISCO, Dec 30 (Agencies): Google has agreed to settle a USD 5 billion privacy lawsuit alleging that it spied on people who used the "incognito" mode in its Chrome browser — along with similar "private" modes in other browsers — to track their internet use.

The class-action lawsuit filed in 2020 said Google misled users into believing that it wouldn't track their internet activities while using incognito mode. It argued that Google's advertising technologies and other techniques continued to catalogue details of users' site visits and activities despite their use of supposedly "private" brows-



ing.

Plaintiffs also charged that Google's activities yielded an "unaccountable trove of information" about users who thought they'd taken steps to protect their privacy.

The settlement, reached on Thursday, must still be approved by a federal judge.

Terms weren't disclosed, but the suit originally sought USD 5 billion on behalf of users; lawyers for the plaintiffs said they expect to present the court with a final settlement agreement by February 24.

Google did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the settlement.

## Oil cos offer Rs 6.87/litre incentive on ethanol made from molasses



NEW DELHI, Dec 30 (Agencies): State-owned fuel retailers have offered Rs 6.87 per litre incentive on ethanol made from C-heavy molasses to shore up supplies.

"In order to maximise ethanol production from C-molasses route and improve the overall availability of ethanol for ethanol-blended petrol programme, public sector oil marketing companies announce an incentive of Rs 6.87 per litre for ethanol from C-heavy molasses," the oil ministry said.

C molasses is a

byproduct of sugar factories and its utilisation for ethanol production is an effective way to promote green economy, it said.

Oil firms are mixing 12% ethanol in petrol as part of a government programme to cut consumption of fossil fuel and import dependence.

Oil marketing companies Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) announced the incentive.

The companies said the decision was taken

to promote the supply of ethanol from C-heavy molasses.

The incentive amount will be payable over and above the previous Ethanol Supply Year (ESY) procurement price of Rs 49.41 per litre.

The government will decide the prices of ethanol produced from B-heavy molasses and juice in a few days. The government can offer additional ethanol from C-heavy against lapsed allocations of juice or B-heavy ethanol. The government might also convert the existing revised allocations of juice or B-heavy ethanol for supply as C-heavy.

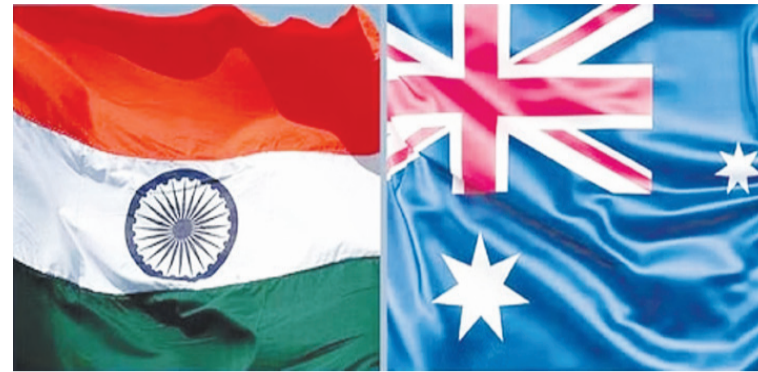
The incentive will not be applicable on quantities supplied in ESY 2023-24 against allocations/purchase orders of ESY 2022-23.

## India trade deficit with Australia down 40%

*Preferential lines refer to preferential access given via duty cuts as part of trade agreements between nations.*

NEW DELHI, Dec 30 (Agencies): Country's trade pact with Australia has boosted exports in several sectors of the Indian economy, including engineering goods, electronic products, and pharmaceuticals, as per the commerce ministry. The data showed country's overall merchandise exports to Australia grew by 14% in April to November 2023, while imports from the country declined by 19% during the same period. The trade deficit with Australia during the period has also fallen by 39% to \$5.3 billion.

According to the data, exports from India to Australia under preferential lines rose by 17.8 percent year-on-year, reaching \$1.58 billion during the period of



April to October 2023. However, exports of gems and jewellery reported a negative growth of 19%, while chemicals export also plummeted by 26% in April-October of 2023.

Preferential lines refer to preferential access given via duty cuts as part of trade agree-

ments between nations. Among sector-wise Indian exports to Australia on preferential lines, the highest percentage increase was recorded in drugs and pharmaceutical products, which saw a significant rise of 52 percent in the first seven months of the current fiscal

year, followed by a 37 percent surge in the export of cereals preparation during the same period.

Imports from Australia on preferential lines also recorded growth, particularly in pulses, fruits, and vegetables during April-October 2023. Rajesh Agrawal, Additional Secretary of the Commerce Ministry, noted that the India-Australia Economic Cooperation and Trade Agreement (ECTA), which came into effect on December 29, 2022, has completed its first year and both the countries are trying to expand the existing pact into a more comprehensive "Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA)".

## South Delhi customer orders 9,940 condoms in one year from Blinkit

NEW DELHI, Dec 30 (Agencies): A South Delhi consumer ordered a whopping 9,940 condoms from Zomato-owned quick delivery platform Blinkit in 2023, earning himself a place 'Blinkit Trends 2023'.

Meanwhile, Gurugram ordered a whopping 65,973 lighters in 2023, and placed more orders for Tonic water (carbonated drink) than for soft drinks this year, according to the same report.

About 30,02,080 PartySmart tablets (to avoid morning hangover after alcohol consumption) were delivered this year.

Someone from Bengaluru placed an order for an iPhone 15 Pro Max worth Rs 1,59,900, a packet of Lay's and six bananas.

Around 3,20,04,725 maggi packets were delivered after midnight as a consumer bought 101 litres of mineral water in one order.

Around 80,267 Gangajal bottles were delivered this year via Blinkit as someone bought 4,832 bathing soaps in 2023.

"About 351,033 printouts were delivered before 8 a.m. and 45,16,490 Eno sachets were ordered, along with 1,22,38,740 ice creams and 8,50,011 ice cube packets, this year.

Someone from Hyderabad ordered 17,009 kgs of rice in 2023.

"Thirty-eight underwears were

ordered in a month by someone. They were delivered briefly," said Blinkit. Another consumer ordered 972 mobile chargers.

"Shared so many facts about buying patterns on Blinkit through 2023. Dropping some of the best to round up the year. Which one is your favourite?" Blinkit CEO Albinder Dhindsa posted on LinkedIn.

A follower reacted: "Obviously brought by a retailer due to price differential from GT distributor".

## Breach of contract: Wipro seeks Rs 25 crore from ex-CFO

BENGALURU, Dec 30 (Agencies): IT major Wipro has demanded Rs 25.15 crore in damages along with 18% interest from its former CFO Jatin Dalal for violating a clause in his employment contract. Dalal has joined the company's rival Cognizant. The suit was filed by the IT company at the end of November and a civil court in Bengaluru has posted for orders on January 3.

The non-compete clause prevents Dalal from joining a rival company within one year of leaving the company and failing which he would be liable to compensate the com-



pany with value of the Restricted Stock Units (RSU) allotted to him or the sum of his total remuneration in the previous 12 months.

Earlier, this newspaper reported that Dalal has filed an application requesting the court to move the matter to arbitration. Dalal joined Wipro in 2002 and became CFO of the

company in April 2015 and also assumed additional responsibilities as President beginning in December 2019. Dalal also led Wipro Ventures, Wipro's \$300 million strategic investment arm focused on investing in early- to mid-stage startups.

On September 21, Wipro announced that CFO Dalal has resigned and that Aparna C Iyer has been elevated as its new CFO. A week later, Cognizant announced the appointment of Dalal as CFO, effective in December. Dalal is reporting to Ravi Kumar S, Cognizant's CEO. The company also said

that Dalal will oversee, among other responsibilities, Cognizant's worldwide financial planning and analysis, accounting and controllership, tax, treasury and internal audit, corporate development, investor relations and enterprise risk management functions.

Wipro has seen many top-level exits in recent times. The company has also filed a complaint against Mohd Haque, a former senior vice president and head of healthcare and medical devices- Americas, alleging a violation of the non-compete clause in his employment con-

tract. He moved from the company before the expiration of the non-compete clause that was set until August 1, 2023. He also joined Cognizant recently.

Clause prevents Dalal joining rival in 1 year

Suit was filed by Wipro at the end of November and a civil court in Bengaluru has posted for orders on January 3. The non-compete clause prevents Dalal from joining a rival within one year of leaving the company and failing which he would be liable to compensate the company with value of the Restricted Stock Units (RSU) allotted to him.

## Don't take headaches lightly

*Migraines, cluster headaches and tension headaches are the three primary types generally seen among patients.*

BENGALURU, Dec 30 (Agencies): Headaches come in varying degrees of pain - some are throbbing, discomforting and uncomfortable, while cluster headaches are equivalent to a hot iron being plunged into the eye, doctors said. Doctors see two kinds of headaches among patients - primary and secondary. Primary headaches are the ones in which an organic cause is not found and secondary headaches are induced by a particular cause like infection, inflammation, blood clot or trauma.

Migraines, cluster headaches and tension headaches are the three primary types generally seen among patients. "The incidence of headaches has increased due to a person's ability to recognise them more accurately. It was noted that the inability to cope with situations or daily stress and dietary habits has contributed to the rising incidence.

Any sight of recurrent headaches for short durations, sudden severe headaches, or change in the character of headaches is when a person should consult

a doctor," said Dr Srinivas R, Lead Consultant, Neurology, Aster CMI Hospital. Migraine is one of the most prevalent kinds of headache which may last between four to 72 hours if left untreated, limiting your ability to carry out a daily routine.

A person experiences visual disturbances before the headache phase starts like shimmering lights, zig-zag lines, stars or blind spots. They suffer from throbbing pain on one side of the head, accompanied by light and sound sensitivity, and nausea and vomiting. "Headaches occur more commonly than a lot of other diseases and are often ignored," said Dr Rashmi Devaraj, consultant and neurologist, at Apollo Hospitals.

"It is important to look out for 'red flag signs' like sudden onset of severe headache (thunderclap headache) which could be rupture of a blood vessel in the brain or sudden bleeding. If a person suffers from persistent vomiting or sudden loss of vision, it is a sign of underlying bleeding and requires immediate medical inter-



vention. If a headache lasts beyond two days or increases in intensity, a person must seek medical help," she added.

Doctors have advised the need for lifestyle modification, following sleep hygiene, stress management, understanding triggering points and ignoring symptoms to avoid headaches as much as possible. In India, where self-medication is rampant, it has also resulted in medicine-overuse-chronic headaches caused by mindless popping of pills to get relief from it. Cluster Headaches People usually ignore symptoms like pain on one side of the head, watery and red eyes, and even a blocked nose, attributing it to fatigue, general

sickness, excessive screen time, lack of sleep or extended work hours.

A cluster headache is rare and incurable, occurs in cyclic patterns and can affect any age group. While its exact cause remains unknown, studies have declared it as one of the most painful headaches a person can experience. Though there are no exact statistics, several studies have stated that 0.1% of the population or more suffer from it. Despite headaches being a common issue, clinicians still lack expertise and often misdiagnose cluster headaches as migraine.

Doctors said symptoms of migraine and cluster headache can overlap. Hence, a person suf-

fering from continuous headaches is advised to maintain a 'headache diary' to record the period, symptoms and possible triggering factors, which can give doctors a detailed perspective for better diagnosis. Despite similar symptoms, cluster headaches show contrasting qualities.

They follow a pattern which usually lasts 15 minutes to three hours. It can occur seasonally, lasting several weeks. The intensity of the pain is continuous, unlike in the case of migraine, which can last for multiple days with varied pain intensity.

A person can experience swelling around the eye, drooping eyelids, restlessness, excessive tearing and unbearable pain in the face area, head and neck. In a case study, a 26-year-old was misdiagnosed with migraine for eight years and his condition deteriorated to a point where the pain became unbearable and pushed him to attempt suicide. The doctor advised the patient to seek help and not to ignore headache symptoms.

## 'Be responsible; avoid contact with the vulnerable if you have fever, sore throat': Sakra World Hospital doctor



BENGALURU, Dec 30 (Agencies): As the year is coming to an end and COVID-19 cases are on the rise across the country people should take precautions rather than the government imposing restrictions, said Dr Rajath Athreya, senior consultant and HOD paediatrics and neonatology, Sakra World Hospital, Bengaluru. A member of the Karnataka government's Covid-19 Technical Advisory Committee, in an interview with Aknisee Karthik, he says there is no cause for concern now.

Coronavirus will remain in circulation at a low level. The precursor of the JN.1 variant was Pirola which was in circulation for several months with very few cases globally. The JN.1 variant has a single mutation which has enabled higher infectivity and ease of spread.

This is to be expected with newer variants.

As of now World Health Organisation (WHO) and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) who have based their opinion on JN.1 trajectory in Singapore and other countries have said that this variant does not seem to add any further burden to public health. WHO has called it a Variant of Interest. There is no cause for concern apart from the need to be vigilant.

We feel we are past the pandemic now. We have entered a phase of endemicity where the population has varying degrees of immunity to coronavirus by infections, exposure and vaccination. The viruses will keep mutating and when a variant has the advantage of dodging some of this immunity, it will cause some surges.

The links between vac-

cines and unexpected deaths purportedly are more anecdotal than evidence-based. There is not much data to attribute causation. So our advice will be to go with the recommendations of the Government of India, WHO and other professional bodies concerning vaccination advice. As of now, a booster has not been recommended. We have to wait for further guidance.

The way we handle respiratory virus infections when it is a pandemic and a public health concern, and when it is not of that magnitude are different. Now is the time for sensible precautions rather than restrictions. I would urge the public not to panic and all of us to remain vigilant. People with medical conditions like kidney, lung, liver and heart diseases, the elderly and those with lowered immunity should be masked up in crowded indoor and outdoor places until we know better. We need to act responsibly if we have any symptoms like fever, cough and sore throat avoid close contact with vulnerable individuals and mask up until we recover.

## OTD: MS Dhoni retires from Test cricket after Boxing Day Test against Australia at MCG

Back on December 30, 2014, MS Dhoni retired from Test cricket after the Boxing Day Test against Australia at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

NEW DELHI, Dec 30 (Agence): Back on December 30, 2014, MS Dhoni pulled the curtains down on his Test career. The decision came out of the blue during India's Test series on Australian soil in 2014-15.

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) released an official statement to put forth the development of Dhoni's retirement from the purest format. It was learned that Dhoni took the decision due to "the strain of playing all formats"

"One of India's greatest Test captains under whose leadership India became the No. 1 team in the test rankings, MS Dhoni, has decided to retire from Test cricket citing the strain of playing all formats of cricket," the release said.

"BCCI, while respecting the decision of MS Dhoni to retire



from Test cricket, wishes to thank him for his enormous contribution to Test cricket and the laurels that he has brought to India. Virat Kohli will be the captain of the Indian team for the fourth and final Test against Australia to be played

in Sydney," the release added.

Dhoni scored an unbeaten 24 in the second innings of his last Test as the match ended in a draw. Chasing a mammoth target of 384, India finished with 174 for six in 66 overs.

Dhoni missed the first game

of the series at the Adelaide Oval due to a thumb injury. In his absence, Virat Kohli stood in for him. It was also the first time that Kohli captained India at the international level. After the Melbourne Test, Kohli was officially named as the skipper of the Indian team.

Dhoni once held the record for the most wins as captain in Tests. In 60 Tests, he led India to 27 victories. It was in 2019 that Kohli went past him to become India's most successful Test skipper.

In 90 Test matches, Dhoni scored 4876 runs at an average of 38.09 and a strike-rate of 59.11 with six hundreds and 33 fifties to his name. His highest score of 224 came against Australia back in 2013 at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai.

## India is one of the most underachieving teams: Michael Vaughan

CENTURION, Dec 30 (Agence): Former England cricketer turned commentator Michael Vaughan emphasised Indian cricket as "one of the most underachieving teams" following their innings and 32 runs loss against South Africa in the opening Test match of the series.

On Thursday, India slumped to their third-biggest defeat against the Proteas in Tests after losing by an innings and 32 runs within three days.

In a post-match show for Fox Cricket Michael Vaughan asked his fellow expert former Australian cricketer

Mark Waugh "Do you think, in terms of cricket, India are one of the most underachieving sports teams in the world?"

However, Mark didn't reply to anything to which Michael stated, "They haven't won much in recent times. I think they are (an underachieving side). They don't win anything. When was the last time they won something? With all the talent they have, all the skill set."

Vaughan further said that India were successful in winning their last two Test series against Australia away from home but when it comes to white-ball

World Cups, they have failed in both formats.

"They've won in Australia twice (Border-Gavaskar Trophy series wins in 2018/19 and 2020/21).

Magnificent, but the last few World Cups, been nowhere, in the last few T20 World Cups, been nowhere."

"You go to South Africa, who are, you know, useful in Test match cricket and to produce a performance like that...I mean, with all the talent they have, and the resources they have, I don't think they win anything," the former England cricket team captain added.

## Nepal cricketer Sandeep Lamichhane convicted of rape; faces up to 10 years in jail

KATHMANDU, Dec 30 (Agence): A court in Nepal found the Himalayan nation's high-profile cricketer Sandeep Lamichhane guilty of raping a teenage girl and fixed January 10 for sentencing.

The 23-year-old has been the face of cricket in Nepal and was the only player from the country to take part in prominent Twenty20 leagues across the world.

He was suspended as Nepal's captain last year and taken into custody after police issued an arrest warrant for him



over the assault in 2022. He was later released on bail.

Lamichhane could face up to 10 years in jail. His lawyers said he would appeal the verdict to a higher court.

"We did not expect

this judgement... we are frustrated," lawyer Sabita Bhandari Baral told Reuters about Friday's verdict by the Kathmandu district court.

"We'll definitely appeal," she said.

## Murray longs to play against Nadal, Djokovic again

BRISBANE, Dec 30 (Agence): Andy Murray conceded Saturday he longed for the chance to play again on the big stage against superstars Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal.

Speaking ahead of the season-opening Brisbane International, the 36-year-old said he missed the days when he regularly met Djokovic, Nadal and Roger Federer at the business end of major tournaments.

Murray matched it with the big three for a decade between 2006-16 before a run of injuries resulted in time off court and a slide in his ranking.

While the others powered on to title after title, the Scotsman, now ranked 42, was forced to



battle his way back, his career never reaching its former heights.

The last time he met Nadal was in the semi-finals of the Madrid Masters in 2016 and while he played Djokovic in the Madrid Masters last year, he had not met him since 2017 before that.

"Obviously I would like the opportunity to play against them again, ideally in the latter stages of big tournaments,"

Murray said.

"That's something that obviously I've missed, that feeling, not had that opportunity really.

"If I get the opportunity to practise with them, I still really, really enjoy that.

"It does bring back some good memories, but ideally, I'd want to be doing that in the tournaments, not in the first rounds."

Murray has been prac-

tising with Nadal in Brisbane as the Spaniard makes his comeback after almost 12 months away with injury.

He said Nadal was moving well and showing no signs of the hip injury that forced him off tour after the 2023 Australian Open.

Murray also said Nadal appeared to have made only minor changes to his game in his time away from the tour.

"His second serve is significantly harder than what he did earlier in his career," Murray said.

"But yeah, the rest of the game, unless there's a physical issue, there's not really much reason for him to make huge changes to that -- it's been pretty successful."

"When he's fit and

healthy, that game style is what has worked really, really well for him, looking for his forehand, trying to dominate with that shot.

"If he wants to be successful in the future, that's what he should be looking to do. That's how he was trying to play today."

Murray takes on second-seeded Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov in the first round, a rematch of the 2013 Brisbane International final which Murray won in two close sets.

Dimitrov won their last encounter at this year's US Open.

"I need to play really well, certainly much better than there, if I want to get through it," Murray said.

## Warner is not selector, we will consider Green for opening slot in Test: Aussies coach McDonald

MELBOURNE, Dec 30 (Agence): David Warner might have endorsed Marcus Harris as his successor for opening slot in Tests, but Australia head coach Andrew McDonald said they are considering a lot more options and Cameron Green is also in contention.

Warner will retire from Test cricket after the third match against Pakistan at Sydney beginning on January 3.

There have been a lot of debates as to who should replace Warner at pole position with the names of Harris, Green, Matt Renshaw and Cameron Bancroft doing the rounds.

"Davey's not a selector. I remember back to

when Davey endorsed Matt Renshaw so I think the next one will probably be Cam Bancroft and then Cameron Green and he'll have all bases covered.

"But it's great when a fellow player endorses someone else internally. It means that they've probably excluded other players as well, but he was asked his opinion and we're happy with him expressing that," McDonald was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

Australia's next Test assignment is against West Indies and McDonald said a decision on Warner's successor will be taken well in time for that series.

"All options will be



considered. We're not going to make the decision until the deadline, which will be the West Indies game.

"Cameron Green, as a discussion around who are the best six batters, has definitely been in the conversation," McDonald said.

McDonald also con-

sidered. We're not going to make the decision until the deadline, which will be the West Indies game.

"Cameron Green, as a discussion around who are the best six batters, has definitely been in the conversation," McDonald said.

McDonald also con-

## Sri Lanka name Wanindu Hasaranga as T20I skipper before Zimbabwe series, Kusal Mendis to lead in ODIs

COLOMBO, Dec 30 (Agence): Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC), on Saturday, December 30, named Wanindu Hasaranga as the skipper of the national T20I team. This announcement comes as the team gears up for their upcoming series against Zimbabwe. Concurrently, right-handed batter Kusal Mendis is set to captain the one-day international team.

The experienced Charith Asalanka steps into the role of vice-captain, offering support to both Hasaranga and Mendis in their respective formats. This reshuffling in the hierarchy follows Hasaranga's return to the field; he had been sidelined due



to an injury incurred during the Lanka Premier League in August.

Hasaranga takes over the T20 reins from Dasun Shanaka, who remains a key figure in the preliminary selections for the forthcoming series that includes three one-day internationals and an equal number of T20 matches, commencing on January

A fresh selection committee now operates under the guidance of former opener Upul Tharanga, with Ajantha Mendis as a member. Additionally, the legendary Sanath Jayasuriya has been appointed as a 'cricket consultant' for a year, bringing his extensive expertise to the fore.

These changes reflect Sri Lanka Cricket's commitment to rebuilding and strengthening their team dynamics, with an eye on future success on the international stage.

Sri Lanka will play all their matches against Zimbabwe at the R. Premadasa Stadium in Colombo.

## 'Reborn' Emma Raducanu shrugs 'weight' off shoulders to start new journey in ASB Classic

AUCKLAND, Dec 30 (Agence): British tennis sensation Emma Raducanu said that she is excited to make a return to competitive tennis in the ASB Classic in Auckland after being out of action since April. Raducanu last played in the Porsche Tennis Grand Prix where she lost to Jelena Ostapenko in the Round of 32.

The 21-year-old admitted that undergoing surgeries on her shoulder and wrists took a toll on her body.

Raducanu, however, said that she has managed to shrug off the pressure of expectations that was on her after she won the US Open 2021. Two years ago, Raducanu became the first qualifier to win a Grand Slam after she defeated Canada's Leylah Fernandez in the final.

"Yeah, I feel reborn in a way. I feel fresh,



I feel ready, I feel happy, I feel excited. So overall, I'm feeling very positive and lighter. I think that for two years after the US Open, I felt maybe a bit more like weight on my shoulders, but now I feel completely fresh," Raducanu was quoted as saying in a press

conference.

"It's nice not to have three casts on you, so you know, just moving around and showering, everything, you really appreciate just like being able to do your own hair, stuff like that. So yeah, I'm just happy to be back playing," she added.

Back in 2023, Raducanu defeated the talented Linda Fruhvirtova 4-6, 6-4, 6-2 after rallying back from a set down. But there, she had to retire midway from her match against Viktorija Hrunckova because of an ankle injury.

Raducanu is back for the tournament in 2024 and is set to restart action from the main draw, which gets underway on January 1. Raducanu entered the top 10 last year, but has dropped down to No.298 in women's singles due to her long absence from the court.

## Strength of character: Stimac's final word on Asian Cup squad

NEW DELHI, Dec 30 (Agence): Lined up to face strong sides like Australia and Uzbekistan in the AFC Asian Cup in Doha next month, India head coach Igor Stimac today said "strength of character" will be the parameter to decide who will be included in the final squad.

India are clubbed with formidable Australia, strong central Asian side Uzbekistan and tricky Syria — all above Stimac's team in the FIFA rankings — in the group stage of the Asian Cup from January 13 onwards.

"All the boys in the (probable) list are similar in their football qualities. What we are looking for the final list of 26 is definitely experience, physical strength, and the final line will be drawn by the

strength of their character," Stimac said. "This is very important for us as a team, because no matter the talent, if there is no character nothing can be achieved," he added.

Stimac will announce his final 26 players before the team's departure tomorrow.

Regarding areas which need improvement, he said: "I am looking for defensive compactness, offensive transition, and the set-pieces mostly. It's also very important to work on man marking inside the box, because I was not happy with that part of our game, in the last few games. We started leaking some unnecessary goals inside the box because marking was not properly done."

# Disability dialogue on challenges and prospects of inclusion organized

## Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 30: An interactive panel discussion on the theme 'Challenges and prospects of building an inclusive social order' was held under Disability Dialogue at University of Jammu.

The disability dialogue focussed on generating a debate and reflecting upon various dimensions of disability rights, policies and issues.

The panel discussion was undertaken to deliberate upon issues confronting the person with disabilities in India with special focus on Jammu and Kashmir, highlighting the opportunities and avenues available for emancipation of personal with disabilities, and outlining strategies for overcoming the challenges and barriers faced by personal disabilities and bringing about transformative change in the society.

The panellist for the discussion were Prof. Kusum Lata Malik, President of the Blind Federation, and a renowned academician and a researcher; Anil Joshi, Former member Board of Directors for National Trust Act, Gol and an accessibility diversity and inclusion expert; Ranjit Kalra member of the J&K Sports Council and Senior faculty at University of Jammu;



Pradeep Dutta, Senior Editor Times Now; and Prof. Sarika Manhas, Coordinator, Disability Initiatives, University of Jammu.

Iqbal Lone, Commissioner, Person with Disabilities, J&K chaired the panel discussion. In his opening remarks he highlighted that the persons with disabilities are an integral part of the society who need our compassion and acceptance. He shared that J&K stands at sixth place in national UDID card enrolment, pointing towards the earnest efforts of the UT administration.

He also emphasized on the need of involving academia and researchers to successfully address the issues confronting the persons with disabilities.

Prof. Kusum Lata Malik in her address highlighted the need for strengthening education system and employment sector for making the persons with disabilities self-reliant. She suggested that inclusive education should be promoted through solemn efforts and discrepancies in employment opportunities should be minimized.

Anil Joshi emphasized on the need of channelizing the energies of persons with disabilities. He pointed that in the modern times is it essential that technology is utilized and modified to ensure inclusion. He also noted that the non-disabled should interact with the disabled to understand their challenges and

issues, and also need to collaborate to find solutions for these challenges.

Ranjit Kalra shared that the Sports Policy of J&K has inputs and special provisions for disabled sports persons. He highlighted the recent achievements of Blind cricket team, wheelchair bound basketball players, and disabled archers to point that bodily limitations can be conquered successfully through personal perseverance, strong support network, and sustained training.

Pardeep Dutta underlined the need of breaking off the 'Victim mentality'. He focussed on developing feeling of humanism - which appreciates all without any prejudice. He suggested that sensitiza-

tion workshops should be carried out for both bureaucracy and media, and exhorted upon the need of collective effort towards the cause of inclusion.

Prof. Sarika Manhas, Convener of the panel discussion in her concluding remarks mentioned that all stakeholder- persons with disabilities, NGOs, media, academia, students and volunteers need to participate and generate a disability discourse that successfully addresses the issue of inclusivity. She also pointed that inclusion is not a concept but rather a way of life that all of us need to imbibe.

Prominent among others who participated in the disability dialogue were Umesh Sharma (Disabled Care), Dr. Piyali Arora (Associate Prof. GDC Udhampur) Kamal Nain Bhan (Association of Aphasics and Deaf), Ritika (Beloved Grace), Shria Abrol (RCI Counsellor), Balkis Razia (Occupational Therapist), along with faculty, research scholars and students of University of Jammu and University of Kashmir. Officers from the Office of Commissioner Persons with Disabilities J & K, Relief and Rehabilitation Department also graced the occasion with their presence.

# Dr. Farooq inaugurates Gulah Mohammad Jan Memorial T-20 Tournament in Poonch



## Top News Report

POONCH Dec 30: In a significant move to promote a healthy lifestyle and identify young talents in sports, the Gulah Mohammad Jan Memorial T-20 Tournament was launched in Poonch, an event that witnessed the participation of over 32 youth teams.

The prestigious tournament was officially declared open by Dr. Farooq Abdullah, former Chief Minister and Member of Parliament, at the Sports Stadium Poonch over 32 teams of youth signed up to take part in the event.

Organized by a dedicated team led by Raiz Madni, Shoaib Mughal, Asgar Ali, Imran Shah,

and others, the tournament aimed to provide a platform for the youth to showcase their talents and engage in physical activities promoting health and wellness.

The inauguration ceremony was graced by several notable personalities, including Jahangir Hussain Mir, former MLC, and Ajaz Jan, former MLA, who addressed the gathering, emphasizing the importance of sports in the development of young individuals.

Among the prominent attendees were Bhaghusain Rathoor, Peer Nissar Shah, Peer Khurshid Shah, Sheikh Afzal, Mashooq Khan, Bashir Naik, Gulam Hussain Bhatti, Raju Thakur, Narinder Singh Talwar,

Naveen Singh, Prvinder Singh, Abdul Razak, Rahim Daat, Javid Lone, Mukhtar Rathoor, Matiul Rehman, Sonu Singh, and Dr. Ravinder Singh, along with others who showed their support for this initiative.

The Gulah Mohammad Jan Memorial T-20 Tournament is more than just a sports event; it is a testament to the commitment of the Poonch community towards nurturing and recognizing the potential of its youth. Through this tournament, the organizers and supporters aim to inspire a generation to adopt healthier lifestyles and bring to light the hidden sports talents among the young populace.

# Inclusivity workshop organized for NSS volunteers and Students



## Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 30: The Office of the Programme coordinator, NSS and Coordinator Disability Initiatives, University of Jammu in collaboration with the Govt College for Women, Parade Jammu organised one day workshop on Inclusivity for the students and NSS volunteers. The workshop was held today at GCW, Parade, where Prof Kusumlata Malik, President National Federation for Blind, India and Sh. Anil Joshi, Former member National Trust Act Gol, Accessibility and Inclusivity Professional were the invited resource persons. In their session both the resource persons highlighted the need to understand and appreciate the contours of human diversity. Prof. Malik gave instances where being disabled in considered primary part of a person's identity, undermining the other potentials of the individual. She stressed on the need of looking beyond the limitations of those with disabilities. Sh. Joshi shared his exemplary journey as a parent to a daughter who despite her Down syndrome has become fully independent and competent. He further asked the volunteers to reach out to the parents

of children with disabilities and share with them the need of early identification and intervention.

Dr. Hema Gandotra, Programme Coordinator, NSS talked about the importance of the workshop and underlined the need for fostering an inclusive environment in a world where diversity is celebrated. She further stressed that through these kinds of workshops volunteers will gain valuable insights into the significance of embracing differences.

Prof. Sarika Manhas, Coordinator, Disability Initiatives while addressing the volunteers focused on the need for open dialogues and urged upon the participants to share their views and experiences for creating safe and supportive spaces for all. She mentioned that true inclusivity can be attained when the principle of Zero reject is followed. She informed that the University of Jammu is committed towards creating a conducive and friendly environment for persons with disability. She urged volunteers to have develop empathic approach in their lives.

Dr. S.P. Saraswat, Principal, Parade College shared about the various new initiatives

taken for the personality development of the students. He encouraged the students to participate in actively where there are opportunities of self-exploration and self-expression. He also narrated anecdotes from his interaction with people with disabilities, which were inspirational and motivational.

Dr Harmanmeet Kaur, Co-convenor, NSS advisory committee, GCW Parade presented the welcome address. She deliberated upon the importance of the concept of inclusivity in the life of the individuals. She stressed on the need for leadership potential among the NSS volunteers. Dr Gurpreet Kour, Programme Officer, NSS thanked the University of Jammu for such an endeavor and also stressed upon the inclusion of Persons with Disability in the journey of Viksit Bharat. Dr. Atiya Sayeed, Programme Officer, NSS presented the formal vote of thanks on the occasion.

Certificates of merit were also distributed to the students who has participated in the fortnight Viksit Bharat Abhiyan organized in the college. More than 100 students and volunteers participated in the day long workshop.

# SMVDU Vice-Chancellor releases Book 'Nano Materials for Sustainable Tribology'



## Top News Report

KATRA, Dec 30: Professor (Dr.) Pragati Kumar, Vice-Chancellor, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU), Katra, launched the book, Nano Materials for Sustainable Tribology published by CRC Press, Taylor and Francis Group, United Kingdom. The book, jointly edited by Dr. Ankush Raina (Assistant Professor, SMVDU), Dr. Mir Irfan UIHaq (Assistant Professor, SMVDU), Dr. Patricia Iglesias Victoria (Associate Professor, Rochester Institute of Technology, New York, USA), Dr. Sudhanraj Jeganmohan (Assistant Professor, Eötvös Loránd University, Hungary), and Prof. Ankush Anand (Professor, SMVDU), delves into the intricate realm of nano materials and their pivotal role in fos-

tering sustainable tribology. It explores innovative solutions for friction, wear, and lubrication challenges across various industrial sectors. The book launch event commenced with a comprehensive overview of its contents, covering a spectrum of nano materials and their diverse applications in ensuring sustainable tribology. The editors, while interacting with the dignitaries present, emphasized the significance of this pioneering publication in advancing scientific knowledge and promoting sustainable practices within tribology. Highlighting the university's commitment to cutting-edge research, the Vice-Chancellor commended the scholarly contributions encapsulated in the book. Prof. Balbir Singh, Dean of Academic Affairs and Prof.

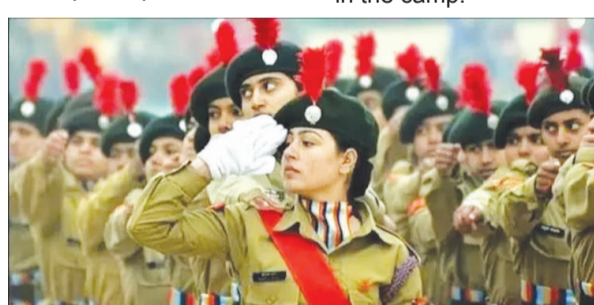
Eswaramoorthy, Head School of Mechanical Engineering, provided insightful perspectives on the book's relevance in contemporary scientific discourse during their address at the event. Shri Ajay Kumar Sharma, Registrar, SMVDU, congratulated the faculty members for their dedication and efforts. The book showcased the university's dedication to pioneering research and academic excellence. The event was graced by Sh. K. N. Rai, Technical Advisor, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, Katra and Mr. Vishavjeet Singh, Deputy CEO, Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board, Katra. Prof. Suparn, Director, DQA, SMVDU, and Mr. Joginder Sharma, PRO, SMVDU, were also present during the function.

# 2,274 cadets to take part in NCC Republic Day Camp 2024, with largest participation of 907 girls

## Top News Report

JAMMU / NEW DELHI, Dec 30: The National Cadet Corps (NCC) Republic Day Camp 2024 commenced at the Cariappa Parade Ground, Delhi Cantt with Sarva Dharma Puja on Saturday. This year, a total of 2,274 cadets from all 28 States and eight Union Territories will participate in the

camp. With 907 girls, this year's camp will see the largest participation of girls cadets.



This diverse participation includes 122 cadets from Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, apart from 171 from the North-Eastern Region, effectively portraying a microcosm of 'Mini India'.

As part of the Youth Exchange Programme, the camp will also witness the participation of cadets and officers from 25 friendly countries - Argentina, Botswana, Bhutan, Brazil, Czech Republic, Fiji, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Laos, Malay-

sia, Maldives, Nepal, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Seychelles, Tajikistan, UK, Venezuela, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, Singapore, Nigeria, Mauritius and Mozambique.

In his address, DG NCC Lt Gen Gurbirpal Singh called upon the cadets to participate wholeheartedly and derive maximum benefits from each activity in the camp. He advised them to display the highest qualities of Character, Integrity, Selfless Service, comradeship and teamwork cutting across the barriers of religion, language, caste in the spirit of nation first.

The Republic Day Camp holds the fundamental aim of instilling a sense of patriotism, discipline, and leadership qualities among the cadets. This annual event serves as a platform to offer cadets valuable opportunities for training, engaging in cultural activities, and participating in social service initiatives, thereby nurturing unity and pride.