

# TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, THURSDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



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**Russia to pursue stronger ties with India amid lack of trust with West**



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## BRIEFLY

### Cop found dead in mysterious circumstances in Rajouri

JAMMU, Dec 19 (Agencies): A policeman was found dead in mysterious conditions near district police lines in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday. Jammu and Kashmir tourism officials said that a cop was found in an unconscious state near DPL Rajouri followed which he was shifted to nearby hospital where doctors declared him brought dead.

The deceased has been identified as Havaladar Nazir Hussain Kohali resident of Kewal Budha.

Meanwhile, police have started an investigation in this regard.

### J&K Police gives 30 days to 10 absconding persons to surrender or face attachment of properties

SRINAGAR, Dec 19 (Agencies): Police in the Sopore area of the Baramulla district in Jammu and Kashmir gave 30 days to 10 absconding persons to surrender or face attachment of their properties.

The cops pasted proclamation orders at the residences of the 10 persons who have been evading law, officials said.

According to the notice, the accused persons have been asked to appear in the court within 30 days. If they fail to comply with the direction, their properties will be attached, it said.

### Kashmir reels under intense cold conditions; Srinagar experiences coldest night

SRINAGAR, Dec 19 (Agencies): Srinagar experienced the coldest night of the season so far as Kashmir reeled under intense cold conditions with the minimum temperature plummeting several degrees below the freezing point, officials said here on Thursday. A thin layer of fog was also witnessed in many parts of Srinagar city which recorded a minimum temperature of minus 6 degrees Celsius, down from minus 4.5 degrees Celsius the previous night, the

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## Kulgam Encounter | Five terrorists killed, two security personnel injured

SRINAGAR, Dec 19 (Agencies): Five Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists, including a self-styled top commander of the outfit, were killed in an encounter with security forces in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, officials said here.

Two security forces personnel sustained injuries in the operation that was launched in the early hours of the day, they said.

Security forces launched a cordon and search operation at Kadder in Behibagh



area of the district on Wednesday night following information about the presence of suspected terrorists there, the officials said.

They said the search

operation turned into an encounter as the terrorists opened fire on security forces, who retaliated.

The slain ultras include a self-styled commander

of the Hizbul Mujahideen Farooq Ahmad Bhat alias Nali, who was allegedly involved in a series of terror related crimes in south Kashmir area.

The other ultras killed in the operation have been identified as Irfan Lone, Adil Hussain, Mushtaq Itoo and Yasir Javaid, all local residents.

Search operations were continuing in the area as police requested local residents not to go close to the encounter site due to safety reasons.

## BJP MPs were pushing me, stopping me from going inside Parliament: Rahul



NEW DELHI, Dec 19 (Agencies): Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Thursday alleged that BJP MPs were pushing him and stopping him and other opposi-

tion MPs from entering Parliament. His remarks came after some BJP MPs claimed that Gandhi pushed an MP, resulting in their leader Pratap Sarangi getting injured.

Sarangi was taken to hospital after getting injured in the melee when the protesting INDIA bloc and the BJP MPs came face to face in front of Makar Dwar in Parliament.

"I was trying to enter Parliament and the BJP MPs were stopping me, pushing me and threatening me," Gandhi told reporters in Parliament premises.

Asked if Congress

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## NDA, INDIA Bloc MPs come face to face at Parliament's Makar Dwar; BJP alleges Rahul pushed Its MP



NEW DELHI, Dec 19 (Agencies): Competing marches by opposition and NDA MPs led to shoving and jostling inside Parliament House premises on Thursday with BJP's Pratap Sarangi getting injured in the melee amid allegations that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi pushed him.

Sarangi was taken to hospital with an injury on his forehead. Both the marches were taken out over the Ambedkar issue, with the opposition accusing Home Minister Amit Shah of insulting the chief architect of

the Constitution.

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha later told reporters that while he was trying to enter the Parliament House, BJP members pushed and "threatened" him.

"It is our right to enter Parliament," he said.

Asked if Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi had also been pushed, Rahul Gandhi said, "It has happened but we don't get bothered with this pushing around."

"This is the entry to Parliament, we have a

right to go inside and the BJP members were stopping us from going inside," he alleged and pointed to the Makar Dwar.

Nishikant Dubey of the BJP alleged that Rahul Gandhi pushed an aged parliamentarian leading to his fall and subsequent injury.

Union Minister Shivraj Chouhan told TV reporters that Sarangi received a few stitches to stop the bleeding.

Both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha have been adjourned following noisy protests by the Opposition seeking an apology from Home Minister Amit Shah for his remarks on B R Ambedkar.

Dressed in blue, a colour associated with B R Ambedkar, INDIA bloc MPs, including the Congress' Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, staged a protest in the Parliament premises demanding

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## Khelo India Games in Gulmarg will be held as per schedule: Div Com Kashmir



HANDWARA, Dec 19 (Agencies): Divisional Commissioner Kashmir, Vijay Kumar Bidhuri Thursday said that administration is committed to ensuring timely and efficient prepara-

tions for the upcoming winter season and major events.

Speaking with reporters in Handwara, Bidhuri, as per the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), said

that Khelo India Games in Gulmarg, are all set to proceed as per schedule. "Last time, delay in snowfall impacted the schedule, but this year we expecting the games to be held as planned," he said.

The Divisional Commissioner also highlighted the importance of promoting tourism in Kupwara through initiatives like the Bungus Festival, which he personally attended last year. "Bungus has

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## Gulmarg Gondola records 1.48 lakh tourists, generates Rs 11.86 cr in 2 months

SRINAGAR, Dec 19 (Agencies): The famous Gondola in Gulmarg has witnessed a significant influx of tourists over the past two months, with a staggering 1,48,357 visitors recorded in November and December so far.

The data accessed by the news agency—Kashmir News Observer (KNO), states that the cable car, one of the top attractions in Jammu and Kashmir,



generated a revenue of Rs 11,86,85,600 during this period (November – December).

In November alone,

the Gondola saw 93,921 tourist arrivals, while the

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Department of Employment

District Employment & Counselling Centre, Model Career Centre, Jammu



## Free Microsoft Digisaksham POWER BI Course

Venue:

District Employment and Counselling Centre, Tophsherkhania, Jammu

Starts at 10:15 AM - 2:00 PM  
From 23rd to 28th Dec 2024

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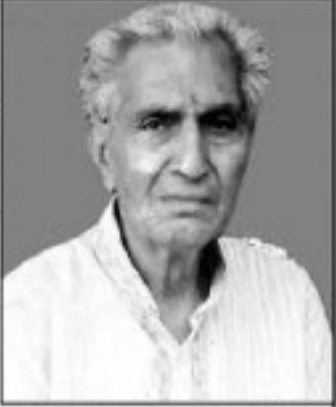
0191-2950379

DIP/J-8299/24

[decc.jammu@gmail.com](mailto:decc.jammu@gmail.com)

**TENTH DAY KRIYA**

With profound grief & sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved Karmyogi Father **Sh Som Nath Saproo**, S/o Late Ram Chand Saproo, Originally Resident of Bul Bul lanker Nawa Kadal Srinagar Kashmir, at present Sec 2 House No 5 Pamposh Colony Janipur Jammu who left us for his heavenly abode on 14th of December.



**SH SOM NATH SAPROO**

**TENTH DAY KRIYA** will take place on Monday 23rd of December at Muthi Ghat at 9 AM.

**GRIEF STRICKEN:-**

Kuldeep Saproo & Kram Saproo (Son & Daughter in law)  
Manmohan Saproo & Anjali Saproo (Son & Daughter in law)  
Sunita Bhat & Rajinder Bhat (Daughter & Son-in-law)  
D Anshu Saproo & Kunal Grover (Grand Daughter & Grand Son-in-law)  
Anshu Saproo & Ekta Pandita Saproo (Grand Son & Grand Daughter in-law)  
Eshan Saproo, (Grand Son)  
D Pawan Bhat Pandita & Akshay Pandita (Grand Daughter & Grand Son-in-law)  
Ishita Saproo & Mansi Bhat -Grand Daughters

And Samast Saproo Parivar,  
7006344670, 9419114022,  
9419144050

**10TH DAY**

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of **Shri SATISH BHASIN (Sweetie)** S/o Late Sh. **INDERJEET BHASIN**, R/o 87-BC Road, Rehari Chungi, Jammu.



**Shri SATISH BHASIN**

**10th Day** will be held on Friday, 20th December 2024 at our Residence at 11AM

**Grief Stricken:**

Smt. Krishna Bhasin (Mother)  
Smt. Ranu Bhasin (Wife)  
\*Sons and Daughter in law\*  
Mr. Abhinav Bhasin & Mrs. Disha Bhasin  
Mr. Pranav Bhasin & Mrs. Bani Bhasin  
\*Daughter & Son in law\*  
Mrs. Bhawana & Mr. Ashish Malhotra

**\*Brothers & Shabi\***

Sh. Sunil Bhasin & Smt. Anju Bhasin  
Sh. Sanjeev Bhasin & Smt. Remmy Bhasin  
\*Sister & Brother in law\*  
Smt. Niema Gandotra & Sh. Ashok Gandotra  
Smt. Madhu Verma & Sh. Rajinder Verma  
\*Grand Childrens\*

**# "BHASIN & GUPTA FAMILY"**

**# "HOT BILLIONS"**

# "C3 INSTITUTE"  
M.B. No. 7006610051, 9419147468,  
9419185570, 9097222274,  
9419338528

**10TH DAY**

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Shri Madan Lal Gupta** (Madan General Store) R/o 121/A, L.No. 7, Tabla Tilo, Jammu on 11th Dec 2024.



**Shri Madan Lal Gupta**

**Tenth Day** will be held on 20th Dec. 2024 (Friday) at Jagat Resort Shakti Nagar from 11:00 am to 12:00 pm.

**GRIEF STRICKEN**

Smt. Neelam Gupta - Wife  
Son & Daughter in law:  
Puneet Gupta & Aarti Gupta  
Daughter & Son In Law:  
Puja & Ranjeev Mahajan

**Brothers**

Krishan Lal Gupta  
Lt. Bansal Lal Gupta  
Sudarshan Kumar Gupta  
Kuldeep Raj Gupta  
Vinay Kumar Gupta

(M/s Madan General Store) Mob.: 9419186616

**10TH DAY**

Our Hearts ache with sadness, and many tears flows. What it meant to loose you, no one will ever know.



**SHRI PASHORI LAL GUPTA**

We hold you close within our hearts, and there you will remain to walk With us throughout our lives until we meet again.

Our Angel, the soul of our family passed away peacefully to merge with eternity on 11 Dec. 2024 at BISHNAH.

**10th Day** will be performed at Green view palace (Bishnah, Kunjwani Road) on 20 Dec, 2024 from 12:00 noon to 1:00 pm.

**GRIEF STRICKEN:-**

Vinay Gupta - Wife  
Sons & Daughters-in-law  
Varinder & Khushbu Gupta  
Ajay Gupta & Sanika Gupta  
Kritika Gupta, Shivam Gupta - Grand Children  
HOUSE NO: 64, WARD NO: 04, NEAR HDFC BANK, BISHNAH, JAMMU  
9419137620, 9797654824, 9906031513

RETD. J.E  
S/o Babu Ram Gupta (Deoli wal  
2 September, 1951 till eternity

**OBITUARY**

With profound grief & sorrow we are sad to inform the sudden and untimely demise of my father **Sh. Kuldeep Ganjoo** resident of Plot No 334-C Rajiv Nagar, Begampur Delhi on 13/12/2024.



**SH. KULDEEP GANJOO**

**TENTH DAY** will be performed on 22/12/2024.

**GRIEF STRICKEN:**

Smt. Lalita Shori (Mother)  
Smt. Madhu Ganjoo (Wife)  
Anoop Ganjoo (Son)  
Smt. & Sh. Ashok Ganjoo (Brother)  
Smt. & Sh. Ravi Bhat  
Smt. & Sh. P N Pandita  
Smt. & Sh. Rohit Sehgal  
MOBILE: 7210009295, 9818859970

**FIFTH DAY**

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Jiwan Jandial S/o Sh. Shambu Nath Jandial** R/o W.No. 7, Near Pine Villa Guest House, Udhampur who left for heavenly abode on 17th December, 2024.



**Sh. Jiwan Jandial**

The **Fifth Day** will be held on 20th December 2024, Friday from 10.00 am to 11.00 am at Mahajan Hall, Shalimar Road, Jammu.

**Grief Stricken**

Smt. Simmi & Sh. Surinder Kumar Gupta  
Smt. Anu & Sh. Romesh Kumar Gupta  
Smt. Sunita & Sh. Rakesh Kumar Gupta  
Ph. No: 9419113859, 9419146948, 9469231050

**TENTH DAY / KRIYA**

With profound grief and sorrow we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved mother **Smt. Kanta Devi** W/o Late Sh. Om Parkash Baria R/o W.No 8 H.No 153 near ISKCON Temple Dhar Road Udhampur.



**SMT. KANTA DEVI**

**Tenth Day Mourning Assembly** will be held on Tuesday 17th Dec. at Jagriti Old Age Home Billan Bawli Road Udhampur upto 12 noon.

**Kriya** will be held on Friday 20th Dec. at Devika Ghat Udhampur.

**GRIEF STRICKEN**

Sons & Daughter-in-laws  
Sh. Deepak Kumar Baria & Smt. Seema Gupta  
Sh. Sanjay Kumar Baria & Smt. Shally Gupta  
Sh. Pankaj Gupta & Smt. Rozy Gupta  
Daughter & Son-in-law  
Smt. Ruchi Gupta & Sh. Vipin Gupta  
Mob.: 7006179564, 9419175012, 9419214896

**10TH DAY KRIYA**

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of **Smt Dhanwati Raina** W/o Sh. Sri Kanth Raina original resident of Razzdan Mohalla Handwara Kashmir at Present 3/50 Pandoka colony Paloura Jammu.



**Smt Dhanwati Raina**

**10TH DAY KRIYA** will be performed on 25-12-2024 (Wednesday) at Mata Bhadrakali Asthapan Phallian Mandal Jathwal. Subsequent Assembly will be held at our residence at 12.00 Noon.

**GRIEF STRICKEN**

Sh. Sri Kanth Raina - Husband  
Smt Rani Raina - Devrani  
Smt Kishni and Mohan Lal Raina -Devrani & Devar  
Smt Lalita -Devrani  
Sh. Janki Nath Pandita & Smt Shanta Ji  
Sh. Kanya Lal Pandita & Smt Shieela Ji  
Sh. Choni Lal and Smt Vijay Ji  
Smt Nimi Raina & Sh. Tej Krishna Raina -Daughter in law & Son  
Smt Sarfa Raina & Sh. Behari Lal Raina -Daughter in law & Son  
Smt Pinky Raina & Sh. Ravinder Raina -Daughter in law & Son  
Smt Renu Raina & Sh. Sanjay Raina -Daughter in law & Son  
Smt Asha Hastu and Sh. Shuban Krishan Hastu- Daughter & Son in Law  
Smt Rajni Chatta & Sh. Vinod Chatta -Daughter & Son in Law  
Smt & Sh. Moti Lal Raina -Cousin  
Smt & Sh. Hari Krishan Raina -Cousin  
Grand Children's and Smast Raina Parivar  
9419193383, 9419116443, 9419280062, 9419117970

**BHOG & ANTIM ARDAS**

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sdn. Nanak Kaur**, W/o S. Sadhu Singh Bali, R/o Sector 7, Lane No. 6, Guru Nanak Nagar, Jammu, who left for heavenly abode on 12-12-2024.



**Sdn. Nanak Kaur**

Programme  
**Arambh Sri Akhand Path Sahib:** 19-12-2024 (Thursday) at 9:30 AM at our residence  
**Bhog of Sri Akhand Path Sahib:** 21-12-2024 (Saturday) at 9:30 AM at our residence

**Shehad Kirtan & Antim Ardas:** at Gudwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Guru Nanak Nagar, Jammu, from 10:30 AM to 12:00 PM

**GRIEF STRICKEN**

S. Sadhu Singh Bali (Husband)  
Daughter-in-law & Son  
Sdn. Armeet Kaur & S. Jagjeet Singh (Hockey Coach)  
Daughters & Sons-in-law  
Sdn. Bhopinder Kaur & S. Satnam Singh Chunnri  
Sdn. Davinder Kaur & S. Mohinder Singh Wazir  
Sdn. Jaspreet Kaur & S. Jagdeep Singh Raina  
Brothers  
Late S. Gurchaman Singh Kala (New Plot)  
S. Gurbux Singh Kala (New Plot)  
Father-in-law & Mother-in-law  
Late S. Amar Singh Bali and Late Sdn. Jaswant Kaur (Nardani Wale)  
Mobile No.: 941978924

**OBITUARY/ 10TH DAY KRIYA**

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Smt. Phoola Koul** W/o Late Sh. Diljeet Koul, originally from Akura (Mattan) / H.No. 251, Sector F, Sainik Colony Jammu at Wagoli Pune on 12-12-2024.



**SMT. PHOOLA KOUL**

The **10th Day Kriya** will be performed at Wagoli Pune on 20th December 2024.

**GRIEF STRICKEN:-**

Sister-in-law & Brother-in-law  
Subashni & Sunil Koul-9682190881  
Daughters & Son-in-laws  
Ashwin & Anu Koul- 9923184220  
Raja & Mannu Koul- 9561534661  
SAMAST PARIWAR  
(PANDITA'S, BHAT'S & BAMEZAI'S)

**TENTH DAY/KRIYA**

With profound grief and sorrow, we mourn the sad demise of our beloved mother **Smt Kamla Devi** (W/o Sh Ram Chand Manhas) R/o Preyan, Dhar Road-Jaganoo Morh, Udhampur.



**Smt Kamla Devi**

The **Tenth Day** will be performed on 20th of December 2024 (Friday) at our residence at 9:30 am to 11:30 am and **Kriya (13th Day)** will be performed on 23rd December 2024 at 8:30 am to 4:30 pm at our residence.

**Grief Stricken:**

Sh Ram Chand Manhas - (Husband)  
Sh Vijay & Smt Meena Manhas - (Son & D-in-law)  
Sh Mool Raj & Smt Sonia Manhas - (Son & D-in-law)  
Smt Geeta & Sh Subash Kotwal - (Daughter & S-in-law)  
Smt Usha & Sh Asutosh Kotwal - (Daughter & S-in-law)  
Smt Shashi Kotwal (Daughter)  
Smt Rachana & Sh Gajinder Kotwal - (Daughter & S-in-law)  
(Mob Nos. 9622992200, 9070892403, 9419955918)

**TENTH DAY/ KRIYA**

"Those who love don't go away, they walk beside us every day."  
The Tenth Day of our beloved father **Sh. Mohan Lal Gupta**, (Gupta Furniture House Wale) S/o Lt. Sh. Anant Ram Vaid, will be performed at 12 noon on 20th December, 2024 at K.D.N Palace, near Women College, Udhampur.



**Sh. Mohan Lal Gupta,**

**Kriya** will take place at 10 AM onwards on 23rd December, 2024 (Monday) at Devika Ghat, Udhampur.

**REGARDS:**

Daughters-in-law & Sons  
Pooja & Davinder Gupta (Dimple)  
Anuradha & Rakesh Kumar Gupta  
Soeika & Raman Kumar Gupta  
Jyoti & Sanjeev Gupta  
Daughter & Son-in-law  
Anjana & Manoj Gupta (Ramnagar wale)  
Smt. Geeta Devi (Sister)  
Grand Children : Sushant & Chitwan Gupta  
Danish, Ridham, Sonaksh, Akshat, Rudra ksh.Kanev,  
Dr. Astha, Dhriti, Rudrakshi  
GUPTA FURNITURE HOUSE,  
VAID MEDICATE,  
VAID MEDICAL HALL,  
GUPTA SCOOPING PARLOUR  
GUPTA SALES CORPORATION, UDHAMPUR  
9419162965, 9419158934, 9419162534, 9419161022

**10TH DAY KRIYA**

With profound grief & sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved father **Sh Swami Raj Bhagat** S/o Lt. Sh. Hari Chander Bhagat (Retd. Javelin Education Officer) H/o Judge Chhota, Teh. Udhocrova Distt. Doda.



**Sh Swami Raj Bhagat**

**10th Day Kriya** will be held at Jaiga Chindri Ghat Srinagar on 21-12-2024 (Saturday) at 10:30 AM.  
Grief Stricken  
Smt Shiv Daa -Wife  
Smt Shweta Daa -Sister  
Sons & Daughter-in-laws  
Sh Satish Kumar & Smt Neelam Bhagat  
Sh Ravinder Kumar & Smt Sarojini Kumar  
Nephews & Nieces-in-law  
Sh Om Prakash Bhagat & Smt Shaktuntika Devi  
Sh Ved Prakash & Uttoma Devi  
Sh Rima Kumar & Smt Naira Bhagat  
Sh Ravi Kumar & Smt Neetu Nayal  
Sh Sanjay Kumar & Smt Usha Devi  
Daughters & Son-in-laws  
Smt. Grew Devi & Sh. Yash Pal Bhagat  
Smt. Ravi Devi & Sh. Rajinder Kumar

**TENTH DAY KRIYA**

With profound grief and sorrow, it is to inform that **Smt. Rattan Rani Mattoo** W/o Late. Sh. Niranjan Nath Mattoo R/o H.No. 21 Main Road Jowahar Nagar Srinagar Kashmir (At present) H.No. 38 Lane 24 Swaraj Vihar Jammu proceeded to heavenly abode on 11.12.2024.



**Smt. Rattan Rani Mattoo**

The **TENTH DAY KRIYA** will be performed at Akhnoor Ghat on 20.12.2024 (Friday). The **ASSEMBLY** will be held at our residence (Swarn Vihar) at 12:00 Noon.

**IN GRIEF**

(Son & Daughter in law)  
Ravinder Mattoo & Usha Mattoo  
(Son-in law and Daughter)  
Lt. Sh. Nareish Kumar Hoopa and Usha Hoopa  
(Son in law & Daughter)  
Sh. Ashok Gupta & Veena Gupta  
MOB: 9796050738, 9797176837, 9717936650

**TENTH DAY, KRIYA & UTHALA**

With profound grief and sorrow we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved mother, **Smt. Surinderi Thappa**, W/o Lt. Sh. Ved Parkash Thappa, R/o 261/A, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. **TENTH DAY** will be performed on 20 December, 2024 (Friday) from 11 AM to 12 PM, at our residence.



**SMT. SURINDERI THAPPA**

**KRIYA** will be performed on 21 December, 2024 (Saturday) at 12 noon at our residence. **UTHALA** will be performed on 21 December, 2024 (Saturday) from 4 PM to 5 PM at Shiv Mandir Near Govt. Field, Gandhi Nagar

**GRIEF STRICKEN**

Sons & Daughters-in-Law  
Sanjay Thappa and Ritu Thappa  
Ajay Thappa and Seema Thappa  
Brothers & Sisters-in-Law  
Sh. MM Magotra and Smt. Suman Magotra  
Sh. RP Magotra & Smt. Rakesh Magotra  
Sister & Brother-in-Law  
Smt. Rama Sharma & Sh. YL Sharma  
Sister-in-Law & Brother-in-Law  
Smt. Kanta Goswami w/o Lt. Sh. Madan Gopal Goswami  
Grand Sons and Grand Daughters  
Samrath Thappa, Ashmita Thappa, Suryanshi Thappa, Advith Thappa  
Mobile No: 9419185069, 7051363930

**TENTH DAY**

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad and untimely demise of **Sh. Ram Kumar Sharma** S/o Sh. Chachu Ram on 14-12-24.



**SH. RAM KUMAR SHARMA**

**TENTH DAY** will be performed on 23-12-24 at R/o Seri Panditian.

**GRIEF STRICKEN:**

Asha Devi (Wife)  
Komal Kemi (Daughter)  
Akshay Sharma (Son)  
Akhil Sharma (Son)  
MOBILE NO: 8493838801

**10TH DAY**

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved **Smt. Kanta Devi (Kiran)** W/o Sanjeev Kumar (Survey of India), who left us for her heavenly abode on 12/12/2024. The **10th Day** will be performed on 20/12/2024 (Friday) at Aap Shambu Mandir, Upper Roop Nagar, Jammu, at 12:00 Noon.



**Smt. Kanta Devi (Kiran)**

**GRIEF-STRICKEN:**

Father-in-law & Mother-in-law  
Sh. Ravi Krishan Shastri & Smt. Late Nirmala Devi  
Son & Daughter:  
Mr. Antarksh Sharma  
Miss. Suryanshi Sharma  
Brothers-in-law & Sisters-in-law:  
Sh. Rajeev Sharma & Smt. Bindu Sharma (Education)  
Sh. Pawan Sharma & Smt. Veera Devi (Jammu University/Education)  
Sh. Anil Sharma & Smt. Neeta Sharma (Education)  
Brother & Sister-in-law  
Sh. Sham Lal & Vandana Sharma  
Sh. Kuldeep & Jyoti Sharma  
(Shanker Hotel/ Market Katra)  
Nephews & Nieces:  
Shivni Sharma, Rudhar Sharma, Shiny Sharma, Shravan Sharma, Ashrey Sharma

**UTHALA**

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Babu Ram Gupta** R/o House No. 102 Chand Nagar Vnaik Bazar Jammu.



**SH. BABU RAM GUPTA**

**UTHALA** will be performed on 20/12/2024 (Friday) at Chand Nagar GURUDWARA Jammu

**Timings:**

3:00 PM to 04:00 PM  
**GRIEF STRICKEN:**  
Late Smt Agya Wanti (Wife)  
(Son and Daughter in law)  
Late Sh Tarsem Lal Gupta & Late Smt Rani Gupta  
Sh Puran Chand Gupta and Smt Sudha Gupta (Son and Daughter in law)  
Sh Prem Gupta and Smt Rajni Gupta (Son and Daughter in law)  
Sh Sanjeev Gupta and Smt Archana Gupta (Son and Daughter in law)  
Akshay Gupta and Sakshi Soni (Grand Son and Grand Daughter in law)  
Kapil Gupta and Kannav Gupta (Grand sons)  
CONTACT NUMBER: 9797421224, 9622138308, 9796411935

**FIFTH DAY**

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Vijay Kumar Gupta** S/o Lt. Sh. Behari Lal Gupta R/o 5 A/B, Gandhi Nagar who left for his heavenly abode on 16-12-2024.



**Sh. Vijay Kumar Gupta**

The **Fifth Day** will be held on 20-12-2024 (Friday) from 11.00 am to 12.00 Noon at Kotli Bhawan Janjghar, adjoining Hari Mandir, Rehari Colony, Jammu.

**Grief Stricken**

Bhabhis & Brother-in-Laws  
Smt. Neelam Gupta & Sh. Prem Sagar Gupta  
Smt. Rekha Gupta & Sh. Vidhya Sagar Gupta  
Smt. Parveen Gupta & Sh. Jugal Kishore Gupta  
Smt. Richa Gupta & Sh. Ravi Kumar Gupta  
Mob. No.: 8803250545, 8492920677

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## Shiv Sena demands to implement free recruitment exams policy

Claims of youth empowerment are meaningless without removing financial barriers: Sahni

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu and Kashmir unit has demanded to make government job recruitment exams free or to implement a 'one time' fee collection system.

In a press conference held on Thursday at the party's state cen-

### SS support demands of JU students for relaxation in age limit

#### Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: Shiv Sena (UBT) Jammu and Kashmir unit chief Manish Sahni has announced support to the demand to announce vacancies in jobs of local languages like Dogri, Hindi, Punjabi in Jammu University. Along with this, he has strongly condemned the police action on the recent demonstration of students in Jammu.



tral office, state chief Manish Sahni said that it is meaningless to talk about youth empowerment without removing financial barriers for unemployed youth. Recruitment exam fee is proving to be a big obstacle for the future of poor and unemployed youth.

Along with this, a demand has been made to give five years relaxation in age to the candidates of Jammu and Kashmir Police SI posts. Sahni said that the examination has been canceled/postponed repeatedly since 2019 due to corruption and paper leak. He said that age relaxation is a legitimate demand of the candidates which should be approved immediately.

He said that in neighboring countries Nepal and Bangladesh, competitive exams are free. On the other hand, there is a 'one time' fee system in states like Rajasthan, Assam.

Whereas in Jammu and Kashmir, under JKSSB, candidates are charged an application fee of Rs 700/600 for each exam and under JKPSC, an application fee of Rs 1200/700 is charged. Sahni said that during the recent police constable recruitment in Jammu and Kashmir, more than 5.4 lakh people applied for only 4002 posts and a fee of about 39 crores was collected. At the same time, this registration fee is not refunded if the exam is

anceled due to paper leak, rigging or other reasons. Sahni said that the competitive exam being free will prove to be a big relief for the youth living a struggling life and they will be able to focus on the preparation of competitive exams without any financial hindrance. Sahni said that the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir has been in favor of youth empowerment. To implement it at the ground level, the application fee of recruitment examinations should be made free or a 'one time' system should be implemented to provide relief to unemployed youth. On this occasion Vikas Bakshi (Gen Secretary), Meenakshi Chhibber (President Mehila Wing), Sanjeev Kohli (Sr. Vice President), Raj Singh (President Kang-har wing) were present.

He pointed out that individuals holding significant positions in government departments, earning handsome salaries, are being assigned duties at Aakashwani. Meanwhile, unemployed and deserving youth are being sidelined, deprived of opportunities that could transform their lives. Highlighting the issue, Yaseen stated that if government employees are rendering their services to Aakashwani, they should not receive any additional remuneration. "It is unjust and demor-

## Dual benefits for Govt employees at Aakashwani Jammu spark outrage

Aakashwani Jammu under scrutiny for hiring practices, Yaseen speaks out

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: Renowned cultural activist and National Fellowship & Scholarship holder Mohd. Yaseen has voiced serious concerns about questionable employment practices at Aakashwani Jammu.

He pointed out that individuals holding significant positions in government departments, earning handsome salaries, are being assigned duties at Aakashwani. Meanwhile, unemployed and deserving youth are being sidelined, deprived of opportunities that could transform their lives. Highlighting the issue, Yaseen stated that if government employees are rendering their services to Aakashwani, they should not receive any additional remuneration. "It is unjust and demor-

alizing for unemployed individuals when those already well-settled in government jobs are enjoying dual benefits. This not only perpetuates inequality but also places an unnecessary financial burden on the system," he remarked. Yaseen also brought attention to the role of Gulshan Raina, News Head at Aakashwani Jammu, in the matter. According to Yaseen, Raina encouraged him to file an RTI to expose the irregularities in employment practices and ensure transparency. This suggestion underscores the gravity of the issue and reflects internal concerns about fairness in the institution's operations.

Calling for action, Yaseen urged Aakashwani Jammu to embrace its responsibility of providing opportunities to unemployed youth and adopt transparent practices in duty allocation. "Institutions

like Aakashwani should be nurturing grounds for fresh talent, not avenues for already privileged individuals to benefit further," he asserted.

The matter has struck a chord with cultural activists and unemployed individuals in the region, sparking widespread calls for immediate reform. Yaseen appealed to Prasar Bharati and the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting to intervene and ensure that employment opportunities are prioritized for those genuinely in need.

"This issue is not just about employment but also about fairness, justice, and the public's trust in our institutions. The system must prioritize unemployed youth over those already holding lucrative government positions," Yaseen added, emphasizing the need for urgent corrective measures.

## Health Camp to provide hearing aids with German Technology at 50% discount in Jammu

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: A unique health camp offering advanced hearing aids based on German technology at a 50% discount will be held on 23rd and 24th December at Shri Gorkha Mandir, Nanak Nagar, Sector-4, Jammu.

The initiative aims to benefit individuals of all age groups, including children and the elderly, struggling with hearing difficulties.

This camp provides a rare opportunity to access high-quality hearing aids at significantly reduced prices, with discounted rates set at Rs 3500, Rs 5000,

Rs 6000, Rs 11000, and Rs 13000. These state-of-the-art devices, known for their durability and efficiency, come with a one-year guarantee, ensuring long-term value for users.

To ensure expert care, the camp will feature services from Dr. Laxmikant Malik, a well-known audiologist from Kolkata with years of experience in addressing hearing-related issues. Dr. Malik will be available from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM on both days to provide personalized consultations, assist with device fittings, and address any queries attendees may have.

The health camp is being organized by

Advocate Harish Kaila, President of Nami Dogri Sanstha (Regd.), a prominent organization dedicated to cultural and social welfare in Jammu. Through this initiative, the organization seeks to make cutting-edge hearing solutions accessible and affordable for the people of the region.

The organizers have appealed to the citizens of Jammu to take full advantage of this opportunity and encourage those in need to attend. Hearing loss is a prevalent issue, and this camp aims to address it effectively by providing technologically advanced solutions at affordable rates.

## NSF pays tributes to Ram Prasad Bismil, Ashfaqulla Khan

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: National Secular Forum (NSF) University Unit paid tributes to Saheed Ram Prasad Bismil and Saheed Ashfaqulla Khan on their 97th Death Anniversary at University Campus.

Amid slogans "Ram Prasad Bismil Zindabad" "Saheed Ashfaqulla Khan Zindabad" "Inqilaab Zindabad" "Bharat Mata ki jai" and garlanded the portraits of the son of soil.

Ankush Abrol Provincial Joint Secretary JKNC was the Chief Guest and Dr. Vikas Sharma Coordinator Jammu District and Zonal Secretary, JKNC presided over the function. Dr. Sukhdev Singh State President NSF and TR Sharma (Retd KAS) was the Guest of Honour.

Sh Ankush Abrol appreciated the initiative taken by the NSF member to remember the death anniversary of Ram Prasad Bismil and Ashfaqulla Khan.

Sharma said that the real tributes to the martyrs would be



eradicating evils prevailing in the society like drug addiction, female foeticide and dowry. He exhorted the youth to refrain from drugs and intoxicants.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Vikas Sharma threw light on the life and supreme sacrifices of Ram Prasad Bismil and Ashfaqulla Khan.

He also said that Ashfaqulla Khan was put to death by hanging on 19th December, 1927, at Faizabad jail.

This revolutionary man

became a martyr and a legend among his people due to his love for the motherland, his clear thinking and loyalty.

TR Sharma addressing on this occasion said that Many freedom fighters laid down their life for the sake of the independence of this country.

One of the youngest people to walk to the gallows fighting for India's independence was Ram Prasad Bismil.

Dr. Sukhdev Singh State President NSF said that Ram

Prasad Bismil was an Indian poet, writer, revolutionary and an Indian freedom fighter who participated in the Mainpuri Conspiracy of 1918, and the Kakori Conspiracy of 1925, and fought against British Raj.

Bismil was hanged on 19 December 1927 by the British for his revolutionary activities.

Speaking on the occasion, Vikshay Vashist state Secretary NSF said that J&K suffered immensely due to misadventures of Centre Govt.

Gourav Partap Singh University Unit President delivered the welcome address; Roshan Sharma President Jammu District was delivering the vote of thanks.

Among those who spoke on the occasion included, Roshan Sharma, Abhishek Uppal, Innam Nasser, Ashwani Sharma, Farhan Khan, Ajay Singh, Arun Sharma, Aditya Sharma, Ashaf Ahmed, and others.

## JMC receives 4,570 street lights through EESL

Initiative addresses safety, illumination issues of City, says JMC Commissioner

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: Reiterating the commitment of the Jammu Municipal Corporation for providing better civic amenities to the people living in the Municipal limit, Commissioner, Jammu Municipal Corporation Dr. Devansh Yadav said that JMC has initiated various initiatives in this regard.

During inspection at the Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) store, the Commissioner highlighted that JMC is actively working on enhancing the city's street-lighting infrastructure, a vital aspect of urban development.

As part of this ongoing initiative, Dr. Yadav said that JMC has successfully received 4,570 streetlights through the Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL). He emphasized that this significant addition to the city's light-



ing infrastructure will improve both the safety and illumination across Jammu.

To expedite the installation and repair of these lights, the Commissioner said that EESL has enhanced its workforce and operational teams, ensuring that the process moves forward swiftly and efficiently.

Speaking about the reactivation of the EESL initiative, the Commissioner said that people could approach JMC with any concerns or issues related to street lighting. He assured the public that JMC would strive to resolve these

issues in a time-bound manner, underlining the importance of efficient service delivery.

Instructing the concerned for ensuring shifting of phase wire system to all remaining unconnected streetlights, the Commissioner said that the step is aimed at guaranteeing seamless functionality of the lights, further ensuring consistent lighting throughout the city, saying that the move would go a long way in enhancing the safety for residents and to improve the overall urban environment, the Commissioner maintained.

## Over 1000 cameras installed at 62 junctions to monitor traffic violations: CEO SSCL

### Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Dec 19 (Agencies): The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Srinagar Smart City Limited, Dr Owais Ahmad Thursday said that over 1000 cameras have been installed at 62 junctions in Srinagar city to monitor and curb traffic violations.

Speaking to reporters at Integrated Command Control Centre (ICCC) at HMT Srinagar, the CEO SSCL Dr Owais said that with the commissioning of Intelligent Traffic Management System (ITMS) the authorities have installed over 1000 cameras at 62 junctions in Srinagar city. He said the move is aimed to monitor traffic violations and ensure incident free travel for all road users.

"Today we have launched Integrated Command Control Centre (ICCC) at HMT Srinagar. Yesterday over 1000 cameras have been made operational at 62 junctions in Srinagar city to capture traffic violations. The move aims to save lives of all road users including driver and pedestrians," Dr Owais said.

He said the technology has been upgraded now in order to rein over traffic violations. "The cognizance will be taken against those who do not wear seat belt, helmet and use mobile phones while driving, or resort to red light violations. Further speed violations will also be captured in coming times," he said.

Besides ICCC HMT, the ITMS is being monitored from SSP Traffic Office as well, he said.

"Yesterday we lodged 102 challans against violations. It is imperative for people to know the system in place is for their safety, and it is very intelligent as violators can't escape from penalty. Once your number is captured, the challan is being processed to the concerned accordingly," he maintained.

## District Hospital Ramban achieves milestone in surgical excellence



### Top News Report

RAMBAN, Dec 19: The District Hospital Ramban has set a remarkable precedent in healthcare by successfully performing six major surgeries in a single day, under the expert guidance of Dr. Yassar Arafat and Dr. Muzammil. This extraordinary accomplishment, encompassing a range of complex surgical procedures, highlights the hospital's unwavering commitment to delivering exceptional medical care despite limited

resources.

The procedures included four cholecystectomies for gallbladder removal, a critical surgery for patients suffering from gallstones or inflammation, ensuring pain relief and preventing complications. Additionally, an anal fistula surgery (Fistula in Ano) was conducted to address a condition causing significant discomfort, while an open TAR (Transversus Abdominis Release) surgery was performed for abdominal wall reconstruction, improv-

ing patients' quality of life.

The success of these surgeries was supported by the skilled anesthesia team led by Dr. Riyaz Dagloo and Dr. Shahid from GMC Srinagar, ensuring patient safety and comfort throughout. Despite operating with a single operating theater and one surgery day per week, the hospital's surgical department continues to deliver results comparable to leading state medical institutions.

Dr. Yassar Arafat expressed gratitude to the District Administration, the Medical Superintendent of District Hospital Ramban, and the Chief Medical Officer Ramban, OT staff for their steadfast support. This milestone underscores the dedication and expertise of the hospital's surgical and support teams, setting a new benchmark in healthcare delivery for the region.

## EDITORIAL

## PM E-Drive

The PM E-Drive initiative, launched by the Government of India, marks a significant step toward transforming India's transportation sector with a focus on sustainability and clean energy. This initiative is in line with the broader goals of reducing carbon emissions, improving air quality, and driving the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) across the country. With increasing concerns over environmental degradation and the adverse effects of fossil fuel dependency, the PM E-Drive seeks to position electric mobility as a cornerstone of India's green future.

India, one of the largest consumers of oil in the world, has been facing challenges related to rising fuel costs, pollution, and climate change. The transportation sector, a significant contributor to carbon emissions, has long been reliant on conventional internal combustion engine vehicles. However, with the global shift towards clean energy, the Indian government has recognized the urgent need to embrace electric mobility. The PM E-Drive initiative is a response to these challenges, aiming to make India a leader in the EV revolution.

In 2019, India set an ambitious target of achieving 30% electric vehicle penetration by 2030. To achieve this, the government has introduced a range of policies, subsidies, and programs aimed at promoting the adoption of electric vehicles. The PM E-Drive initiative is one such step to accelerate this transition and create a conducive environment for EVs to thrive.

The PM E-Drive aims to achieve multiple objectives in its mission to drive the EV revolution in India:

**Promote Clean and Green Mobility:** One of the primary objectives of PM E-Drive is to reduce India's carbon footprint by promoting the use of electric vehicles. By shifting away from gasoline and diesel-powered vehicles, the initiative aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve air quality in cities, especially in regions facing severe pollution.

**Energy Independence:** By encouraging the use of EVs, India aims to reduce its dependency on imported oil. This will not only contribute to energy security but also lower the country's trade deficit, which is significantly influenced by oil imports.

**Boosting Local Manufacturing and Employment:** The PM E-Drive is expected to create a substantial demand for electric vehicles, which in turn will stimulate local manufacturing. The production of EVs, batteries, and related components is expected to create jobs, promote innovation, and make India a hub for electric mobility manufacturing.

**Infrastructure Development:** The success of electric vehicles depends not just on the vehicles themselves but also on the supporting infrastructure. PM E-Drive is working toward expanding the charging infrastructure across the country, ensuring that EV users have access to convenient and efficient charging stations.

By promoting domestic EV production and reducing the need for imported fossil fuels, the initiative will help reduce the country's reliance on oil imports, leading to savings on foreign exchange.

The PM E-Drive initiative includes several key features that will support the widespread adoption of electric vehicles in India:

The government has introduced a range of incentives to make electric vehicles more affordable. Under the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (FAME) scheme, buyers of electric vehicles are eligible for financial incentives, reducing the upfront cost of EVs. Additionally, subsidies for EV manufacturers and battery production are designed to stimulate domestic production and make EVs more cost-competitive with traditional vehicles.

One of the main challenges for EV adoption in India has been the lack of sufficient charging infrastructure. The PM E-Drive focuses on building a robust network of charging stations across cities and highways, ensuring that users can easily find charging points. Public-private partnerships are encouraged to accelerate the development of these charging facilities.

To address the issue of long charging times, the initiative also promotes the concept of battery swapping. This allows EV users to replace their depleted batteries with fully charged ones at designated stations, reducing downtime and enhancing convenience.

The government is investing in research and development (R&D) to advance EV technology, particularly in areas such as battery technology, energy storage, and vehicle efficiency. Innovations in these fields are expected to reduce the cost of EVs and make them more attractive to consumers.

States are encouraged to implement their own policies to promote EV adoption, including offering additional incentives for EV buyers, reducing road taxes, and facilitating the creation of local charging infrastructure. States like Delhi, Maharashtra, and Gujarat have already introduced state-level EV policies that complement the national efforts under PM E-Drive.

Despite subsidies, the initial cost of electric vehicles remains high compared to conventional vehicles. The government needs to work on reducing the cost of EVs through innovations in battery technology and economies of scale.

While the government is making efforts to expand charging infrastructure, there is still a lack of charging stations, especially in rural and remote areas. More investment is needed to ensure a nationwide network of charging points.

## Simultaneous Polls will Usher Real Democracy

By: Omkar Dattatray

Simultaneous polls has come to the centre stage again thanks to the approval of ONOE proposal by the union cabinet more recently..If anything is more talked about in the political circles ,intelligentsia and the public ,it is the need for simultaneous elections .The subject of ONOE has hogged the limelight and it is the talk of the day .ONOE will soon be a reality . Now the two bills regarding one nation ,one election has been introduced in the Lok Sabha .Besides the union territories amendment bill which seeks to align elections in the UT's of Puducherry ,Delhi and Jammu &Kashmir with the Lok Sabha polls was also introduced .These bills were introduced by the union Law minister Arjun Ram Meghwal and he asserted that these legislations will not tamper the powers enjoyed by the states and UT's .The ONOE bill is the 129th constitutional amendment bill .Former president Ram Nath Kovind said that ONOE will galvanize election process and will lead to economic growth which is badly required in the country .ONOE or simultaneous polls will in fact be a boon for the Indian democracy and the passage of the two bills in this connection will be a triumph of the largest democracy of the country .It will bring in its bag multiple benefits and will usher in real democracy and good work culture .A good proportion of the precious time of the centre ,state and UT governments will be saved and the administrative efficiency and acumen of the government will increase considerably .ONOE will ultimately result in good ,efficient ,transparent and quick governance and it will revolutionize and transform our democracy and democratic governance.

Good governance which is the slogan and catch word of PM Modi will find expression and reflection by switching over to ONOE .After all democracy is for good governance and for people's welfare and both these things will result from ONOE .Considerable time ,energy and money will be saved by adopting the system of ONOE and the money thus saved can be used for economic and societal development of the country .People who are the real sovereigns in a democracy will also feel some relief as they will not have to go for voting every now and then as it is the practice these days in our democracy .Time ,money and energy thus saved can be put to productive use in boosting economy and the administration's precious time will also be saved and put to use in attending to administrative and people oriented functions and above all good governance will accrue from introducing ONOE in the country .Election is the means and not an end in itself in a democracy and the aim and end is the public welfare .People's welfare can be ensured if we switch over to the progressive system of ONOE and this is the foregone conclusion .Work culture ,administrative efficiency will be increased and all this will benefit the people .It has been seen that the voters are tired of participating in elections so often and they yearn for a change in the system and are in favor of simultaneous polls .People/voters will be saved from going to polling booths yearly ,half yearly and so often as they feel tired and need some relief from this tiring process of elections so often .ONOE will also lead to increase in the GDP by 1.5% from 7.23 percent .There are many benefits accruing when ONOE will be a reality in India and it will be ben-

eficial to the rulers as well the ruled and so Modi wanted it to become a reality soon .Modi has the determination ,will power and the grit to bring innovations in the political system and democracy of the country and the bill regarding ONOE is a step in this direction and it will be beneficial to the country as it will give enough time ,energy to the government to attend to the pressing needs ,concerns and problems of the people .Precious ,valuable and scarce money will be saved which can be put to more productive and efficient use ,thus it may result not only in provision of goods and services and efficient governance but will also result in the growth of the economy .Voters will also be saved from visiting the polling booths off and on and so they their precious time will also be saved and the people can apportion their time to more useful activities. The biggest benefit of simultaneous polls is that it is economical and cost effective as enormous money will be automatically be saved which the government coffers will be full of finances and it can be expended to fruitful activities which may result in economic and social development .Cost effectiveness and economical is the dominating merit of simultaneous polls and the money so saved can be put to productive use which will ultimately result in social and economic development .Neither autonomy nor federalism will be impacted by simultaneous polls as the opposition including congress argue and this criticism of the opposition fails when we weigh the merits of ONOE .One fails to understand as to how is the ONOE dictatorial .The opposition parties should not oppose the ONOE bill for the sake of opposition and instead see the merits of these bills and coop-

erate with the treasury benches so that these bills will be passed .As of now there were 269 MP's in favor of the bills introduced and they voted in favor of these bills and at the same time 198 MP's opposed these bills and so voted against the bills regarding ONOE .The opposition parties should see the reason and writing on the wall and in near future vote in favor of this important legislation .One of the merits of simultaneous polls is that it will lead to national unity and integration and it is also a characteristic benefit which will accrue from implementing one nation ,one election .Government has referred the two bills regarding ONOE to the select committee of the parliamentarians for detailed deliberation ,debate and discussion on the advice of PM Modi and HM Amit Shah as both wanted a detailed deliberations on ONOE legislations before passing these .BJP's national general secretary Tarun Chugh has said that ONOE bill will usher new era in celebration of constitution .He also said it is an epoch making step by the prime minister Narendra Modi .To conclude it can be said that the merits of ONOE far more weight its limitations .It can be said that in Modi's scheme of things nothing is impossible as it is rightly said that Modi Hai Tu Mumkin Hai.May simultaneous polls shine our democracy and give it more strength so that it will flourish and spread its fragrance all around.

*(The author is a columnist, social and KP activist)*

## Why reading and writing matter more in the age of Artificial intelligence

By: Vijay Garg

As Artificial intelligence grows increasingly sophisticated, our commitment to these skills will determine whether we remain active participants in innovation—or passive consumers

In an era increasingly defined by technological innovation, reading and writing—cornerstones of human intellect—are facing a profound transformation. While artificial intelligence bots like OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google Bard redefine the boundaries of information generation, the necessity of cultivating human literacy has never been more crucial. The transition from Neanderthals to modern human involved significant cognitive and cultural advancements, but Neanderthals themselves did not read or write. Reading and writing developed after modern humans became the dominant hominin species. These are not merely communication tools but exercises that keep our cognitive faculties sharp and resilient.

When we read, our brains decode symbols, conjuring vivid images, emotions, and concepts. This intricate process activates the left temporal cortex, which is responsible for language processing, and strengthens neural connectivity. Studies underscore that reading enhances memory, concentration, and analytical thinking. Engaging with diverse genres deepens empathy and broadens perspectives, fostering a nuanced understanding of the world.

Writing, on the other hand, is an intellectual partner to reading. Crafting words—whether in a journal, essay, or story—requires us to organize thoughts, synthesise ideas, and express them clearly. This process activates the prefrontal cortex, the brain's hub for decision-making and problem-solving. Writing is more than an intellectual task; it is therapeutic. Research shows that expressive writing can alleviate stress, enhance mood, and even bolster the immune system.

The tactile act of writing also strengthens memory, embed-

ding information deeply within our minds. Reading and writing foster neuroplasticity, enabling the brain to adapt and form new connections. They are antidotes to cognitive decline and shields against neurodegenerative diseases like Alzheimer's. Regular engagement with these skills cultivates intellectual independence, creativity, and emotional depth—uniquely human attributes.

Yet, as AI bots revolutionise the way we consume and produce information, there is an alarming decline in human literacy. Tools like Book AI, which transforms any book into a conversational chatbot, exemplify AI's capacity to digest and reproduce complex information effortlessly. AI lacks the intrinsic human qualities of creativity, empathy, and ethical judgment. As AI literacy surges, the stagnation of human literacy risks creating a dangerous imbalance. Over-reliance on AI can diminish critical thinking and communication skills, weakening the very attributes that distinguish humans from machines.

While the fear of displacement is understandable, the answer lies in shifting our perspective. AI is not an adversary but a powerful partner that can amplify human capabilities and drive innovation. Individuals can leverage their unique strengths to complement AI capabilities by prioritising the development of reading and writing skills. In an environment controlled by artificial intelligence, these abilities are necessary to navigate complicated concepts, understandably articulate them, and affirm human importance. The development of artificial intelligence highlights the significance of human expertise rather than diminishing it. By committing to studying throughout our lives, we can ensure that technology will not replace our humanity but rather improve it.

*(Vijay Garg Retired Principal Educational columnist street kour Chand MHR Malout Punjab)*

## CEC Leh holds meeting on Khelo India Winter Games 2025 preparations

### Top News Report

LEH, Dec 19: The Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson, convened a meeting with key officials from Khelo India to discuss preparations for the upcoming Khelo India Winter Games 2025.

The meeting was attended by Director ( Khelo India Events) Amar Jyoti, Dr. Stanzin Thakchos, OSD to Secretary Sports, Assistant



Director ( SAI) Ram Kumar G and Consultant (Khelo India, SAI)

Gopal Kandpal, Consultant ( Khelo India, SAI) Mohit Waswani.

The discussions focused on key aspects including venue selec-

tion, equipment requirements, and other logistics necessary for the smooth execution of the event.

Adv. Tashi Gyalson emphasized the immense sports potential in Ladakh and urged the team to focus on maximizing this opportunity.

The collaboration between LAHDC Leh and Khelo India aims to position Ladakh as a prominent venue for winter sports.

## CEC Leh felicitates Air Commodore DS Handa

### Top News Report

LEH, Dec 19: The Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyal-

son, and Nyoma Counsellor, Ishey Spalzung, felicitated Air Commodore DS Handa, Commander of the 21st Air



Force Wing, in his office chamber, in recognition of his successful tenure.

During the meeting, the Commander presented a memento to the CEC Tashi Gyalson as a token of appreciation.

The CEC extended its best wishes to Air Commodore Handa for his future endeavors.

They also discussed several important issues related to the region, focusing on ongoing developments of the local community.

## Army inaugurates Cricket Tournament for Children at Piri



### Top News Report

RAJOURI, Dec 19: The Indian Army on Thursday inaugurated the Inter-School Cricket Tournament at government Higher Secondary School, Piri.

The tournament brought together student-athletes from four school teams representing government schools of Dhar Sakri, Parore Gujran, Piri,

and Rehan, showcasing their cricketing talents and fostering a spirit of camaraderie and healthy competition. The tournament will feature a series of thrilling matches, with teams competing in subsequent rounds.

Students from various age groups displayed remarkable sportsmanship and skill, making the event a memorable experience for partici-

pants, spectators, and coaches alike.

The tournament aimed to create an opportunity for young athletes to hone their cricketing skills, develop teamwork, and build lasting friendships. The high level of talent demonstrated by the players, and the success of events like this, will lead to more such tournaments being regularly conducted in the future.

## Dimple leads protest rally against e-Rickshaws in Jammu

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: Sunil Dimple, Chairman of the Black Auto Union and President of Mission Statehood Jammu Kashmir, led a strong protest rally against the introduction and sale of E-Rickshaws in Jammu. Hundreds of auto drivers and owners participated in the rally, which passed through BC Road, Rehari Chungi, Amphalla, and the Bus Stand area, raising slogans against the Jammu and Kashmir Transport Commissioner and the RTO office. Protesters alleged that the policies of the transport department have pushed the black auto industry, a 50-year-old institution, to the brink of collapse.

During the rally, Dimple demanded an immediate halt to the sale of E-Rickshaws, alleging that they contribute to law and order problems in the city. He accused many E-Rickshaw drivers of being involved



in criminal activities, drug peddling, and stated that a significant number are outsiders and Rohingyas. He further claimed that the government's decision to promote E-Rickshaws is driven by profit, disregarding the negative impact on the livelihoods of existing transporters.

Protesters also highlighted other grievances, including the inability of auto and mator drivers to pay high insurance premiums, token fees, and bank installments due

to reduced passenger flow. Sanjay Sethi, President of the Black Auto Industry, accused the traffic department of failing to regulate E-Rickshaws, which are allegedly operating outside their designated zones. He also criticized the practice of traffic police taking vehicle photos with personal mobile phones and using them to issue heavy e-challans, which he claimed is a form of blackmail.

Dimple warned of an intensified movement, announcing

plans for a larger rally involving over 10,000 transporters, drivers, and vehicle owners to press the government for action. He demanded that the administration immediately address their concerns and reverse policies that are detrimental to the traditional transport industry in Jammu.

The protest was supported by several prominent leaders, including Sanjay Sethi, Narendra Chowdhry, Tilak Raj, Sanjay Kumar, Sourav Kumar, Happy, Rocky Kapoor, Aman Singh, Bitu Kumar, Ashok Sharma, Tarsem Lal, and Sanjeev Kumar. They collectively urged the government to take swift action to protect the livelihoods of thousands of transporters in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Black Auto Union has vowed to continue its fight until their demands are met, holding the administration responsible for any unrest if corrective measures are not taken promptly.

## GDC Thannamandi celebrates 14th Tree Talk Anniversary

### Top News Report

THANNAMANDI, Dec 19: The Department of Botany under the aegis of the IQAC at Government Degree College Thannamandi celebrated 14th anniversary Tree Talk initiated by O.P. Sharma Vidyarthi as part of Viksit Bharat @2047 Abhiyan.

On this occasion an interactive session organized in hybrid mode under the patronage of Prof. (Dr.) Farooq Ahmed, Principal of the college wherein noted environmentalist and Tree Talk crusader, O.P. Sharma Vidyarthi, former Director, Ecology, Environment and Remote Sensing was resource person.

In comprehensive online talk, Vidyarthi explained his long



journey of Tree Talk started on December 19, 2010 under which he organized 1582 Tree talks while transcending to grassroots in almost all parts of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh, rest of the country as well as in Canada and USA.

He asserted that there is urgent need of conservation of local flora like Hardul (Rho-

dodendron) and Himalayan Wild Cherry (Prunus cerasoides) locally called ban Rawari through establishment of nurseries in colleges and schools in Pirpanjal.

Students and youth can play a vital role in carrying forward the traditional knowledge and wisdom, he added.

Prof. Farooq Congratulated

OP Sharma for his outstanding campaign towards educating students and youth in particular and masses in general about the importance of flora and fauna and their conservation. The legendary environmentalist who is often regarded as a living encyclopedia, has devoted his life towards conservation of biodiversity and environment that is an inspiration for all of us, he said.

Earlier, Dr. Ashaq Malik, Head, Department of Botany introduced the audience about the programme and conducted the online/offline proceedings whereas Dr. Showkat Ahmed Dar from the same Department presented the formal vote of thanks.

## Condolence meeting held for former MP Ghulam Hassan Khan



### Top News Report

LEH, Dec 19: A condolence meeting was held at the Conference Hall of the Council Secretariat, LAHDC, Leh, to mourn the sad demise of Ghulam Hassan

Khan, the former Member of Parliament from Ladakh.

The meeting was attended by the Chairman/CEC, LAHDC Leh, Adv. Tashi Gyalson, Executive Councillor Tashi Namgyal Yakzee,

Councillors, and other staff members.

In honor of the late Khan, a two-minute silence was observed as a mark of respect to his contributions to the region.

Ghulam Hassan Khan was a prominent leader and an influential figure in Ladakh's political landscape. As a former Member of Parliament, he played an important role in representing the concerns and aspirations of the people of Ladakh at the national level.

## JKBS felicitates Musician Vicky Kaith in its foundation day commemorative function

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: The Jammu and Kashmir Batwal Sabha marked its 4th Foundation Day with grandeur and enthusiasm.

The function organised in Kaith Music Factory at Bhagwati Nagar, commenced with recitation of Gayatri Mantra and lighting of lamp of integrity and unity.

Speaking on the occasion, the General Secretary R.L. Kaith highlighted the illustrious journey of JKBS since its inception in 2021. He said JKBS always created love, affection, brotherhood and social ties among the community members.

He appreciated the contribution of the pillar of Batwal community, Late



Romesh Lal Motan in eliminating social evils from the society and working for the welfare of the community.

During the celebration, the JKBS members felicitated Vicky Kaith who has excelled in the field of music.

The celebration concluded with a reaffirmation of JKBS' commitment to its core values and objectives, leaving the attendees inspired and proud of the organization's legacy.

## Dr. M.L. Dogra Honored with Vishwa Ratan Samman - 2024

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: Dr. Mohan Lal Dogra, a distinguished figure in the fields of performing arts and education from Jammu and Kashmir, has been awarded the prestigious "Vishwa Ratan Samman - 2024" by the Worthy Wellness Foundation (NGO), recognized by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India.

The award recognizes Dr. Dogra's outstanding contributions as a director and promoter of folk music and dance, setting benchmarks in preserving and popularizing India's rich cultural heritage. His exceptional work includes the production of musical plays, original Dogri songs, and extensive efforts in mentoring and financially supporting hundreds of artists.

Dr. Dogra's illustrious career spans decades, with remarkable contributions through the Directorate of Field Publicity and Song and Drama Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India. His initiatives have highlighted the



traditional culture of Jammu and Kashmir through light and sound performances at major national festivals, including Kumbh Melas, Haridwar, Allahabad, Ladakh Festivals, and Navratri Festivals across India.

Some of his acclaimed theatre productions include Maa Sheran Wali, Raja Mandlik, Kathoti Mein Ganga, Ram Charit Manas, Bhasmasur, Doli, and Rang Dari Deo. He has also pioneered folk theatre workshops for children in collaboration with the J&K Social Welfare Department and produced over 30 dance-drama spectacles address-

ing social issues such as health awareness and drug abuse.

In recognition of his significant contributions, Dr. Dogra has been honored with over 30 national and international awards, including Cultural Bonanza Award (1995) by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Lifetime Achievement Award (2016) by Nav Dogri Sansthan, Bharat Bhushan Award (2022-23) by Icons of Asia, Global Educational Excellence Award (2023) by NURCLM and Rashtriya Pratibha Samman (2024) by Golden Sparrows Organization at Teen Murti Bhawan, New Delhi.

While felicitating Dr. Dogra, V.K. Magotra, Managing Director of Bhartiya Lok Sangeet Kala Sansthan (BLSKS), lauded his relentless efforts in promoting India's cultural heritage, remarking, "Dr. Dogra has added another feather to his cap and brought immense pride to the Dogra community."

This prestigious honor underscores Dr. Dogra's invaluable contributions to the preservation and promotion of India's folk arts, cementing his legacy as a true cultural icon.

## Devoleena Bhattacharjee and husband Shanawaz Shaikh become parents to baby boy

Television actor Devoleena Bhattacharjee, best known for her role in Saath Nibhaana Saathiya, has embraced parenthood. The actor and her husband Shanawaz Shaikh welcomed their baby boy on December 18 and shared the joyous news with fans on social media.

Devoleena Bhattacharjee welcomed baby boy

On Thursday, Devoleena Bhattacharjee took to Instagram to announce the birth of her baby boy. The actor shared a video, "Thrilled to announce the arrival of our bundle of joy, our baby boy on December 18." The caption of the video read, "Hello world! Our little angel BOY is here...18/12/2024 (sic)." Her industry friends and fans congratulated the couple for their new beginnings as parents.

In June, Devoleena Bhattacharjee reacted to her preg-



nancy rumours and said, "Many people have been messaging me for a long time regarding my pregnancy, creating news about it. I am sure that whenever I feel like sharing such news with you all, I will do it myself. For now, please do not bother me." However, she announced her pregnancy later on August 15, she announced pregnancy in a heartfelt post with photos

from a panchamrit ritual, often observed by pregnant women.

About Devoleena Bhattacharjee and husband Shanawaz Shaikh

Devoleena tied the knot with her beau Shanawaz Shaikh in December 2022 in a court wedding in Lonavala with only close friends in attendance. However, the actor faced backlash for her wedding with trolls questioning

her decision of an inter-faith marriage. In an interview with E-Times in October 2023, Devoleena gave a reply to trolls and said, "If I had married a wealthy man, I'd have been labeled a gold-digger, and if I married someone like SRK (Shah Rukh Khan), they would have said usne kaisi ladki se shaadi kar lee (What kind of girl did he marry)."

Devoleena Bhattacharjee is best known for playing Gopi Modi in one of television's longest-running show Saath Nibhaana Saathiya. She then participated in Salman Khan's reality show, Bigg Boss 13 and it is still considered as one of the most successful seasons of Bigg Boss history. She also entered as a proxy for Eijaz Khan in Bigg Boss 14 and as a wildcard in Bigg Boss 15, however, couldn't win any of the seasons.

## Anup Jalota recalls Zakir Hussain's humility and discipline



Noted bhajan singer Anup Jalota has said tabla maestro Zakir Hussain will be remembered for his humility and discipline, while taking India to the global music stage. "Ustad Zakir Hussain was from India but he was for the world," Jalota said, while paying tributes to the music legend at an event in Mumbai on Tuesday

night. "I have worked with him. He was such a humble and disciplined person. He did not have habits like smoking and drinking, yet he had to leave this world early," 'bhajan samrat' Jalota said.

Veterans from the music world, including Pandit Hariprasad Chaurasia, Anuradha Paudwal, Talat Aziz and

Penaz Masani also paid glowing tributes to Zakir Hussain at the event.

Zakir Hussain, who performed with George Harrison and Van Morrison, died at a hospital in San Francisco on December 15.

Jalota and his protégé Sumeet Tappoo unveiled their music album 'Legacy', marking 40 years of their guru-shishya (teacher-student) relationship, at Tuesday night's event.

The devotional singer said the album blends classical, devotional, and contemporary sounds to create a unique musical experience. Tappoo spoke of the "immense learning and guidance" he has received from his mentor since their first meeting in Fiji 40 years ago.

## Shehnaaz Gill shares endearing video of grandparents' 'golden bond'

Actress and social media sensation Shehnaaz Gill shared an adorable video of her grandparents' "pure love" setting a new benchmark for relationship goals.

Shehnaaz shared a video of her "dada" combing the hair of her "dadi". The old couple seems to have an endearing fight in Punjabi after her grandfather tries to open her grandmother's knotted hair. Amidst all this, Shehnaaz can be heard laughing in the background.

For the caption, she wrote in Hindi: "Pyar bhari nokjok aur umarbar ka saath - jab dadaji dadi ke baaal savarte hai, toh ladai main bhi mohabbat se lagti hai #DadaDadiLove #GoldenBond #ForeverTogether #EternalCompanions #LoveKnowsNoAge #CuteMoments #LifelongPartnership #NokJhokWaliMohabbat #GrandparentGoals #PureLove #MadeForEachOther."

"(Love-filled banter and a lifetime together - when grandpa combs grandma's hair, even the arguments feel like



love.)" Shehnaaz on December 1 shared a video of herself along with an inspiring message about self-love.

The actress posted a video where she is seen walking down a road, effortlessly posing for the camera as she embraces the moment. Gill captioned the post with a powerful message, "Life feels lighter and brighter when you learn to enjoy your own company."

It's the most peaceful kind of happiness. #shehnaazgill."

In the clip, Shehnaaz could be seen striking different happy poses for

the camera. She looked uber cool in a kurti top paired with jeans and shoes. She also added Amit Malsar's popular song "Jo Tum Mere Ho."

On the work front, the 31-year-old actress gained widespread recognition after competing on the reality show "Bigg Boss 13", where she finished in third place. She has since appeared in several successful Punjabi films, including "Sat Shri Akaal England," "Kala Shah Kala," "Daaka," and "Honsla Rakh." In 2023, she made her Bollywood debut with Salman Khan's film "Kisi Ka Bhai Kisi Ki Jaan."

## Mamta Kulkarni clarifies she's not returned to Mumbai for Bollywood

Actor Mamta Kulkarni talked about coming back to Mumbai after 25 years and her relations with Vicky Goswami.

In a conversation with agency, she said, "I have not come back for Bollywood and I am not planning to make a return as an actress."

On talking about her connection with Vicky Goswami, she added, "I have no connection with D (drug) world as I never met these people. Yes, I got connected with Vicky Goswami.....in 1996 my spiritual, journey started and a guru came into my life during that time..."

"Vicky called me when he was in jail in Dubai to come and meet him... and I when met him...I spent 12 years...mai dhayn tap aur puja path is mein agarasar ho gayi' (I got busy with meditation, penance, and worship), and when he came out of jail in 2012, my all desires were finished by that time... either to fall in love or get married... nothing was left and he came out of jail and



I had decided until he would come out, I won't go back to India. Then he went to Kenya and I came to India for Kumbh mela in around 2012-2013. I went straight to Allahabad (now Prayagraj) from Dubai for ten days and then went

back to Dubai."

In 2017, Thane Police issued a non-bailable warrant against Mamta Kulkarni and drug lord Vicky Goswami in connection with a drug haul case. The name of the duo surfaced in the connection based on

which a chargesheet was filed. In January, Goswami, Ibrahim and Baktash Akasha as well as Gulam Hussein were extradited from Kenya to the US. All of them were arrested in November 2014 in a sting operation by the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA), who was posing as Colombian drug dealers.

"Vicky went back to Kenya, and once or twice, I went to meet him and came back to Dubai. He had already been accused in Kenya and I was not with him during that time. 2016-2024 see apne liye tap-saya kiya (I did penance for myself)." She added, "Now, I am not in touch with him, I last contacted him in 2016."

Meanwhile, the actor recently took to her Instagram account to share that she has finally landed in Mumbai. In the video, Mamta expressed her feelings of nostalgia and emotion as she revisited her homeland. The actor shared that her journey out of India

began in 2000, and now in 2024, she was finally back. Mamta also said she became emotional when the flight was about to land, seeing her country from above for the first time in over two decades. She also teared up while stepping out of Mumbai's international airport, overwhelmed by the significance of her return.

In the video caption, Mamta wrote, "back to my motherland after 25 years attended kumbh mela 2012 after 12 years austerity and come back exactly after 12 years for another maha kumbh 2025."

Mamta Kulkarni gained fame in the 1990s with her performances in hit films like Karan Arjun and Baazi. The actor has worked with top stars like Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan, and Aamir Khan during her career. However, in the early 2000s, Mamta stepped away from Bollywood and moved abroad, leading a life away from the limelight.

## Keerthy Suresh flaunts her mangalsutra in first public appearance after marriage

Keerthy Suresh recently tied the knot with longtime boyfriend Anony Thattil in an intimate wedding ceremony in Goa. Days after her wedding, the actor made her first public appearance as she joined her Baby John co-stars Varun Dhawan, Atlee, and Wamiqa Gabbi for the Christmas Bash.

Keerthy Suresh's first public appearance after marriage

Recently, the Baby John team hosted a Christmas bash in Mumbai to promote the film. Newlywed Keerthy Suresh also joined her co-stars Varun Dhawan and Wamiqa Gabbi for the event. The actor opted for a red bodycon dress and was seen flaunting her mangalsutra during the event. On the other hand, Varun wore a white t-shirt with a red jacket and Wamiqa stunned in a red leather outfit.

Netizens couldn't get enough of Keerthy Suresh's post-marriage

glow. One of the fans commented, "She is glowing and how after marriage." Another commented, "Tradition follower Keerthy." Another comment read, "She is looking gorgeous." Another fan wrote, "She is a gem."

Keerthy Suresh and Anony Thattil's dreamy wedding

Keerthy Suresh and Anony Thattil got married in a dreamy wedding ceremony in Goa. The couple's wedding pictures took over the internet. The actor recently dropped an unseen picture from her wedding, posing with husband Anony Thattil, and Thalapathy Vijay. Sharing the picture on Instagram, Keerthy wrote, "When our dream icon blessed us at our dream weddingggg! @actorvijay sir (hug and red heart emojis). With love, Your Nanbi and Nanban."

Keerthy Suresh is all set to make her grand Bollywood debut along-



side Varun Dhawan in Baby John. Helmed by Kalees, the film serves as an adaptation of Atlee's Theri. The film also stars Wamiqa Gabbi, Zara Zyanna, and Jackie Shroff and is scheduled to release

in theatres on December 25. After Baby John, Keerthy will be next seen in JK Chandru's directorial Revolver Rita. The teaser of the film showed the actor in a massy avatar leaving fans excited.

## Sushmita Sen sends birthday love to 'nicest human being'

Bollywood actress Sushmita Sen recently took to social media to shower birthday love on her father, Shubeer Sen.

The former Miss Universe shared a heartfelt note accompanied by a sweet picture of them together, calling him the "nicest human being." On Thursday, the actress shared a series of photos featuring her father and other family members.

In her post, the 'Aarya' actress expressed deep gratitude and admiration for her father, highlighting the values and life lessons he has instilled in her. For the caption, Sen wrote, "Happppppyyyy Birthday to the nicest human being, I am blessed to call my Father!!! Happy 80th Baba @sensubir Here's to a life filled with glorious milestones & divine grace!! To your health & happiness always #bestbaba #besttata. I love you soooooo much!!! #dugadugga #titan @alisahsen47 @reneesen47 @



subhra51 @rajeevsen9 @asopacharu @ziana\_asopa."

Shubeer Sen, a retired officer of the Indian Air Force, shares a deeply cherished bond with his daughter, Sushmi-

ta. Over the years, the actress has frequently expressed her gratitude for her father's steadfast support, especially during pivotal moments in her life. One such defining chapter was her

groundbreaking triumph at the Miss Universe pageant in 1994.

Sushmita has often reminisced about how her father's unwavering belief in her abilities became her anchor during her journey to making history. At just 18, she became the first Indian woman to claim the coveted Miss Universe crown, a feat she attributes not just to her determination but also to the strength she drew from her father's encouragement.

On the professional front, the 'Main Hoon Na' actress was last seen in the acclaimed series 'Aarya 3'. In the show, Sushmita portrayed a fearless woman who navigates a dangerous world of crime, doing whatever it takes to safeguard her family.

The series first gained international recognition when its debut season was nominated for "Best Drama Series" at the prestigious International Emmy Awards.

## India moving forward at 'unprecedented' speed under Modi govt: Rajnath

NEW DELHI, Dec 19 (Agencies): India was left behind in terms of modern weapons and technology but it moved towards self-reliance in the defence sector at an "unprecedented" pace after the Modi government came to power, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Thursday. In an address at an event, Singh said modern warfare is changing rapidly and there is a need to adopt high-end technology to deal with future and national security challenges.

The defence minister exhorted scientists and engineers to gain command over critical technologies, such as artificial intelligence and quantum computing in tune with the changing times, and urged them to never forget India's heritage. Singh was speaking at the Indian National Academy of Engineering's Annual Convention at IIT Delhi.

The defence minister emphasised that the niche technologies are going to impact almost every sector in a big way in the coming times. "Right now, we are in the initial phase. Our aim should be to first gain command over these technologies, so that in the future, they can be used for the welfare of the people to fulfil their immediate basic needs," he said.

Singh pointed out that the world is continuously evolving,



and the defence sector cannot remain untouched by this change. He stated that earlier, due to some reasons, India was left behind in terms of modern weapons and technology, but ever since the Modi government came to power, the country has moved towards self-reliance in defence at an unprecedented pace, according to the defence ministry.

"Modern warfare is changing rapidly, therefore there is a need to adopt high-end technology. Towards this, we have brought out schemes like Innovations for Defence Excellence (iDEX) and Technology Development Fund (TDF) to bring out the talent of the youth, through which their as well as the nation's dreams can come true," he said.

The iDEX was launched in 2018 to create an eco-

system to foster innovations and encourage technological development in the defence and aerospace sector. Singh asserted that India is passing through a "defining moment" as it is exporting even those weapons which it once imported.

The defence minister credited this "revolutionary transformation" to the collective efforts of the public and private sectors, academia, and engineers and innovators. He exuded confidence that the country will soon achieve a formidable technical edge in the global arena.

Singh lauded the role of IITs in the scientific development of the country in collaboration with the Defence Research and Development Organisation and called for establishing an even better organic relationship among the industry, research

and development organisations and academia.

"In developed countries, academic campuses play an important role in progressing frontier technologies. There is a need to explore ways on how to co-opt IIT Delhi and similar institutions of higher scientific learning and excellence with the government's development campaign," he added.

"India is the youngest country at present. Our youth have the passion and the ability to innovate. Our government stands with them at every step." Singh noted that the government has been supporting the youths in their quest for innovation and providing funds as per needs.

"Today, India has become a hub of innovation and startups, due to which we are continuously gaining technological prowess. We will always stand with our engineers and innovators. With our combined efforts, we will realise our dream of 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India)," he said.

The defence minister commended Indian National Academy of Engineering (INAE) for playing a "crucial role" in making India self-reliant. By focusing on innovation, collaboration and modernisation, this institute has started a technological revolution in India, he said.

## BJP president Nadda asks Congress to 'stop lying' on Ambedkar issue



NEW DELHI, Dec 19 (Agencies): The BJP on Thursday launched a fresh attack on the Congress over its treatment of B R Ambedkar as the ruling party's president J P Nadda asked the opposition party to "stop lying".

Nadda reiterated his party's accusations against the Congress for insulting and ignoring Ambedkar and his legacy, and cited the work undertaken by the Modi government to honour his legacy.

His posts on X came amid the opposition's relentless attack on Home Minister Amit Shah for allegedly insulting Ambedkar during his Rajya Sabha speech.

He told the Congress and its "rotten ecosystem" that they lost Lok Sabha polls for a third consecutive time in June and performed badly in a number of assembly polls.

"In November, you lost badly in Maharashtra. At least now stop lying. Because your lies will not go unchecked. The truth will always win. Jai Bhim," he said.

Shah has in turn accused the Congress of distorting his remarks and has

received strong support from the ruling party, including PM Modi.

Nadda claimed the Congress and its rotten ecosystem have been exposed since Wednesday by all those who believe in truth, democracy and social justice.

He said, "So, I thought of sharing some facts to illustrate the deep Congress hate towards Dr Ambedkar. Pandit Nehru hated Dr Ambedkar. Yes, it was unfiltered hate. That is why Pandit Nehru got Dr. Ambedkar defeated twice." Nehru, he alleged, was proudly writing to people overseas, expressing joy that Ambedkar was no longer in the Cabinet.

Referring to the house in Alipur Road in the national capital where he breathed his last, Nadda said it should have been converted into a grand memorial that would inspire people long back.

But "Ambedkar-hating Congress" did nothing and it was the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government which developed it into an "iconic place".

The "self-proclaimed custodians" of social justice in the Congress

made empty promises of making a grand memorial at "Chaitya Bhoomi", where he was cremated, in Mumbai, but it was the Modi government which ensured in 2015 that the land transfer was done.

Modi prayed there twice in recent years, Nadda added.

The BJP president also shared a post, now deleted, allegedly of Congress leader Sam Pitroda in which he had rated Nehru's contribution to the Constitution bigger than Ambedkar. Nadda said, "The most loyal courtier of the Dynasty spelt out what the Congress really thinks of Dr. Ambedkar — that he had no role in the making of our Constitution. Some screenshots indeed speak a thousand words." The X post can be deleted but their real feelings will never go, he added.

He also highlighted the Modi government's development of the Ambedkar International Centre against the Congress' alleged neglect to make his point.

He said, "Congress leaders love spreading lies about India on foreign soil, but they never bothered about a place in London where Dr. Ambedkar himself lived. During PM Modi's 2015 UK visit, he went there, and subsequently, it was acquired by the Maharashtra Government." Opposition parties' protest over Shah's remarks have stalled proceedings in Parliament since Wednesday.

## Cong always hated Ambedkar, included his shameful cartoon in NCERT book in 2012: Pradhan

NEW DELHI, Dec 19 (Agencies): Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan Thursday slammed the Congress, alleging it has always hated B R Ambedkar and had even included a cartoon in an NCERT textbook showing Jawaharlal Nehru "whipping" Ambedkar.

He claimed that the "crocodile tears" of the Congress over Ambedkar are just pretence. "Suddenly the Congress has got a lot of respect for Babasaheb Ambedkar. These crocodile tears of the Congress for Babasaheb are just a pretence, there is a huge difference between their words and actions.

The Congress party's hatred and contempt for Babasaheb is well

known," Pradhan wrote in a post on X.

The Union Education Minister said that during the rule of the Congress-led UPA-2 government, a shameful cartoon was included in the NCERT textbook for Class 11 in 2012 in which Pandit Nehru was shown "whipping" Babasaheb Ambedkar.

"After strong opposition from BJP, then Human Resource Development Minister Kapil Sibal apologised and announced to withdraw it.

"Obviously, such a shameful act cannot happen unknowingly, this cartoon filled with hatred towards Babasaheb was made public only after the approval of the royal family and

the whole country knows who had control of the remote-run government at that time," Pradhan said.

The Union education minister said, "These corrupt people who give themselves 'Bharat Ratna' have never given proper respect to Babasaheb and when the Honorable Prime Minister Modi Ji is giving a grand honour to Babasaheb Ambedkar Ji, the Congress party is unable to digest it."

"The Congress party, which makes political gains in the name of Babasaheb Ambedkar, takes his name only out of compulsion, while the truth is that the entire Congress party, from Jawaharlal Nehru to Rahul Gandhi, has



always hated Babasaheb," added Pradhan.

A massive political row erupted on Wednesday as the Congress and other opposition parties launched an all-out attack on Shah for his remarks on Ambedkar and demanded his sacking, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other top BJP leaders rallied to his defence and said he has exposed

Congress "anti-Ambedkar" stand.

Competing marches by opposition and NDA MPs over the Ambedkar issue led to shoving and jostling inside Parliament House premises on Thursday with the BJP's Pratap Sarangi getting injured in the melee amid allegations that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi pushed him.

## Centre asks states to expedite tap water connections as 4 crore rural homes still lack access

NEW DELHI, Dec 19 (Agencies): The Centre is actively engaging with states that have yet to achieve 100 per cent tap water connection coverage for rural households, Jal Shakti Minister C R Paatil said on Thursday.

Speaking at a press conference here, the minister acknowledged that the 2024 deadline for ensuring tap water access in

rural India has passed.

"There are still four crore households without tap water connections. The ministry is in discussions with the respective states and has urged them to expedite the process," he said.

Official data reveals that 79 per cent (15,37,22,950) of rural households have been provided with tap water connections so far. Over 19 crore rural house-



holds have been identified for coverage.

Among the states, West Bengal has the lowest coverage at 53.9 per cent, followed by Kerala at 54.13 per cent, Jharkhand at 54.62 per cent and Rajasthan at 54.95 per cent, according to the data.

Eleven states and Union territories have achieved 100 per cent coverage of tap water connections under the Jal Jeevan Mission.

## Five killed as truck collides with car in Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur

SHAHJAHANPUR, Dec 19 (Agencies): A car rammed into a truck, leaving five members of a family dead and five others critically injured in Uttar Pradesh's Shahjahanpur district, police said on Thursday.

Superintendent of Police (SP) Rajesh S said, "The accident occurred near the Barkheda Jaipal crossroads on the Bareilly-Etawah highway when a family travelling to Delhi in an Ertiga car collided with an oncoming truck late Wednesday night."

The deceased were identified as Riyazul Ali (45), Amna (42), Gudiya (9), Tamanna 'Anu' (32),



and Noor (6).

Riyazul, a resident of Kant town in Shahjahanpur, was engaged in the garment business in Delhi, the police said.

"The family had left for Delhi at around 10 PM on Wednesday night after attending a wedding. Their vehicle met with the fatal collision shortly thereafter," the

SP said.

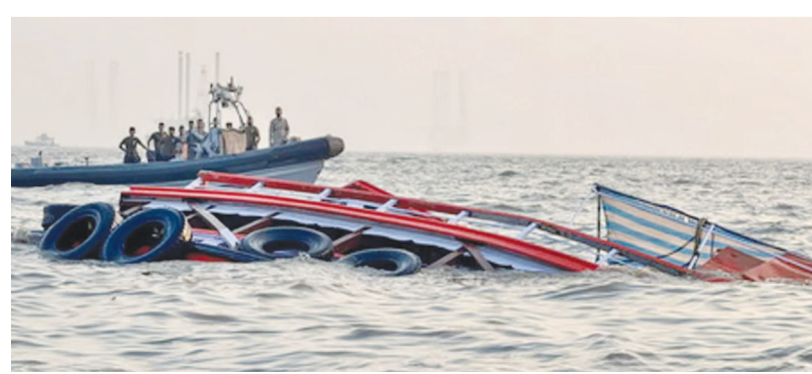
Police said they have taken the truck driver into custody and seized the vehicle.

Shamsher Ali, the uncle of Riyazul, said at the hospital, "The family had come to Shahjahanpur two days ago for a wedding and were returning to Delhi when this tragedy occurred."

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has expressed condolences to the bereaved families.

In a statement, he directed district officials to ensure the injured receive proper treatment and prayed for their speedy recovery.

## Man, child still missing after ferry-Navy craft collision off Mumbai coast



MUMBAI, Dec 19 (Agencies): Two passengers, a man and a child, were still missing a day after a Navy craft carrying out engine trials rammed into their ferry off

the Mumbai coast, police said on Thursday. Of the 113 persons on board both vessels, 13 died and 98, including two injured, were rescued, they said.

The two missing persons have been identified as 43-year-old Hansraj Bhati and seven-year-old Johan Mohammad Nisar Ahmed Pathan, the police said.

A search operation was underway with help of the Navy and Coast Guard, they said.

Thirteen persons, including a Navy personnel and two contractual naval employees, were killed when the Navy craft dashed against the passenger ferry 'Neel Kamal', carrying more than 100 passengers from the Gateway of India to Elephanta Island, on Wednesday afternoon.

## 100 North Korean troops deployed to Russia killed in combat, claims Seoul

*The heavy losses are attributed to the lack of experience by North Korean troops in drone warfare and unfamiliarity with the open terrain where they are taking part in the battle, South Korean MP Lee Seong-kweun told reporters.*

SEOUL, Dec 19 (Agencies): At least 100 North Korean troops deployed to Russia have been killed with another 1,000 injured in combat against Ukrainian forces in intense fighting in the Kursk region, a South Korean lawmaker said on Thursday citing the country's spy agency.

The heavy losses are attributed to the lack of experience by North Korean troops in drone warfare and unfamiliarity with the open terrain where they are taking part in the battle, a member of parliament, Lee Seong-kweun told reporters.

Lee was speaking after a closed-door briefing by the National Intelligence Service (NIS) to parliament.

The discrepancy in the estimate of the troops killed from that made by a US military official who cited several hundred casualties is because of the relatively conservative analysis by the NIS, Lee said.

"There was a report that there have been at least 100 deaths and the injured are approaching



1,000," he said.

There are indications that the North is preparing for additional deployment, Lee said, including intelligence of the country's leader Kim Jong Un overseeing training.

The report echoed comments by US and Ukrainian officials that North Korean losses are heavy and that Russia was using them in large numbers in assaults in Kursk, a Russian region where Ukraine launched a cross-border incursion in August.

More than 10,000 North Korean troops have been

deployed to help Russia in the war, according to US and South Korean officials.

Pyongyang has also shipped more than 10,000 containers of artillery rounds, anti-tank rockets as well as mechanised howitzers and rocket launchers.

Neither the North nor Russia have officially acknowledged the troop deployment or the weapons supply.

Russian President Vladimir Putin visited Pyongyang in June and signed a "comprehensive strategic partnership" treaty with North Korean leader Kim Jong Un that included a mutual

defence pact.

Earlier on Thursday, North Korea said its military alliance with Russia is proving "very effective" in deterring the US and its "vassal forces", denouncing a recent statement by Washington and allies against ties between Pyongyang and Moscow.

North Korea made no mention of its involvement in the war in Ukraine or casualties.

Instead it denounced a statement by the United States and nine countries and the European Union issued on Monday as "distorting and slandering the essence of the normal cooperative relations" between the North and Russia.

In a statement by an unnamed foreign ministry spokesman, the North blamed Washington and its allies for prolonging the Ukrainian war and destabilising the security situation in Europe and Asia-Pacific.

"It is because of the misguided acts of the U.S. and the West persisting in their structure-destructive, hegemony-oriented and adventurist military policy," it said.

## 52 killed in two bus accidents in central Afghanistan

*Traffic accidents are common in Afghanistan, due in part to poor roads after decades of conflict, dangerous driving on highways, and a lack of regulation.*



KABUL, Dec 19 (Agencies): Two bus accidents involving a fuel tanker and a truck on a highway through central Afghanistan killed 52 people and injured 65, the Taliban government spokesman said Thursday.

The accidents happened in Ghazni province on the same highway between the capital Kabul and southern Kandahar city late Wednesday, provincial head of information and culture Hamidullah Nisar said on X, without specifying how many people were killed and injured in each accident.

"We learned with great regret that two fatal traffic accidents occurred on the Kabul-Kandahar Highway, in which 52 of our compatriots were killed and 65 others were injured," said chief government spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid.

Nisar said one bus collided with a fuel

tanker near Shahbaz village in central Ghazni, while the other hit a truck in the eastern district of Andar.

He added that rescue teams rushed to the site and transported the injured to the hospital, with some in "serious condition."

Traffic accidents are common in Afghanistan, due in part to poor roads after decades of conflict, dangerous driving on highways, and a lack of regulation.

In March, more than 20 people were killed and 38 injured when a bus collided with a fuel tanker and burst into flames in southern Helmand province.

Another serious accident involving a fuel tanker took place in December 2022, when the vehicle overturned and caught fire in Afghanistan's high-altitude Salang Pass, killing 31 people and leaving dozens more with burns.

## Woman kills two children in Pakistan: Report

NAWABSHAH, Dec 19 (Agencies): In a disturbing incident in Nawabshah, a mother killed her two children by slitting their throats. The tragic event occurred in the jurisdiction of Airport Police Station, agency reported on Thursday.

The mother, identified as Komal Sheikh, was taken into custody. During initial interrogation, the mother confessed to the crime, admitting that she had killed her children with a knife in separate rooms, as per agency.

Police and rescue teams arrived at the scene after receiving information about the incident. The bodies of the children were shifted to the hospital for post-mortem examination, agency reported.

The police recovered the murder weapon and are conducting further

investigations into the matter.

A similar incident took place in August, when a mother in Karak, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, killed herself after murdering her two minor children. The incident took place in Mona Khel area, where a woman, named Moona, shot her two children and later committed suicide over a domestic dispute, agency reported.

The deceased children were identified as Zain, 2-year-old and Rabia, 4, the police said.

Earlier on November 15, in a disturbing incident, a seven-month pregnant woman was murdered by her mother-in-law and sister-in-law in Kotli Marlan village in Daska of Pakistan's Punjab, agency reported.

A police official told agency that the moth-

er-in-law, Sughra Bibi along with her daughter Yasmeen killed Zehra (26) and dismembered the body, packed it into bags, and dumped it into a canal.

Agency reported that the victim's mother-in-law cut her limbs off and severed the woman's head to avoid identification and spread rumours that Zehra had run away with someone.

Zehra, who hailed from Gurjanwala's village Kot Mand was married to Qadeer of Kotli Marlan in 2020. The police have not yet been able to contact Qadeer, who works abroad. The Daska police have registered a case of murder and other charges, as per agency.

Agency reported that Sughra Bibi, Yasmeen, and grandson Abdullah were arrested and are in Daska police custody.

## Russia to pursue stronger ties with India amid lack of trust with West

MOSCOW, Dec 19 (Agencies): With its lack of trust in the West, Russia is planning to build stronger ties with India among other countries.

Accusing the United States of instigating global conflicts and sinking crucial Cold War arms control treaties, Russia's Chief of the General Staff Valery Gerasimov said it is "impossible" for Moscow to place a "minimum level of trust" in the West.

Claiming that any effort to reach a meaningful agreement on arms control is hindered by the West's "double standards", Russia's top Army commander said the issue has become irrelevant to current international relations due to a lack of trust between Moscow and



the West.

Russia and the United States-- by far the largest nuclear powers-- have both expressed regret about the disintegration of the tangle of arms control treaties which sought to slow the arms race and reduce the risk of nuclear war.

"On the whole, the topic of arms control remains in the past, since a return to a minimum level of trust is

impossible today due to the double standards of the West," Mr Gerasimov said according to a report by agency.

The Russian top general said with Moscow having no trust in the US and other Western countries, it would develop ties with China, India, Iran, North Korea and Venezuela.

"Without trust, it is impossible to create an effective mechanism for

mutual control," he was quoted as saying by the defence ministry.

"Many countries have begun to think about adequate response measures," he added.

The United States, which casts Russia and China as the biggest nation-state threats to the West, blames Moscow for the collapse of agreements such as the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the 1987 Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces (INF) Treaty.

The United States formally withdrew from the INF Treaty in 2019, citing Russian violations which Moscow denied. The US withdrew from the ABM treaty in 2002.

President Vladimir Putin in 2023 suspended Russian participation in the New START treaty that limits both sides'

strategic nuclear weapons, blaming US support for Ukraine. However, Moscow has kept to the warhead, missile and bomber limits imposed by the agreement - as has the United States.

Gerasimov said that the deployment of US missiles in Europe and Asia was stoking "a strategic offensive arms race", with a build-up of American forces in the Philippines of particular concern to Russia.

He said Russia had seen increased activity by the US-led NATO military alliance near Russia's borders. After Ukraine struck Russian territory last month with long-range missiles supplied by the United States, the US had become a direct participant in the conflict in Ukraine, the general added.

## Putin opens his annual news conference, an event he uses to reinforce his authority

MOSCOW, Dec 19 (Agencies): Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday held his marathon news conference and call-in show, an annual event he has used to reinforce his authority and demonstrate sweeping control of the country's political scene.

Putin began by boasting about Russia's economic performance, saying that it's on track to grow by nearly 4% this year. He acknowledged that consumer inflation is high at 9.3%, but noted Central Bank's efforts to bring it down and insisted that the situation in the economy remains "stable."

The tightly choreographed session, which is broadcast live by state-controlled TV stations across Russia's 11 time zones, has been heavily dominated by domestic issues in the past years. Most journalists and ordinary people calling the studio

ask about road repairs, utility prices, house maintenance, medical services, government subsidies for families and other economic and social issues.

Journalists from the country's over 80 regions wave colorful signs and placards in the hall near the Kremlin as they try desperately to attract Putin's attention.

Russian state media reported that ordinary citizens submitted more than 2 million questions ahead of the show.

Questions about Russia's military action in Ukraine and soaring tensions with the West are expected to be an important part of the show.

Putin, who has held power for nearly a quarter-century, has vowed to bring what he describes as the "special military operation" to a victorious end and boasted about Russia's battlefield gains this



year.

But just two days before Putin's news conference, a senior Russian general was killed by a bomb outside his apartment building in Moscow. The brazen killing of Lt. Gen. Igor Kirillov, claimed by Ukraine, brought the nearly 3-year-old conflict once again to the streets of the Russian capital.

Putin has declared that last month's strike on Ukraine with a new hypersonic intermediate-range ballistic missile was a response to Western allies' permission for Kyiv to use their

longer-range weapons for strikes on Russia. He threatened that Moscow could launch more strikes on Ukraine with the new Oreshnik missile and warned it could also be used to target military facilities of the countries that allowed Ukraine to use their missiles for attacks deep into Russia.

Putin has said that Moscow stands ready for talks on a peaceful settlement to the conflict but reaffirmed his demand that Ukraine must renounce its bid to join NATO and recognize Russia's gains.

Ukraine and the West have rejected those demands.

The Russian leader's comments on Thursday will be closely watched for any signs of shift in his bargaining position ahead of the inauguration of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, who has pledged to negotiate a deal to end the hostilities.

Putin could also comment on the downfall of Syrian President Bashar Assad, who he has offered political asylum. Assad's demise has dealt a painful blow to Russia, which launched a military intervention in Syria nine years ago to prop up Assad's government amid a civil war.

Moscow has quickly sought to establish contacts with the victorious rebels to secure its diplomatic and military personnel in the country and try to extend the lease on its air and naval bases in the country.

## Airstrikes hit Yemen's capital, port city after Houthi attack targets Israel

DUBAI, Dec 19 (Agencies): A series of intense airstrikes shook Yemen's rebel-held capital and a port city early Thursday, shortly after a Houthi missile targeted central Israel.

It wasn't immediately clear who launched the strikes on Sanaa, which the Iranian-backed Houthis have held for over a decade.

The Houthis also reported strikes in Hodeida as well. But initial information on the targets of the attack and the timing suggested Israel may have conducted the assault.

Houthi-controlled media reported the strikes, but offered no immediate information on casualties nor damage. The Houthi-controlled satellite channel al-Masirah said that some of the strikes targeted power stations in the capital, as well as the Ras Isa oil terminal on the Red Sea.

Rebel-held Hodeida, some 145 kilometers (90 miles) southwest of

Sanaa, has been key for food shipments into Yemen as its decade-long war has gone on. There's also longstanding suspicion that weapons from Iran have been transferred through the port.

The strikes happened just after the Israeli military said its air force intercepted a missile launched from Yemen before it entered the country's territory.

"Rocket and missile sirens were sounded following the possibility of falling debris from the interception," the Israeli military said. Sirens sounded near Tel Aviv and the surrounding areas, and a large explosion was heard overhead at the time. The Houthis did not immediately claim the missile attack, but said an important military statement would be issued in the coming hours, following a pattern of how they claim their assaults.

The Israeli military did not respond to a request

for comment. Israel has struck the Houthis in the past over attacks targeting Israel and in recent weeks have threatened to again attack the rebels. Israel previously struck Hodeida and its oil infrastructure in July after a Houthi drone attack killed one person and wounded 10 in Tel Aviv.

American forces have also launched a series of strikes on the Houthis over nearly a year due to Houthi attacks on shipping in the Red Sea corridor. On Monday, the U.S. military's Central Command said it hit "a key command-and-control facility" operated by the Houthis in Sanaa, later identified as the al-Ardi complex once home to the government's Defense Ministry.

But on Thursday, a U.S. military official said the attacks weren't carried out by the Americans, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss the ongoing strikes.



## Congress stages protest over 'Amit Shah's' alleged remarks against B R Ambedkar



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: Senior Congress leader Tara Chand, along with other party members, staged a protest on Thursday against Union Home Minister Amit Shah's alleged remarks on B.R. Ambedkar.

The Congress leaders demanded an 'apology and the resignation of Amit Shah'.

The protest was held in Jammu, where party members raised slogans against the BJP and the Union Home Minister.

Addressing the gathering, Congress senior leader Tara Chand said, "Amit Shah's remarks are an insult to the legacy of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who fought for equality and justice in India. We demand that he issue a public apology and step down from his post."

The Congress leaders alleged that Shah's comments undermined the contributions of Ambedkar, and they vowed to intensify their agitation if their demands were not met.

Union home minister

Amit Shah however on Wednesday accused the Congress of "twisting" facts and his statement made in the Rajya Sabha to create an "illusion" that he insulted the country's first law minister B.R. Ambedkar.

"My statement has been twisted in the Rajya Sabha. They created an illusion. Even earlier during the polls my statements have been twisted using AI. I'm from a party that can never insult Ambedkar," he said addressing the media.

## Amit Kapoor welcomes CCTV compulsory in school buses



### Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: Amit Kapoor, President of Parents Association Jammu, has welcomed the directive issued by Jammu and Kashmir Transport Commissioner Vishesh Mahajan, making it mandatory to install CCTV cameras in school buses.

Along with this, he said that to curb the arbitrary fare of school buses, an order should also be issued to fix their fares. He said this during a press conference in Jammu.

He described this step as an important step towards increasing the safety of students and preventing tragic inci-

dents related to school transport.

He said that installing CCTV cameras in school buses will save many precious lives, especially those of our children. He said that this directive is in line with the guidelines given earlier by the Supreme Court of India, which emphasized on installing CCTV in school buses. Unfortunately, these instructions have not yet been fully implemented in this area.

He said that installation of CCTV cameras will not only monitor the activities of drivers and co-drivers but will also help prevent speeding and irresponsible behaviour.

It will also increase accountability of private buses and other vehicles hired by parents which have been running without proper safety regulations till now.

## Major General Anupinder Bevi, VSM inspects NCC Headquarters Jammu Group

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: Additional Director General Major General Anupinder Bevi, VSM, conducted an inspection of the NCC Headquarters Jammu Group, where he reviewed the procedures and systems contributing to the efficiency and effectiveness of the NCC Curriculum.

During the inspection, Major General Bevi commended the focused work being undertaken by all officers, permanent instructor staff, Associate NCC officers, and civilian staff. He emphasized the importance of maintaining high standards and encouraged all to continue the good work to meet the aims and objectives of the NCC.

Brig PS Cheema,

Commander NCC Group Jammu briefed the ADG where all Commanding Officers of NCC Units of Jammu Group were present during the inspection. Major General Bevi used this opportunity to issue early directions to all officers for giving appropriate notice to non-performing institutes which have failed to meet the commitment as per affidavit as per NCC Act, submitted during demand for raising of NCC Units in their institutes. He directed that the list of non-performing institutes which have failed to nominate ANOs/CTOs as well as those unable to fulfil the vacancies to be shared with the Department of Higher Education of the UT for appropriate direc-

tions to the Heads of the Institutes. Gen Bevi strongly emphasised that the lack of commitment of these institutes is restricting the chances of those institutes which are in the waitlist and are desperately looking for this opportunity. In addition, this contributes towards the overall position of the Directorate for the RDC Banner, he remarked.

The General officer laid emphasis on institutional training and accountability of ANOs and Permanent Instructors in maintaining quality of training.

Gen Bevi assured all support to the Group Headquarters and the Units especially the newly raised 6 J&K BN NCC and 1 J&K Air Sq NCC at Udhampur.

## JKEEGA to hold protest on Dec 30, demands regularization of engineers

### Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: The Jammu and Kashmir Electrical Engineering Graduates Association (JKEEGA) has reaffirmed its decision to continue with a one-day peaceful protest on December 30, 2024, following the government's inaction on the long-standing demand for regularization of engineers in the Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Department (JKPDD).

JKEEGA, which had served a 26-day notice to the government on December 4, 2024, highlighted that no progress has been made on the State Administrative Council (SAC) decision of 2019 to regularize all engineers. During a press conference held at the Press Club in Jammu, General Secretary Er. Sachin Tickoo and Er. Hidayatullah expressed the deep frustration and alienation felt by power engineers due to decades of neglect.



The engineers lamented the ad-hocism and stopgap arrangements in promotions without regularization, which has resulted in a demoralized workforce. Senior engineers, including Chief Engineers and Superintending Engineers, often retire at grades as low as Assistant Engineer or Junior Engineer, leading to diminished pension benefits and professional stagnation.

The lack of response from the administrative department to a query raised in February 2024 regarding the regularization of 250 engineers has

further exacerbated the situation. Despite repeated instructions from the Chief Secretary for expedited action, no tangible progress has been made.

The SAC's one-time exemption from referring cases to the Public Service Commission (PSC) was intended to address these chronic issues, yet over 2,500 engineers promoted between 1986 and 2019 remain affected. The continued absence of regularization has negatively impacted the morale of these professionals, particularly when compared to their counterparts in other engineering depart-

ments and CPSUs.

JKEEGA also criticized the failure to implement the Assured Career Progression scheme for engineering gazetted services, which was approved by the State Cabinet in 2018. While similar schemes were implemented for police and administrative services, engineers were left out, further fueling dissatisfaction.

The association highlighted severe staff shortages in key positions across the department. Vacancies include Managing Directors (2), Chief Engineers (6), and Junior Engineers (436), among others. The sanctioned strength of 1,981 positions is far from adequate, especially considering the massive increase in assets managed by the department.

The unimplemented recommendations of professional HR consultants and unbundling committee reports have left the department unable to

meet its growing workload, with many engineers forced to handle multiple charges.

JKEEGA emphasized that addressing HR issues like regularization and career progression is crucial for driving reforms and improving the JKPDD's performance. The association urged the government to prioritize these issues to boost morale and efficiency in the power sector.

The one-day peaceful protest, scheduled for December 30, 2024, will not affect essential services, including hospitals. Engineers across Jammu and Kashmir will participate, with support from the All India Power Engineers Federation.

Prominent members of the JKEEGA Executive Body, including Er. Kuldeep Raj, Rajeshwar Jamwal, Purshottam Lal Sharma, and others, were present at the press conference to reinforce the association's commitment to the cause.

## FROM PAGE 3

## NDA, INDIA Bloc MPs come face to face at Parliament's Makar Dwar; BJP alleges Rahul pushed its MP

Amit Shah's resignation for his remarks related to the chief architect of the Constitution.

BJP-led NDA parliamentarians also carried out a march within Parliament premises, raising slogans and carrying placards demanding an apology from the opposition Congress for allegedly insulting Ambedkar.

As the INDIA bloc parliamentarians came face to face with the ruling coalition MPs in front of the Makar Dwar of Parliament, the two sides engaged in loud sloganeering in a bid to outdo each other.

The INDIA bloc members first staged a protest at B R Ambedkar's statue in Parliament premises, carrying posters that read 'Main Bhi Ambedkar', 'Jai Bhim' and 'Amit Shah maafi maango'.

They then took out a protest march on the Parliament premises. MPs of the Congress, DMK, RJD, SP, the Left and NCP(SP), among others, participated in the protest. Several opposition MPs, including Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and K Kanimozhi, were seen wearing blue.

Earlier, the Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha chaired a meeting of the Congress' Lok Sabha MPs in the main committee room.

The opposition on Wednesday seized on Home Minister Amit Shah's remarks on B R Ambedkar to corner the government and demanded his resignation for what they called was an insult to the architect of the Constitution.

The attack from virtually all opposition parties, including the Congress, TMC,

DMK, RJD, Left parties and Shiv Sena-UBT, led to the adjournment of both Houses of Parliament and prompted the BJP, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to come out in stout defence of Shah.

Trinamool Congress (TMC) MP Derek O'Brien has also submitted a notice to move a privilege motion against Shah in the Rajya Sabha where the home minister had said on Tuesday evening that Congress leaders would have got a place in heaven had they chanted the name of God rather than following the fashion of repeating Ambedkar's name.

The hullabaloo in Parliament also spilled onto the streets of the national capital and places as far as Maharashtra, Bihar and Tamil Nadu. In Delhi, AAP convener Arvind Kejriwal led hundreds of supporters to gather outside the BJP office and protest noisily amid slogans "Amit Shah maafi mango, Amit Shah sharm karo".

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and senior leader Rahul Gandhi, TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, DMK chief M K Stalin, Shiv Sena-UBT chief Uddhav Thackeray and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav were among those who have slammed Shah for his remarks.

## BJP MPs were pushing me, stopping me from going inside Parliament: Rahul

president Mallikarjun Kharge and Wayanad MP Priyanka Gandhi had also been pushed, Rahul Gandhi said, "It has happened but we don't get bothered with this pushing around."

"This is the entry to Parliament, we have a right to go inside and the BJP members were stopping us from going inside," he alleged and pointed to the Makar Dwar.

Gandhi said the central issue is that they are attacking the Constitution and insulting the memory of Ambedkar.

Several MPs of the INDIA bloc, including Congress leaders Kharge and Rahul Gandhi, staged a protest in Parliament premises on Wednesday demanding Home Minister Amit Shah's apology for his remarks which they claimed were an insult to B R Ambedkar.

The protesting INDIA bloc MPs also came face to face with demonstrating BJP MPs in front of Makar Dwar of Parliament as the two sides engaged in loud sloganeering in a bid to outdo each other and a melee ensued as the MPs were moving towards the steps to go inside Parliament building.

## Khelo India Games in Gulmarg will be held as per schedule: Div Com Kashmir

immense potential for eco-tourism, and we are considering more ways to highlight it as a key attraction in Kupwara," he said.

On winter preparedness, Bidhuri assured that the administration is fully geared up to provide better facilities than last year. "We are conducting daily reviews to ensure all arrangements are in place, and this winter will definitely be better than the previous one," he remarked.

## Gulmarg Gondola records 1.48 lakh tourists, generates Rs 11.86 cr in 2 months

snowfall, attracted 54,436 visitors. Gulmarg Gondola, operated by the Jammu and Kashmir Cable Car Corpora-

tion (JKCCC), in two phases is Asia's highest and longest cable car project, offering breathtaking views of the snow-clad Pir Panjal mountain range — the first phase connects Gulmarg to Kongdoori at an altitude of 8,530 feet, and the second phase takes visitors to the stunning Aparhat Peak at 13,780 feet above sea level.

Speaking with KNO, Managing Director, J&K Cable Car Corporation, Syed Qamar Sajjad said that, they have increased the quota and introduced the Tatkal facility to ensure foreign tourists, especially those planning at the eleventh hour, are provided with Gondola services, irrespective of their numbers.

The Gondola capacity is already full for the next two months, which aligns with the anticipation of winter games and the snowfall season that attracts skiers in large numbers, he said. Jammu and Kashmir tourism "Our doors will remain open for everyone, even at the last moment. We are ready to augment ticketing facilities while ensuring the safety and security of tourists," Sajjad said, adding that by the end of this session, they anticipate a 10-12 per cent increase in tourist footfall. "Our revenue target is Rs 100 crore, with net taxation projected at Rs 60 crore."

"Additionally, we are focusing on maintaining and enhancing existing assets to make them aesthetically appealing and ensuring tourists have easy access to tickets. Our goal is to elevate the overall experience for every visitor," MD Cable Car Corporation added.

Pertinent to mention that the J&K Cable Car Corporation (JKCCC) on Tuesday in a bid to meet the growing demand for Gulmarg Gondola tickets, announced the launch of an online Tatkal Ticket Facility for the Gulmarg Gondola Project, besides, seamless facilitation to the foreign tourists.

## Kashmir reels under

## intense cold conditions; Srinagar experiences coldest night

officials said. Wednesday night was the coldest of the season so far in the city, and the night temperature was 4 degrees below the normal for this part of the season.

They said the intense cold conditions led to the freezing of the fringes of several water bodies, including the famous Dal Lake here, while water supply lines in many areas of the city here and elsewhere in the valley were also frozen due to the biting cold. The long dry spell in the city and other areas in the plains has resulted in the increase in ailments like cough and common cold. Tourist resort Pahalgam in south Kashmir, which also serves as one of the base camps for the annual Amarnath Yatra, recorded a low of minus 6.8 degrees Celsius, a degree down from the previous night. The famous ski-resort of Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 5 degrees Celsius. Konibal, a hamlet on the outskirts of Pampore town, was the coldest weather station in the valley as the minimum settled at the low of minus 8.4 degrees Celsius.

The minimum temperature in Qazigund — the gateway to Kashmir — was minus 7 degrees Celsius, Kupwara in north Kashmir minus 6.2 degrees, and Kokernag in south Kashmir minus 5.3 degrees. The Met office has forecast mainly dry weather till December 26 with a possibility of light snowfall in higher reaches of the valley on the night of December 21-22.

It said light snow over few higher reaches is also possible from December 27 night to the morning of December 28. However, the minimum temperature is forecast to fall further in the valley and there will be a cold wave at isolated to scattered places during the next few days, it said.

# Dogri Sanstha Jammu celebrates Dogri Maanta Din

## Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: Dogri Sanstha, Jammu celebrated 'Dogri Maanta Din' in a simple but impressive function organized at Kunwar Viyogi Auditorium, Dogri Bhawan, Karan Nagar Jammu. The function was graced by Sanjeev Verma (IAS), Commissioner Secretary to Government of J&K, General Administration Department as the Chief Guest.

On this occasion litterateurs and artists having made colossal contributions for preserving and promoting mother tongue Dogri and cultural traditions of Duggar Pradesh were felicitated along with Sahitya Akademi Awardees for the period 2023-24. The prominent personalities felicitated on the occasion were Suman Sharma, Darshan Darshi and Shiv Dobia (All for literature), Pt. Narayna Prasad (Classical Dance), Suman Gupta (Painting), Madhvi Sharma (Media), Anil Tickoo (Theatre). Vijay Verma for Sahitya Akademi's main award, Bishan Singh 'Dardi' for Bal Sahitya Puraskar, Dr. Sushma Rani for translation award and Heena Chowdhary. They were presented with a shawl and a memento. Promila Manhas read the citations in favour of Dogri Litterateurs and artists whereas Rajeshwar Singh 'Raju' read



citations in favour of Sahitya Akademi Awardees.

Earlier Prof. Lalit Magotra while welcoming the Chief Guest, awardees and others gracing the gathering with their august presence said that Dogri Sanstha Jammu, the pioneer literary organization has always been working as a strong voice for preserving and promoting mother tongue Dogri since its formation in 1944. He recalled the decades of struggle for getting the mother tongue Dogri included in 8th schedule of Indian Constitution and said that it has undoubtedly brought more responsibility on the organization as well as at individual level because working for our own existence is our common

cause. This day which is celebrated as Dogri Maanta Din all over the region needs to be celebrated across the nation and even abroad wherever Dogras reside so that a sense of belongings towards our roots should inspire us to contribute for promotion of our mother tongue. He further added that at present when mother tongues all over the world are facing a crisis for survival the new education policy (NEP) has been a constructive step for imparting education in mother tongue thus helping for its survival and creating awareness among the masses about the importance of mother tongue.

While addressing the gathering, the Chief Guest Sanjeev

Verma (IAS) said that Dogri Sanstha has been doing commendable effort in promoting mother tongue Dogri and regional cultural heritage. We have to realize that our mother tongue and cultural traditions account for our existence as a community and we have to preserve it all costs. We are proud Dogras and should feel proud of our language as well as traditions. He hoped that all will realize the necessity of time and will contribute for the common cause. The highlight of his speech was the emphasis and stress he placed on the close relationship between the ancient Vedic language and classical dogri language. He was of the strong opinion that dogri is the closest to the Vedic language. He substantiated his views by citing numerous examples of striking similarities between Dogri and vedic language. He said that every dogra should be proud of this great inheritance and further research work should be done in this direction.

The program conducted by Pawan Verma was attended by a galaxy of prominent personalities from all walks of life. The function concluded with vote of thanks by Rajeshwar Singh 'Raju', General Secretary, Dogri Sanstha Jammu.

# Waseem Afroz Khan resigns from CAIT Kashmir chapter over organizational concerns

## Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Dec 19: In a significant and bold move, Waseem Afroz Khan, Vice President of the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) Kashmir Chapter, has resigned from both his position and his basic membership. In a letter addressed to CAIT's President, Farhan Kitab, and its members, Khan expressed his dissatisfaction with the chapter's leadership and the way it has deviated from its core mission of supporting local traders.

Khan criticized the leadership for misusing its authority, lacking transparency, and failing to address the pressing concerns of the local business community in Kashmir. He accused the chapter of being transformed into a tool for a select few individuals, rather than serving the collective interests of Kashmir's traders. He stated, "The CAIT Kashmir Chapter has lost its purpose and credibility. What should be a united front advocating for traders' rights and economic growth has become a closed circle, dominated by unprofessional practices and personal agendas. Decisions are made

in secrecy, excluding the collective voice of the business community. This is a betrayal of the trust placed in the organization by local Kashmiri traders."

Khan also expressed concern over the chapter's failure to promote local trade and tackle the unique challenges faced by Kashmir's traders. Despite the resilience and resourcefulness of the business community in Kashmir, Khan noted that the chapter had failed to address critical issues such as economic instability and limited market access. He pointed out that the CAIT Kashmir Chapter, which should have been a catalyst for policy reforms and local business growth, had instead become bogged down in internal conflicts and personal interests.

Having been an active member of CAIT since 2015, Khan had participated in several national programs aimed at empowering local traders. However, his disappointment with the Kashmir chapter's deviation from these values led to his decision to resign. "I have always stood for integrity and fairness in trade practices. It is disheartening to see the CAIT Kashmir Chapter stray so far from its mission. I cannot con-

tinue to associate with an organization that fails to deliver for the community it claims to serve. My resignation is not just a protest—it is a call for change," he remarked.

In his resignation, Khan emphasized the urgent need for a fresh approach to revitalizing and empowering Kashmir's local trade sector. He called on credible business leaders and stakeholders to come together and create a transparent, accountable, and effective platform that truly addresses the needs of traders. Khan stressed that the business community in Kashmir deserves an organization that prioritizes their interests, champions their cause, and fosters sustainable growth. He concluded by calling for significant reforms within CAIT to regain the trust of the local traders.

Khan's resignation serves as a wake-up call for the CAIT Kashmir Chapter, urging it to reassess its priorities and return to its foundational mission of empowering local traders. His decision reflects a growing dissatisfaction among members and traders regarding the chapter's current direction and leadership.

# CIS Jammu shines at 25th RSFI National Rope Skipping Championship 2024

## Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: Students of Cambridge International School (CIS), Jammu, have brought laurels to the institution by securing an impressive six gold medals at the prestigious 25th RSFI National Rope Skipping Championship 2024, held in Panchkula. This remarkable achievement reflects the dedication and hard work of the students and their mentor.

The medal winners include Shivya Sharma - 2 Gold Medals, Pahal Gupta - 2 Gold Medals, Divyam Chargoitra - 1 Gold Medal and Gouresh Bazotra - 1 Gold Medal.

The Managing Director Er. Renu Bangroo applauded the outstand-



ing efforts of the students and congratulated them on their outstanding performance. Special appreciation was extended to Shivang, the mentor, for his exceptional guidance, and to the parents for their constant support and encouragement.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chairman Er. Vidhi Sharan Singh Jamwal said, "This achievement is evidence of the commitment of our students

and the dedicated efforts of our staff. We are immensely proud of our young champions and look forward to many such milestones in the future."

Cambridge International School continues to nurture talent and strive for excellence in academics, sports, and co-curricular activities. This victory is yet another feather in the school's cap, reinforcing its commitment to holistic development.

# GYFF 2024 to celebrate young filmmakers in Chandigarh



## Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: Supremacy Talents is proud to announce the Global Youth Film Festival 2024 (GYFF), India's first youth-centric film festival, set to take place on 20th and 21st December at the Government Museum & Art Gallery, Sector 10, Chandigarh. This one-of-its-kind festival aims to inspire young filmmakers and promote the spirit of creativity, innovation, and awareness. The event is being organized in association with Aryans Group of Colleges, Rajpura, Near Chandigarh, and Rosero Elena, with free entry for all attendees.

Dr. Parveen Kataria, Director General of Aryans Group, will grace the occasion as

the Chief Guest, while Manmeet Singh, Director of IMI - The Film School, will preside over the event. The festival is a significant step toward encouraging budding filmmakers, promoting cinema as a medium for awareness on social causes.

Various short films would be screened including "Aaj ki Taaza khabar", "Planet plastic", "Harvest & hope", "The last stretch of greenery", "The lost attempt", "In the face of death", "Ganga", "Aanandache Rop: Tree of Happiness", "Echoes of Resilience - Fight Against Drug Abuse", "Run for Water", "Trees: The nature's heartbeat", "Beyond Labels", "Kiska Hai Intezaar", "Acid", "Bhookh", "376 I.P.C.", "Mahua Ek Yodha" etc.

# JKTJAC delegation meets DSE Jammu, raises key issues

## Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: A delegation from the Jammu Kashmir Teachers' Joint Action Committee (JKTJAC), led by UT President Vinod Sharma, met with Ashok Kumar Sharma (JKAS), Director of School Education Jammu, to address pressing issues faced by the teaching fraternity. The delegation submitted a memorandum outlining several key concerns that have been affecting teachers in the region.

Among the issues raised, the JKTJAC delegation emphasized the need for the regularization of Rehbar-e-Taleem (ReT) teachers who have completed their mandatory five-year tenure but are still waiting for regularization. They also sought the conversion of RRETs to Teachers Grade II/III, highlighting that their files have been pending in the Directorate for a long time. The delegation further raised the issue of the adjustment of newly promoted teachers to masters, many of whom have been waiting for their adjust-



ments for an extended period. Another critical issue discussed was the demand for the holding of another Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) for teachers to masters. Additionally, they called for the issuance of the mutual transfer list for teachers appointed under the ReT scheme and for earned leave to be granted to teachers who have worked during the summer and winter vacations for various duties.

In response, Director Ashok Kumar Sharma assured the delegation that their concerns would be given due consideration. He informed them that more than 30 files of RRETs have already been cleared for conversion to Teachers Grade II/III, and a regularization list will be issued by the end of the

month. He also mentioned that the adjustment of newly promoted teachers to masters will be completed by next week.

The delegation was composed of several key members of JKTJAC, including Surjit Chib (UT Vice President), Rajesh Jamwal (Provincial President, Jammu), Khazan Singh (UT Coordinator), Javed Bali (UT Publicity Secretary), Naseer Ahmed Butt (UT Publicity Secretary), Lekh Raj Parihar (District President, Udhampur), Ravinder Manhas (District President, Jammu), Shamsheer Singh, and others. The meeting ended with the JKTJAC leadership expressing their gratitude to the Director for his patient hearing and his assurance of prompt action on the issues raised.

# Reffa Boules India Federation hosts RAFFA Sports Camp at APS Dhar Road

## Top News Report

UDHAMPUR, Dec 19: The Reffa Boules India Federation organized an engaging raffa boules sports camp at Army Public School (APS) Dhar Road, Udhampur, bringing excitement and joy to students and staff alike.

The camp aimed to promote the unique sport of boules, a ball game that combines strategy and precision. The event saw enthusiastic participation from the school management, teachers, and students, who embraced the opportunity to try their hand at this lesser-known yet thrilling sport.

A highlight of the event was principal of school Dr. Jyoti Badyal, who actively participated in the game, showcasing remarkable interest and skill.

Speaking on the occasion, Jyoti Badyal thanked Sunny Nanda, the General Secretary of the Reffa Boules Ind. Federation, for organizing the camp.

She expressed her enthusiasm for the sport and stated, "We are inspired by this initiative and will soon start incorporating this wonderful sport into our school's activities."

The management of APS Dhar Road expressed gratitude for the initiative, highlighting how such events contribute to students' overall development.

"Sports like boules not only foster physical fitness but also teach teamwork and focus," said a school official.

The Reffa Boules India Federation plans to organize more such events in schools across the country to popularize the sport and encourage youth participation.

# Rattan Lal Gupta, Sheikh Bashir Ahmad express grief over Kathua fire tragedy

## Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: Rattan Lal Gupta, Provincial President of Jammu and Kashmir National Conference (JKNC), and Sheikh Bashir Ahmad, Provincial Secretary Jammu, have expressed profound sorrow over the tragic fire incident in Kathua district that claimed the lives of six individuals.

In a condolence message, Gupta and Ahmad extended their heartfelt sympathies to the families of the victims. They prayed for peace for the

deceased and strength for the bereaved families to bear the irreplaceable loss. The leaders also wished for the speedy recovery of those injured in the incident.

They called on the authorities to provide the best possible medical care to the injured and ensure that they receive immediate treatment for a smooth and quick recovery. Furthermore, they urged the administration to provide adequate relief to the affected families, particularly those who have lost loved ones in this unfortunate tragedy.

# Movement Kalki highlights discrimination against 10+2 lecturers, students



## Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 19: Movement Kalki, led by its member Pawan Sharma, held a press conference today to address issues of discrimination in the recruitment of 10+2 lecturers and the mistreatment with ABVP students.

The conference shed light on the neglect of Hindi, Sanskrit, and other regional languages in the education sector and condemned police actions against students.

The organization alleged that discriminatory practices have intensified in Jammu and Kashmir since the recent elections. Local languages such as Hindi, Sanskrit, and Dogri are reportedly being sidelined in

favor of English and Urdu. Movement Kalki criticized this approach, calling it a betrayal of regional cultures and an impediment to educational equity.

The members strongly condemned the police lathicharge on ABVP students, describing it as undemocratic and inhumane. They raised concerns about the involvement of male police officers in handling female students during the incident, which they termed unconstitutional and unacceptable.

The government's failure to recruit teachers for Hindi, Sanskrit, and Dogri was a key point of contention. Movement Kalki criticized the prioritization of English and Urdu, asserting that it undermines the

education system and disrespects the region's linguistic heritage. They argued that this neglect jeopardizes the future of thousands of students and alienates communities connected to these languages.

The organization expressed solidarity with the students, emphasizing that Hindi is the mother tongue of many in the region and that Sanskrit represents the roots of India's ancient heritage. They urged the government to recognize the significance of these languages in the curriculum and take immediate steps to address the shortage of teachers.

Movement Kalki called on the government to ensure equitable treatment of all languages and end discriminatory recruitment practices. They warned that failure to act would lead to intensified protests and campaigns.

The press conference was attended by prominent Movement Kalki members, including Thakur Karnail Chand, Pawan Sharma, Sanjeev Dubey, Kishore Kamal, and Kewal Sharma, among others.

## I haven't batted well but feeling good about my game: Rohit Sharma

Following the drawn Test at the Gabba, Rohit makes an honest assessment of his batting Down Under

BRISBANE, Dec 19 (Agencies): Rohit Sharma is the first to admit that his recent batting form has been below par but he continues to "feel good" about his game, providing him hope for the remaining two Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy.

Rohit, who did not play the series opener in Perth due to the birth of his second child, has managed scores of 3, 6 and 10 on the tour. His return to the middle-order after six years to accommodate KL Rahul at the top has made the task even more challenging for him.

Following the drawn Test at the Gabba, Rohit made an honest assessment of his batting Down Under.

"I have not batted well. There's no harm in accepting that. But I know what's in my mind, how I'm preparing myself. All those boxes are very much ticked. It's just about spending as much time as possible, which I'm pretty sure I'm just there," Rohit said in the post match press conference.

"As long as my mind, body, and feet are moving well, I'm pretty happy with how things are panning out for me. Sometimes those numbers can tell you that it's been a while since he's got



big runs.

"But for a person like me, it's all about how I feel in my mind, what kind of preparation I'm having before each game, and how I'm feeling about myself. That's the most important thing and I'm feeling good about myself, to be honest. Runs are obviously not showing that, but inside it's a different feeling," he said.

Rohit gets emotional while talking about Ashwin, Rahane, Pujara

Though R Ashwin made his international retirement on Wednesday, Ajinkya Rahane and Cheteshwar Pujara, heroes of the previous Australia tour, remain active cricketers and are regular in domestic cricket.

When asked how it feels to

lose longtime teammates one after the other, Rohit said players coming and going is part of the game at the highest level and he remains in touch with majority of them.

"We have played so much together. When these guys keep leaving, you do miss them. We are always friends. What can we do (if they retire or are not part of team) ...? We are not together on tours but we keep meeting."

"I keep meeting Ajinkya as he stays in Mumbai. Pujara likes to hide in Rajkot, we don't meet often but we do at times. Ashwin also, he will be with you guys. I am sure we will keep meeting," he said on a lighter note, already predicting a bright future for Ashwin in the media. Known for speaking from his

heart, Rohit soon realised that he might have put himself in trouble by talking about Rahane and Pujara who last played for India in 2023.

"By the way Rahane has not retired (tum marwaoge year) you will put me in trouble (by asking such questions). Even Pujara has not retired. They both can come back."

Avoiding follow-on was a little victory for us

Former Australian cricketers and media questioned India's dressing room celebrations after avoiding the follow-on on Tuesday. But Rohit said there was nothing wrong in celebrating that moment.

"It doesn't matter. I have been here enough number of times to understand what mind games are. From a personal point of view, we were behind in the game, it was a little victory for us to avoid that follow on."

"Looking at the weather and where the game was heading, we managed a draw though Australia were ahead."

"It was a little victory for us. There is no harm in celebrating that. We saw two guys (Bumrah and Akash Deep) fighting for the team and we were happy with that," he added.

## Royal Challengers Bengaluru launches unique training programme in Mundgod

MUNDGOD, Dec 19 (Agencies): Eighteen-year-old Akshay Siddi holds a dream in his heart. He has been practicing tirelessly to complete the 100-meter sprint within 11 seconds. This achievement will soon take him to the United Kingdom, where he will train under Olympic-level coaches.

Akshay's parents, who are farmers, see this as a monumental accomplishment for their son as he chases his dream.

Thanks to the Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB), many Siddi boys and girls can now dream of excelling in sports. Made of Bold Sports Development Program was created by RCB in partnership with non-profit sports organisations, such as the GoSports Foundation and Bridges of Sports Foundation.

Mundgod, also known for its famous Tibetan monasteries, now houses a facility equipped with a hostel, kitchen, trainers, and an indoor gym. Around 25 boys and girls, selected from different parts of the district, are staying and receiving specialized sports training here.

The facility was inaugurated by Rajesh Menon, Vice President and Head of Royal Challengers Bengaluru. He encouraged the aspiring young athletes to dream big and work towards their goals for India's sporting progress.

"India has a diverse range of sporting talents. If you travel up north, you find wrestling. The northeastern states excel in boxing. Similarly, when we explored Karnataka, we decided to

support the Siddi community by establishing this facility," Menon told The New Indian Express.

"RCB is providing national-level coaches who regularly visit Mundgod to train the children. In the coming days, we plan to organise sports camps, appoint dieticians, and bring in sports psychologists. These selected children from the Siddi community have exceptional athletic potential, and RCB is committed to nurturing their talent. Already, two sprinters from this facility are undergoing training in the UK," he added.

Kamala Siddi, a renowned athlete from the Siddi community and currently employed with Indian Railways, is mentoring the training team at Mundgod. Kamala has won several international medals for India and the Railways.

The Siddis are a native tribal community of Karnataka, descended from Southeast Africa. They were brought to India during the Portuguese era. Today, there are around 50,000 Siddis in India, with a majority residing in Uttara Kannada district.

Sixteen-year-old Sushmita Siddi, from Haliyal, has big dreams in track and field events. She is training here for the 100-meter and 200-meter dashes. Having practiced for five years, she recently won a state medal in the 4x100 relay.

"I consider Gabrielle Thomas my inspiration, and I aspire to achieve great success in sports."

The RCB facility provides us with the best training, and we are thrilled to be under the guidance of skilled coaches," she said.

## Here is why Virat Kohli lost his cool at journalist at Melbourne airport

MELBOURNE, Dec 19 (Agencies): As the third Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy ended in a stalemate at the Gabba, both Australian and Indian teams left for Melbourne for the fourth Test.

On their arrival at the Melbourne airport, a video of Indian cricketer Virat Kohli reportedly lashing out at the mediaperson ahead of the Boxing Day Test, has gone viral.

Kohli was engaged in a heated exchange with a journalist, as he appeared to be upset by the presence of cameras directed at his family. According to The Sydney Morning Herald, reporters were interviewing Australian pacer Scott Boland, when Virat Kohli and his family were spotted nearby. Cameras shifted focus to Kohli, who appeared displeased with his family being filmed in a public setting and engaged in a



heated exchange with a reporter.

A reporter from Channel 7 shed more light on the situation. "It was upon seeing the waiting cameras that Kohli became a little heated over what is largely a misunderstanding when he thought the media was filming him with his children," he said on 7NEWS.

Kohli then made his position clear.

"With my kids I need some privacy, you can't

film without asking me," he can be heard saying, as quoted by 7NEWS. Later, the India star cleared the air with the media once it was explained his kids in fact weren't being filmed and he shook hands with the cameraperson before leaving.

Kohli, who started the ongoing Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Australia with a century in Perth, has since faltered, accumulating only 21 runs in the last three outings.

## Just-retired Ashwin returns home with 'zero regrets'; says retirement was instinctive

CHENNAI, Dec 19 (Agencies): There was the mandatory shower of flower petals, lots of smiles and a live band too as Ravichandran Ashwin returned home on Thursday after his shock international retirement in the middle of a Test series in Australia, insisting that he made an "instinctive" decision and is walking away with "zero regrets".

He landed at the Chennai International Airport early this morning and was escorted out by officials of the state cricket association.

The 38-year-old owner of 765 international wickets did not speak to the waiting media there as he hopped into his car where his wife Prithi and two daughters were waiting for him.

However, once he reached home and was surrounded by his parents, and other well-wishers, Ashwin did oblige the waiting newsmen, opening up a bit about his decision.

"It's emotional for a lot



of people, and may be it will sink in (in some time) but for me, personally, it is a great sense of relief and satisfaction. It was very instinctive and it has been running in my head for a while. I just felt (it) on Day 4 and I just called it a day," Ashwin said, referring to the drawn third Test in Brisbane. "... it (retirement) is a not a big decision as far as I am concerned because I am going to embrace a new path," he went on.

Asked if he regretted not being the captain of the national side, Ashwin dismissed the suggestion.

"I can't do it now. I have no such regrets. In fact,

I have zero regrets. I have seen from a distance those people with regrets but I don't have any such regrets," asserted the bowler, who has 537 Test wickets to his credit, making him India's second highest wicket-taker in the format behind the great Anil Kumble (619).

As he entered his house, his parents embraced him and the seasoned bowler was garlanded too. A few from among the gathering took his autograph, shook hands and congratulated him for a stellar run as an India player.

"I never thought so many people will come

here. I just wanted a quiet entry, and was looking forward to relax at home. But you have made my day. I have played Test cricket for so many years, but the last time (I saw something) like this was after the 2011 World Cup," he said.

Ashwin on Wednesday announced retirement with immediate effect in the middle of the five-match Test series that is currently locked 1-1 after three games.

"To be honest, we all go through a lot in our career, not only for cricketers but in general. Generally, when I go to sleep I remember a lot of things like taking wickets, making runs, but those memories are not there in the last two years."

"So, that was a clear indication that we need to take a different route now," Ashwin said.

"I have not set any new goals, as I just want to relax now. Actually, it's difficult for me to stay

inactive, but I want to try that now," he added.

He will continue to play club cricket, including the IPL, where he will return to play for Chennai Super Kings next year.

"I think that part for me is still burning bright. I am going to play for CSK and don't be surprised if I aspire to play for as long as I can. I don't think Ashwin the cricketer is done, I think only Ashwin the Indian cricketer called time. That's it," he reiterated.

In the limited-overs format, being part of the 2011 World Cup and the 2013 Champions Trophy-winning teams would count among the major highlights of his 14-year career.

Ashwin played 116 ODIs for India, claiming 156 wickets, while his 65 T20 International outings yielded 72 scalps.

His career began in 2010 in the one-day format before he made his Test debut a year later.

## Underestimated intensity of world championship, was not at my 100 percent: D Gukesh

CHENNAI, Dec 19 (Agencies): Chess world champion D Gukesh explained why he was not at his best in the Chess World Championship tournament against Magnus Carlsen. The 14-game final had copped criticism from legendary Magnus Carlsen Vladimir Kramnik for being poor in quality.

Speaking to agency in an exclusive interview, Gukesh responded to the criticism and accepted that he was not at his best during the finals. Gukesh stated that he underestimated the intensity of the tournament and the stress that he was going to face

over the 2-week period. In the tournament, a blunder from Liren in the final game saw Gukesh capitalise and secure the win and become the youngest chess World Champion in history. However, the quality of the final did come under scrutiny. Former world champions Carlsen and Vladimir Kramnik were vocal in expressing their displeasure at the Gukesh vs Liren match. Kramnik called it "the end of chess as we know it," while Carlsen would comment that it felt like a second or third round clash in an open tournament.

Gukesh spoke about the criticism and said

that he had reached his best level in the Candidates tournament, which helped him qualify for the Chess World Championship Final and during the Chess Olympiad - where he won the individual gold medal on Board 1.

"I would have preferred to play better than I have, but I also understand that this was my first experience of this kind. To be honest I underestimated the kind of intensity the tournament has. I thought it would be similar to the candidates but it was not at all that. The kind of work that we did in the openings, the kind of emotional stress I



had to face was different, something that I had never experienced," Gukesh spoke about the quality of the chess in the tournament.

"So, it's understandable that I was not at hundred per cent but it is also something to realise that even though I was not at hundred per

cent I could beat one of the best players in the world in an stressful environment. And you know, I have shown my best at candidates and in the Olympiad level and I am confident that I can achieve those heights again in future," he further added.

Asked about his goals

after the tournament, Gukesh said that he was still not the best player in the world - a title that he thought was fit for Magnus Carlsen. Gukesh said that his next goal was to reach Carlsen's level and beat him.

"I think I am one of the best players in the world. But Magnus Carlsen remains to be No.1. I have immense respect for him, but it's also good to have the world championship title. I have him up there (as a benchmark) so it is nice to keep pushing me every day and have something to dream about. My goal has always been to be the best player in the

world. Now that I know that Magnus is there at the top, it helps me push," Gukesh said.

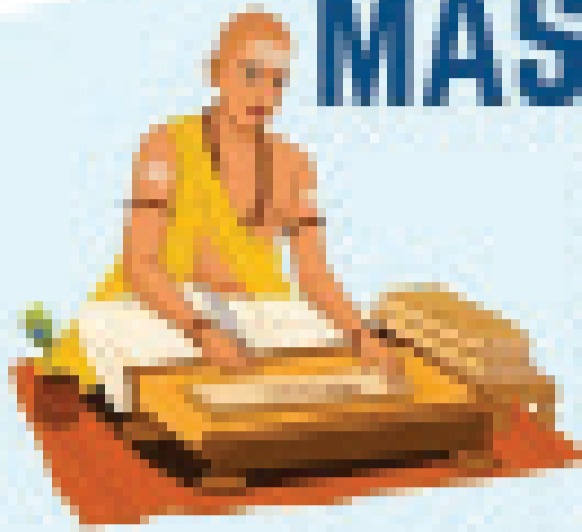
Earlier this week, Gukesh landed in India amidst huge fanfare. Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M.K. Stalin honoured India's newly-crowned Chess World Champion, Gukesh Dommaraju, in a felicitation ceremony and presented him with a cheque for Rs 5 crore in the presence of Deputy Chief Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin and chess legend Viswanathan Anand.

Gukesh expressed heartfelt gratitude during a public address, highlighting the pivotal role of India's chess capital

Chennai and its vibrant chess community in his historic journey. "For me to be standing here as the youngest World Chess Champion, I feel gratitude towards everyone," Gukesh said. He described Chennai as "one of the best cities in the world of chess" and acknowledged the unwavering support of the Tamil Nadu government and the city's Grandmasters. "This couldn't have been possible without the support of the Tamil Nadu government," he remarked, emphasizing the collective contributions that made his remarkable achievement possible.



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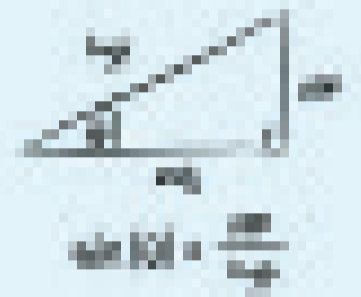
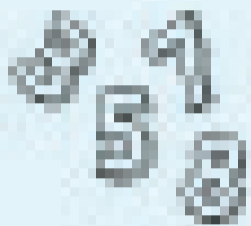


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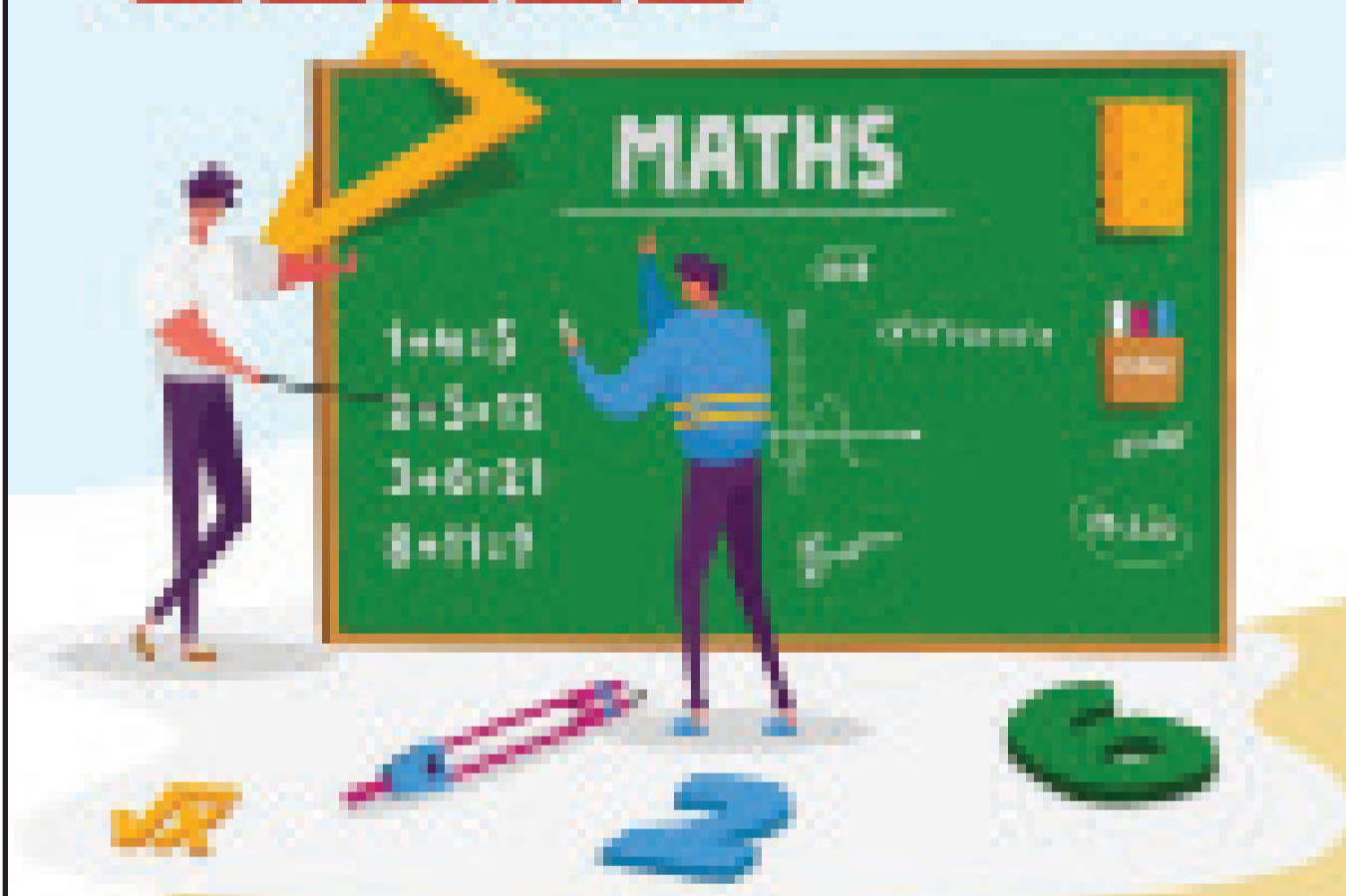
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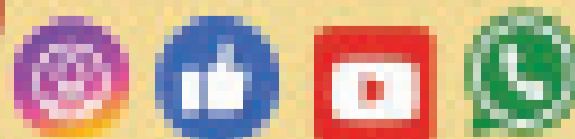
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