

TOP NEWS OF J&K

JAMMU, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 24, 2024

Daily Evening Newspaper



ENTERTAINMENT | 6

Nikki Tamboli to make debut in Punjabi films with item song



NATIONAL | 7

BJP running 'double blunder' Govt, not 'double engine' one: Akhilesh Yadav

INTERNATIONAL | 8

Tonga's parliament elects a new prime minister after his predecessor quit this month



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BRIEFLY

67 officers selected to Junior Scale of JKAS, JKPS directed to submit contact details for verification

JAMMU, Dec 24 (Agencies): On the recommendations of J&K Public Service Commission, 67 candidates selected for the Junior Scale of Jammu and Kashmir Administrative Service, Accounts Service, and Police Service have been instructed to submit their email IDs and contact details to the General Administration Department within seven days, by December 29, 2024. Jammu and Kashmir tourism As per an order, this step is essential for uploading their verification rolls in the Employees Verification System (EVS).

Search Operation launched in Kishtwar following suspicious movement

JAMMU, Dec 24 (Agencies): Security forces launched a cordon-and-search operation in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar district on Tuesday following suspicious movement in the area, sources said. Jammu local businesses, Jammu and Kashmir tourism Village Defence Guard (VDG) members reportedly fired a few shots after detecting suspicious movement in Kuntwara area of the district, they added. Subsequently, security forces and police were mobilised, and a cordon-and-search operation was launched, the sources said.

The incident occurred in the same area where, on November 7, two VDG members were killed by terrorists.

No respite from cold: MeT says chill to continue till Dec 26

SRINAGAR, Dec 24 (Agencies): The Meteorological Centre Srinagar Tuesday said that cold wave conditions will continue at isolated places of Jammu and Kashmir till December 26. It also predicted dry weather with light rains over plains in Jammu while light snow over higher

Amit Shah reviews implementation of three new criminal laws

NEW DELHI, Dec 24 (Agencies): Emphasising the use of technology, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday has directed National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) and National Informatics Centre (NIC), the technical arm of the Centre, to ensure that alerts be generated for all criminal cases at predefined stages and



timelines right from registration to disposal of the case to benefit victims and complainants.

Shah's direction came while chairing a review meeting on the implementation of three new criminal laws with the NCRB in the national capital.

"Alerts to investigation officers as well as

Turn to page 9

'We should try again': Punjab Assembly Speaker on Vajpayee's failed India-Pak peace initiative

LAHORE (Pakistan), Dec 24 (Agencies): "Even though the chance was missed, we should try again," says Punjab Assembly Speaker Malik Ahmad Khan when asked about Atal Bihari Vajpayee's 1999 'bus yatra', a bold attempt by the then Indian Prime Minister to put India-Pakistan relations on the peace track.

Vajpayee took a bus ride to Lahore on February 19, 1999. He and Pakistan premier Nawaz Sharif signed the Lahore Declaration after a historic summit here. The agreement signalled a breakthrough, but just months later a Pakistani intrusion led to the Kargil War.

Wednesday is Vajpayee's 100th birth anniversary.

"Vajpayee's visit to Lahore in 1999 was a defining moment. Even though the chance was missed, we should try again. With Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who follows Vajpayee's vision, leading India, and Shehbaz Sharif, Nawaz's brother, in charge in Pakistan,

Turn to page 9

Congress holds Ambedkar samman march in Jammu, seeks apology from Shah

JAMMU, Dec 24 (Agencies): The Congress held an Ambedkar Samman March in Jammu city on Tuesday to protest against Union Home Minister Amit Shah's remarks on the chief architect of the Constitution, and reiterated its demand for an apology.

The march is part of a nationwide protest to demand accountability from the home minister.

The Congress launched a weeklong campaign against



Shah, alleging that he insulted Ambedkar with his remarks while partici-

pating in a debate on the Constitution in the Rajya Sabha last week.

Led by the Congress' Jammu and

Turn to page 9

Gudoora incident: Woman died after son-in-law reportedly pushed her, say Police

SRINAGAR, Dec 24 (Agencies): Police on Tuesday said that a lady namely Khurshi Begum of Looswani Pulwama reportedly died after pushed by son-in-law during arguments with his wife in Gudoora area of Pulwama yesterday.

Police said an FIR has been lodged under relevant sections of law and the son-in-law of the deceased has been lodged at police station Pulwama, while as fur-

ther investigations into the case have been initiated.

"Yesterday evening at about 1800 hours, one lady namely Khurshi Begum W/o Ab Rehman Dar R/o Looswani was brought dead to DH Pulwama. Reportedly deceased was present at her daughter's home at Gudoora. Deceased's daughter namely Rafeeqa Bano W/o Mohammad Aslam Mir R/o Gudoora and her hus-

band were having some arguments and the deceased also got into it," police in a statement said.

During this process reportedly accused pushed her and she collapsed," the statement said.

In this regard Rafeeqa Bano (complainant) gave a written complaint against her husband Mohammad Aslam Mir R/O Gudoora on which

Turn to page 9

National Conference slams party MP Aga Ruhullah for leading student protest

SRINAGAR, Dec 24 (Agencies): National Conference leader and MLA Hazratbal, Salman Ali Sagar Tuesday expressed strong dismay over the protest led by party's own Member of Parliament from Srinagar, Aga Ruhullah over reservation policy row. The protest was also joined by several opposition leaders and legislators.

Speaking with reporters at NC headquarters in Srinagar, Salman Sagar, said that if the MP believes that he can do it, then that's his indi-



vidual prerogative, however, this was not the National Conference's initiative.

Salman said that the party only organises protests after instructions from senior leaders such as Dr Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah, or after

directives from the general secretary's office. "Such protests are not organised independently by individuals. They must be authorised by the party leadership. What happened yesterday was entirely an individual action and not a National Conference event," he said.

"A Gathering of Rivals" Salman said the protest was a platform for the party's adversaries. "It was a gathering of our adversaries, of our enemies. Unfortunately, one of our MPs was present

Turn to page 9

Don't fiddle with rights of Dalits, Gujjars, Paharis: Tarun Chugh to J&K CM on anti-reservation protest



JAMMU, Dec 24 (Agencies): BJP general secretary and in charge of the party's Jammu and Kashmir affairs Tarun Chugh on Tuesday accused Chief Minister Omar Abdullah of trying to deprive the underprivileged classes of their rights in the

name of rationalisation of reservation policy.

Speaking to media persons, Tarun Chugh said, "Omar Abdullah Ji the country is run according to the Constitution and nobody will be allowed to fiddle with the rights of the Dalits, Gujjars, Paharis and other under-

privileged classes of the society. INDIA bloc and the National Conference (NC) have deprived the underprivileged classes of their rights and they are again working on conspiracies to do the same. In the NC government members of the Valmiki Samaj could not get a government job and the BJP gave the constitutional right of reservations to these people."

He said, "NC is working on politics of revenge and retaliation against these people, but we will not allow them to do it. Instead of engaging

Turn to page 9

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UTHALA
Our beloved **Smt Ratna Devi** passed away peacefully on Sunday 22nd December 2024. **Uthala** will be performed at Chand Nagar Gurudwara Near Fortune Hotel on 25th December 2024 (Wednesday) from 3:00-4:00pm
IN GRIEF AND PRAYER
Sons and Daughter-in-laws
Sh Raj Kumar & Smt Anu Gupta
Sh Surinder Gupta & Smt Sandhya
Sh Ashwani Gupta & Smt Alka
Sh Ravi Gupta & Smt Seema
Sh Jyoti Gupta & Smt Mamta
Daughter and Son-in-law
Smt Sunita & Sh Vinod Mahajan



Smt Ratna Devi

FIFTH DAY
With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved sister **Smt. Lalita Sharma** W/o Late Sh. Ghanshyam Raina R/o Fattu Chougan Jammu who left for her heavenly abode on 22-12-2024 (Sunday). The Fifth Day will be held on 25-12-2024 (Wednesday) from 11.00 AM to 12.00 Noon at our residence H.No. 185-B Ram Vihar Old Janipur, Jammu.
Grief Stricken
Sh. Uttam Deep Sharma- Brother Brother & Bhabhi
Sh. Shashi Kumar Sharma & Anuradha Sharma
Mob. No.: 9419143310, 9419110930
Tharmatt Family




Smt. Lalita Sharma

10TH DAY/KRIYA/RASAM PAGRI
With heavy heart & profound grief, we are sorry to inform the sad demise of our beloved mother **Smt. Vidya Devi (Bobo Ji)** W/o Late Sh. Om Parkash Pakhrin resident of Ward No.4, Ramnagar, who breathed her last on 15th Dec. 2024. **Tenth Day** will be performed on 24th Dec. 2024 (Tuesday) at 11.00 AM to 12.00 Noon at Brahmin Sabha Ramnagar. **13th Day/Kriya**
Kriya will be performed on 27th Dec. 2024 at our residence W.No.4, Ramnagar at 12.00 Noon onwards. **Rasam Pagri** on 27th Dec at 4.00 PM at our residence.
GRIEF STRICKEN
Sons & Daughters-in-law
Sh. Ashok Gupta & Smt. Sneha Lata
Sh. Kulbeer Gupta (Billa Shah) & Smt. Sushma Gupta
Sh. Pardeep Gupta & Smt. Arju Gupta
Daughters & Sons-in-law
Smt. Swarn Lata & Late Sh. Kishor Gupta
Smt. Rama Gupta & Kulbeer Gupta
Deeply Remembered By:-
All Grand Children
M/s Om Pharmaceuticals (Jammu)
Malgotra Medical Shop (Ramnagar)
Contact No: 9419273939, 9419281654




SMT. VIDYA DEVI (BOBO JI)

TENTH DAY
With profound grief and sorrow, we announce the sudden and untimely demise of our loving **Sh. Anil Choudhary** S/o Late Sh. Sardar Singh & Smt. Mohinder Devi on 17/12/2024. **10th Day Satsang** will be held on 25/12/2024 (Wednesday) from 10.00 am onwards at our residence Pateli Brahmins, Akhnour Road, Jammu.
GRIEF STRICKEN
Smt. Rajani Choudhary - Wife (Brothers & Bhabhis)
Smt. Sheela Devi & Sh. Jaswant Choudhary
Smt. Shakuntla Devi & Sh. Darshan Choudhary
Smt. Kiran Choudhary & Sh. Bitta Choudhary
(Sisters & Brother-in-laws)
Smt. Vaishno Devi & Sh. Charanjeet Singh
Smt. Meenu Choudhary & Sh. Rashpal Choudhary
Somal and Akshir **(Son & Daughter)**
M/s J.S. Choudhary & Sons
M/s Anil Brothers
M/s Unique Tiles
M/s Jeva Builders
M/s Deva Traders
Mob.: 9419132002, 9103056079




Late Sh. Anil Choudhary (Govt. Contractor PHE Deptt.)

CHOUBARSI
Four years have passed since you left us for heavenly abode. We remember you and miss your presence in every moment of our lives.
CHOUBARSI of **Smt. Suman Dutta** W/o Late Sh Rajesh Dutta will be performed on 27th December at Shakti Palace on degree college road near Birla Park Kathua.
Deeply Missed and Remembered by:
Pooja and Saurabh Dutta (7006533007)
Sheetal and Abheek Dutta (8283818420)
Shakuntla Dutta



Smt. Suman Dutta

10TH DAY KRIYA
With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved Father **Karmyogi Sh. Narayan Raina** S/o Lt Sh. Prasad Razdan R/o Arreh, Tehsil & Distt. Kulgam, Kashmir A/P H.No. 39, Sec 2, Sharika Vihar, Lower Roop Nagar, Jammu.
10th Day Kriya will be held at Muthi Ghat on 26th Dec, 2024 (Thursday) at 9:30 AM.
GRIEF STRICKEN:
Son and Daughter-in Law:
Sh. Ramesh Raina and Smt. Versha Ji
Daughters & Sons-in-law:
Smt. Bimla and Sh. Pyaray Lal Bhat
Smt. Kaki and Sh. Bheem Ji Bhat
Smt. Pinky and Sh. Bal Krishan Pandita
Grand Children: Sakshi, Sonali, Bhabli, Rakesh, Vimal, Menika, Viboti, Mega
Contact: 9419149997, 9469807767, 9103890965.



Karmyogi Sh. Narayan Raina

KRIYA / UTHALA
With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform that our beloved **Smt. Lalita Gupta** W/o Late Sh. Krishan Lal Gupta, R/o H No: 311-B, Bharat Nagar, Rehari Colony, Jammu has left for the heavenly abode on 13th of December, 2024. May her noble soul rest in peace. **KRIYA** will be performed on 25th of December, 2024 (Wednesday) at 10:00 am at our residence- H No: 311-B, Bharat Nagar, Rehari Colony, Jammu.
UTHALA will be performed on 25th of December, 2024 (Wednesday) at 3:00 pm to 4:00 pm at Hari Mandir, Rehari Colony Jammu
GRIEF STRICKEN:
Son & Daughter in Law:
Sh. Ravinder Kumar Gupta & Smt. Vandana Gupta
Sh. Sanjeev Kumar Gupta & Smt. Rajni Gupta
Sh. Rahul Kumar Gupta (J&K Bank, Zonal Office, Jammu) & Smt. Richa Gupta
Daughter: Smt. Neelam Gupta W/o Late Sh. Parmod Gupta
Grand Son: Love Gupta
Grand Daughter: Ridhima, Amisha, Parul, Sachli, Aarvi & Sonali
Grand Daughter & Grand Son in Law: Mrs. Sonam Gupta and Mr. Tarun Suri
MOBILE NO: 9858204440, 7006657225 & 9419961856



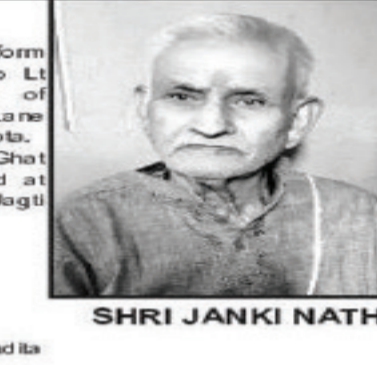
SMT. LALITA GUPTA

TENTH DAY KRIYA
With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad & untimely demise of our beloved mother **Smt. Pitty Pandita (Pyari)** W/o Late Shri Jagar Nath Pandita on 21.12.2024 (Saturday), originally resident of Hakcherpora (Hatmulla) District & Tehsil Kupwara, presently at Lane No.17, Block No. 84, Flat No. 19 Mini Township Jagti Colony Nagrota, Jammu. The **MOURNING** is being observed at Lane 17 Community Hall, Mini Township Jagti near BSNL Tower.
TENTH DAY KRIYA will be held on Monday, 30.12.2024 at Akhnour Ghat and assembly will take place at 11:00 AM, Lane 17 Community Hall, Mini Township Jagti near BSNL Tower.
GRIEF STRICKEN:-
SAMAST, PANDITA ,BHAT PARIVARS
CONTACT NOS: 9419250786, 9419250781, 9469650834, 9622320893



Smt. Pitty Pandita (Pyari)

TENTH DAY
With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of **Shri Janki Nath** S/o Lt Sarwanand Pandita originally resident of Rawoocha Rafiabadd Baramulla at present Lane No.3, Block-12, Flat-13, Jagti Township, Nagrota. The **Tenth Day** will be performed at Akhnour Ghat on 27-12-2024 and **Assembly** will be held at Community Hall Backside Lane No.4, Jagti Nagrota at 11.30 AM.
GRIEF STRICKEN
Smt. Princy Devi - Wife
Son & Daughter-in-law
Sh. Sha linder Pandita & Smt. Pooja Pandita
Daughter & Son-in-law
Smt. Asta Pandita & Sh. Ravinder Kumar Pandita
Brothers & Bhabhis
Smt. Dulari & Sh. Prem Nath Pandita
Smt. Jaishori Pandita & Sh. Makhan Lal Pandita
Lt. Smt. Lajwanti Pandita & Sh. Chuni Lal Pandita
Smt. Kamla Thusoo & Lt. Sh. J.N Thusoo - **Sister**
Grand Children: Deepika, Kashti, Eshita, Harshita, Divyanshi, Charleen, Esh Harsh, Daksh, Vasu, Rudraksh
Mob: 6006967906, 9906197577, 8899548132



SHRI JANKI NATH

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 Razdan Mohalla Handwara Kashmir at Present 3/50 Pandoka colony Paloura Jammu.
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. Kirya Lal Pandita & Smt Shieela Ji
Sh. Choni Lal and Smt Vijay Ji
Smt Nimi Raina & Sh. Tej Krishna Raina -**Daughter in law & Son**
Smt Sarla Raina & Sh. Behari Lal Raina -**Daughter in law & Son**
Smt Pinky Raina & Sh. Ravinder Raina -**Daughter in law & Son**
Smt Smita Raina & Sh. Sanjay Raina -**Daughter in law & Son**
Smt Asha Hastu and Sh. Shubhan Krishna Hastu- **Daughter & Son in Law**
Smt Rajni Chaita & Sh. Vinod Chaita -**Daughter & Son in Law**
Smt & Sh. Moti Lal Raina -**Cousin**
Smt & Sh. Hari Krishan Raina - **Cousin**
Grand Children's and Smaat Raina Pariwar
9419193383, 9419116443, 9419280062, 9419117970




Smt Dhanwati Raina

TENTH DAY KRIYA
With profound grief and sorrow it is to be inform to all near & dear that **Smt. Woma Shori Bhat** W/o Lt. Sh. Dwarka Nath Bhat R/o Chandpora Hanwan Srinagar at present H.No 595/A, Lane No. 5, Suryavanshi Nagar, Lower Roop Nagar, Muthi Jammu.
TENTH DAY KRIYA will be performed at Akhnour on 27th December 2024 and **ASSEMBLY** will be held at Muthi Ghat (11:30 AM)
GRIEF STRICKEN
Brother-in-law- Mohan Lal Bhat
Son and Daughter-in-law
Chinda Bhat W/o Gokal Nath Bhat
Soni Bhat W/o Sarjay Kumar Bhat
Daughter and Son-in-law
Lt. Bita Pandita W/o Barsi Lal Pandita
Nirmala Koul W/o Tej Krishan Koul
Sunita Bhat (Punmy) W/o Dileep Kumar Bhat
AND SAMAST BHAT, KUL, PANDITA PARIWAR
MOB: 9419206241, 7889767088



SMT. WOMA SHORI BHAT

TENTH DAY KRIYA
With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Karmyogi Smt. Sham Rani Raina** W/o Late Sh. Shyam Lal Raina original resident of Rangteng, Alkadai, Srinagar and at present H.No. 28, Trikuta Lane 1, Behind Krishna Palcos, Sector-1, Durga Nagar, P.O. Roop Nagar, Jammu on 16/12/2024. **Tenth Day Kriya** will be performed on 25/12/2024, Wednesday at Muthi Ghat near Directorate of School Education. **Assembly** shall be held at 11.00 a.m.
GRIEF STRICKEN
(Son & Daughter-in-law)
Piyare Lal Raina & Girja Raina
9149742737, 7006245609
Lalita Raina & Abhinav Ganjoo (Daughter & Son-in-law)
9419197527, 9419192788
Usha Raina & Pran Nath Pandita (Daughter & Son-in-law)
9149656253, 9419240799
Lt. Som Nath Raina & Nancy Raina (Son & Daughter-in-law)
Upinder Krishan Raina & Sarla Raina (Son & Daughter-in-law) **9018996105**
Grand & Great Grand Children




Karmyogi Smt. Sham Rani Raina

TENTH DAY/UTHALA
With profound grief & sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Smt Babita Doga** W/o Sh. Parshottom Lal R/o 161/128 Pacco Drakki Jammu who left for her heavenly abode on 15th of December, 2024. **Tenth Day** will be performed on 24-12-2024 (Tuesday) from 12:00 Noon at Doga Bahmin Sabha, Parade Jammu.
Uthala will be performed on 27-12-2024 (Friday) from 4.00 PM to 5.00 PM at Doga Bahmin Sabha Parade, Jammu.
Grief Stricken
Sh. Parshottom Lal -Husband
Shivani & Munish Mann - Daughter & Son-in-law
Shigna Doga -Daughter
Brothers-in-law & Sisters-in-law
Tilak Raj & Santosh Kumari
Suraj Parkash & Santosh Kumari
Subhas Chander & Shakti Devi
Naresh Doga & Savita Doga
M/s Girdhari Tea Stall, Pacca Darga, Jammu
Mobile: 9419703272, 9622912338



Smt Babita Doga

OBITUARY
With profound grief and sorrow we regret to inform you the sad demise of **Mithun Prashar** (J&K Bank) S/o Late Sh. Ram Murti Sharma, R/O Bhagwati Nagar, Kathua who left us for heavenly abode on 21st December, 2024.
GRIEF STRICKEN:-
Smt. Anita Sharma (Mother)
(Chachi & Chachu)
Smt. Savita Sharma & Pawan Kr Sharma
Smt. Savita Sharma & Kewal Krishan Sharma
Smt. Priya Sharma (Wife)
(Bhabhi and Brother)
Smt. Indu and Sh. Ankur Prashar
Smt. Megha Prashar and Sh. Ranbir Singh (Sister and Brother in Law)
Master Ayan Prashar (Son)
9622320206



Mithun Prashar (J&K Bank)

10TH DAY/13TH DAY
With profound grief and immense sorrow we regret to inform the sad and untimely demise of our beloved **Mr Vishal Narwalia (Bablu)** S/o Sh. Pardeep Kumar R/o H. No.311 W. No.09, Mohalla Ustad Jammu on dated 13-12-2024. **10TH DAY** will be performed on 22-12-2024 (Sunday) at 11.00 AM at our residence. **13TH DAY** will be performed on 25-12-2024 (Wednesday) at 11.00 am at our residence.
GRIEF STRICKEN
Smt Rajni Devi & Sh. Pardeep Narwalia - Mother & Father
Smt. Preeti Narwalia - Wife
Pratham & Himansu - Son
Smt. Shalu Narwalia & Sh. Vikas Narwalia - **Bhabhi & Brother**
Smt. Neetu Parwa & Sh. Rishi Kumar - **Sister & Brother in Law**
CONTACT: 7889343261, 9622233696




MR VISHAL NARWALIA (BABLU)

TENTH DAY
With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Mother Smt. Raj Rani** W/o Late Prem Nath Bhat of Zangalpora Devast, Kulgam at present H.No. 332, Dina Nagar, Bani Near Ramo Event on 22/12/2024. The **Tenth Day** will be performed on 30/12/2024 (Monday) at Akhnour Ghat and the **Assembly** will be held at our residence at 11.30 am.
GRIEF STRICKEN
Pran Nath Bhat and Lalita Pandita (Son & Daughter-in-law)
Grand Son & Grand Daughter-in-law)
Suraj Bhat and Melak Pandita
Doly Bhat and Ram Krishan Bhat (Daughter & Son-in-law)
(Daughter & Son-in-law)
Pinky Pandith and Prashman Krishan Pandith
Grand Children : Showeta Bhat, Kavita Bhat, Anu Raina, Amit Pandith, Swati, Sunj, Sumit
Mobile : 7006093175, 812508131, 7780949501, 9419209111



Smt. Raj Rani

UTHALA / RASAM KRIYA
With profound grief and sorrow we regret to inform you the sad and untimely demise of our beloved **Sh. Jiwan Jandial** who left for his heavenly abode on 17th December 2024. **UTHALA** will be held on 20th December 2024 from 4:00 pm to 5:00 pm at Shiv Temple, Housing Colony, Udhampur. **Rasam Kriya** will be held on 28th December 2024 at Devika Ghat.
Grief Stricken:
Sh. Shambhu Nath Jandial (Father)
Mrs. Jyoti Jandial (Wife)
Mr. Sarvesh Jandial (Son)
Brij Paul Jandial and Sonika Mahajan (Brother and Bhabhi)
Gopal Jandial and Ruchi Jandial (Brother and Bhabhi)
Contact No. 9419697220, 9419160526



Sh. Jiwan Jandial (1967 - 2024)

TENTH DAY KRIYA
With profound grief and sorrow, it is to be inform to all near & dear that **Smt. Dulari Raina** W/o Late Trikoti Nath Raina R/o Devi Angan Hari Perbat Srinagar Kashmir, Present at L-474, Opp SBI Palam Dabri Road New Delhi-110045. **Tenth Day Kriya** will be performed at Modi Nagar Ganga Ghat Chotta Hariwar, Muradnagar Ghazialbad. Later Assembly will be held 29th Dec at above mentioned New Delhi address at 1 PM.
GRIEF STRICKEN
Aashwini Raina -Son
Bharti Raina -Daughter-in-law
Aastok Raina -Son
Arti Raina -Daughter-in-law
Grandsons : Mayin Raina, Rudraksh Raina, Samaeeta Raina
Brothers-in-law & Sister
Sh. Karshi Nath Raina
Sh. Durga Nath Raina & Smt. Puhpanjali Raina
Sister-in-law
Sheela Ji
& SAMAST RAINA PARIVAR
MOB: 7838725960, 9810377972, 9873101391



SMT. DULARI RAINA

10TH DAY KRIYA
With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved Father **Karmyogi Sh. Narayan Raina** S/o Lt Sh. Prasad Razdan R/o Arreh, Tehsil & Distt. Kulgam, Kashmir A/P H.No. 39, Sec 2, Sharika Vihar, Lower Roop Nagar, Jammu.
10th Day Kriya will be held at Muthi Ghat on 26th Dec, 2024 (Thursday) at 9:30 AM.
GRIEF STRICKEN:
Son and Daughter-in Law:
Sh. Ramesh Raina and Smt. Versha Ji
Daughters & Sons-in-law:
Smt. Kaki and Sh. Bheem Ji Bhat
Smt. Pinky and Sh. Bal Krishan Pandita
Grand Children: Sakshi, Sonali, Bhabli, Rakesh, Vimal, Menika, Viboti, Mega
Contact: 9419149997, 9469807767, 9103890965.



Karmyogi Sh. Narayan Raina

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Christmas Carnival celebration held at Shiksha Niketan

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 24: Shiksha Niketan Higher Secondary School, Jeevan Nagar, Jammu, hosted a spectacular Christmas Carnival on Tuesday, spreading joy and festive cheer among students, staff, and guests. The event was graced by the presence of Rasika Sikka, BDO HQ, Jammu, who is also an alumna of the school. Saint George Matti, State President of RMS and presently serving as Father in Maha Abhishek Church, Bishnah, added to the spiritual and celebratory atmosphere of the occasion.



The event commenced with a welcome to the dignitaries, followed by a series of cultural performances. Students showcased their talent through vibrant dance performances, captivating the audience with their energy and creativity. Adding to the festive spirit, a lively Christmas carol session filled the air with melodious tunes. The Christmas Carnival also featured various games, music, and a range of food stalls, creating a fun-filled environment for students to enjoy and cherish. The school ensured inclusivity and celebration for all by distributing food items among the teachers and staff members,

adding a thoughtful touch to the event. Speaking on the occasion, Rasika Sikka expressed her nostalgia and pride in being part of the Shiksha Niketan family and lauded the school's efforts in organising such vibrant celebrations. Saint George Matti emphasized the message of peace, love, and togetherness that Christmas embodies. The Christmas Carnival concluded on a high note with laughter, joy, and cherished memories for all attendees. The management, staff, and students of Shiksha Niketan Higher Secondary School extended their gratitude to the guests and everyone who contributed to making the event a grand success.

AJKSCC to commemorate martyrdom of Chaar Sahibzadas in Dec 26

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 24: The All Jammu Kashmir Sikh Coordination Committee (AJKSCC) held a press conference at the Press Club Jammu on Tuesday, attended by executive members from across Jammu and Kashmir.



The Chairman, Ajit Singh, flanked by Chief Advisor Avtar Singh Khalsa, General Secretary Surat Singh Toofani, and other office bearers, announced the organization of a religious function to commemorate the martyrdom of Chaar Sahibzadas (Vir Bal Diwas). The event will take place on December 26, 2024, at Gurudwara Sahib (Sant Mela Singh Dastkari Ashram), Digiana, Jammu, from 6:00 PM to 9:30 PM. This national-level observance honors the supreme sacrifice of Baba Ajit Singh Ji, Baba Jujhar Singh Ji, Baba Zorawar Singh Ji, and Baba Fateh Singh Ji, the sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, who gave their lives to protect religion, culture, and humanity. The Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir, Manoj Kumar Sinha, will be the chief guest, paying homage to the unparalleled martyrdom of the Sahibzadas. Baba Balwant Singh Ji, and others, will deliver sermons on Gurbani and Sikh history. Ajit Singh urged the Sangat to attend the function and pay their respects. The event promises to be a profound tribute to the legacy of the Sahibzadas, fostering universal brotherhood and spiritual enlightenment. The press conference was attended by notable members, including Gurjit Singh, Sukhdev Singh, Paramjit Singh, and others.

BJP's LoP Sunil Sharma accuses NC of 'Fixed Match' on protest over reservation

Demands apology from 'Congress for defaming Ambedkar'



Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 24: Sunil Sharma, the Leader of Opposition in Jammu and Kashmir from the BJP Tuesday, accused the National Conference (NC) of orchestrating a "fixed match" regarding the recent protest over reservation. Sharma claimed that the protest was nothing more than a political maneuver involving Aga Ruhullah and Chief

Minister Omar Abdullah, alleging that both sides were in collusion. "It's the first time we are witnessing such a spectacle, where members from the same ruling faction protest and meet the Chief Minister inside," Sharma said, asserting that this was a clear sign of political theatrics rather than genuine dissent. Sunil Sharma went further to assert that

the NC would ultimately face defeat, claiming that their attempts to mislead the open merit aspirants would not succeed. He also took aim at Congress, accusing them of defaming Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of India's Constitution. Sharma pointed to the historical removal of Ambedkar from his position as the Law Minister by Congress, which he described as a deliberate conspiracy to undermine Ambedkar's legacy. He demanded that the Congress tender an unconditional apology for its role in tarnishing the reputation of one of India's most revered figures.

Dr. Rupesh honoured with Excellence Award in Public Relations and Communications in Tbilisi, Georgia

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 24: Dr. Rupesh Kumar Singh, a distinguished figure in the fields of Public Relations, Corporate Affairs, and Social Advocacy, has been awarded the Excellence Award in Public Relations and Communications. The award, presented in a prestigious ceremony in Tbilisi, Georgia, recognizes Dr. Singh's remarkable contributions to the PR and communications sector, as well as his continued efforts in social development, media advocacy, and sports promotion. The renowned persons were honoured for their contributions and achievements in their respective fields. From India, prominent personalities honoured on the occasion were Dr Anshu Kataria, Chairman, Aryans Group of Colleges, Rajpura, Near Chandigarh; Acharya Manish; Founder, Jeena

seekho, Life care Ltd & MD, HIIMS. Dr. Rupesh Kumar Singh, who currently serves as Head, Corporate Affairs, Punjab and Haryana, Adani Group, has a wealth of academic and professional experience. He holds an LLB, a Master's in Arts, an MBA, and a Post Graduate Diploma in English Journalism from the Indian Institute of Mass Communication. He is also a Silver Medalist from Punjab University in his Master's program. His academic achievements have laid the foundation for a successful career that spans multiple sectors, including public relations, corporate affairs, and social initiatives. Dr. Singh's leadership role as Chairman of the Bihar Foundation (Punjab & Chandigarh Chapter) has been instrumental in building stronger ties between the people of Bihar and the wider North Indian community. The Bihar Foundation is a key initiative of the Government of Bihar, aimed at promoting the social, cultural, and economic interests of the state. Under Dr. Singh's leadership, the Foundation has launched several initiatives that focus on community empowerment, skill development, and welfare programs, benefiting countless individuals in the Punjab and Chandigarh regions.

Free medical camp will organise by Varicose and More in collaboration with GHRT India in Doda on Dec 29



Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 24: Varicose and More Pvt Ltd, a leading healthcare organization which has started multiple 24 hour clinics within house 24 hour pharmacy and free consultations of doctors from 9PM to 7AM, in association with Global Human Rights Trust, a renowned non-profit organization, is organizing a free mega medical camp on December 29, 2024 from 10:30 AM at Atulaya Health Care Behind GMC Doda. The medical camp aims to provide free consultations, diagnostic tests,

and treatment to patients suffering from vascular diseases, cancer related issues, neurological, pediatric, gynaecological and other health issues. Specialist doctors will be available for consultations. "We are committed to providing quality healthcare services to those in need. We aim at not only providing free consultations but also free medicines and laboratory tests to the people of Doda, Baderwah and Kishtwar," said Dr. Anisa Nisar Jan Executive Director, Varicose and More Pvt Ltd.

"Global Human Rights Trust is dedicated to promoting healthcare as a fundamental human right. We have been actively involved in such initiatives and we are glad to be associated with Varicose and More Pvt. Ltd which has an expertise in conducting such medical camps," said Dr H R Rehman Chairman, Global Human Rights Trust. "We are glad to be associated with V&M clinics and GHRT for the forthcoming mega medical camp to be held in Doda on 29th December. Atulaya Healthcare is one of the leading diagnostic facilities in the country and we are delighted to announce that we would be extending certain investigations totally free of cost on that day to all patients and the remaining investigations on flat 20% discount," said Vikram Jasrotia, State Head of Atulaya Healthcare.

PSPS GCW Gandhi Nagar celebrates National Mathematics Day

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 24: Department of Mathematics, Padam Shri Padma Sachdev Govt. College for Women, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu celebrated National Mathematics Day on 23-24th December, 2024. The celebration commenced with the rendition of the iconic song "Zero Dija Bharat Ne" sung by Anu and Rajni Devi of semester 5. Dr. S.P. Saraswat, Principal of the College was the Chief Guest of the event. He encouraged the students to cultivate interest and

passion towards the subject. Dr. Renu Anand, HoD, Department of Mathematics and convener of the event formally welcomed the guests and shared insights into the extraordinary achievements of legendary Mathematician Srinivas Ramanujan. Dr. Shally Gupta, HOD, Mathematics and Dr. Kamaljeet Kour from M.A. M College Jammu, Dr Rawan Kumar and Dr. Yash Paul from GCW Gandhi Nagar were the Jury members for the various events. They enlightened the students about the life and work of the great

mathematician Srinivas Ramanujan and also about the role of Mathematics in the development of India. About 100 students attended the event, with 30 students participating enthusiastically in various activities, including a poster-making competition and a mathematics quiz held on December 23, followed by a poetry recitation competition on Tuesday. The events showcased the creativity and knowledge of the participants, celebrating the beauty of mathematics in diverse forms. Anchal and Rashmeen compered the event. A formal vote of

thanks was presented by Kanan. The organizing committee included Dr. Anshu Sharma and Dr. Sonali Sharma from the Department of Mathematics. Dr. Rupinder Kour, Dr. Jyoti Dutt, Prof. Anupama Sharma, Dr. Pooja Charak and Dr. Jagmeet Kour also graced the event. The celebration of National Mathematics Day not only honored the legacy of Srinivas Ramanujan but also inspired students to explore the endless possibilities that mathematics offers in shaping a progressive and innovative future for India.

PM Shri GGMS Jindrah organizes educational tour to Jambu Zoo

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 24: In a bid to offer practical exposure to wildlife and nature conservation, the PM Shri Government Girls Middle School, Jindrah, organized an educational tour to Jambu Zoo. This initiative, supported under the PM Shri Scheme, aimed at broadening the students' understanding of biodiversity and fostering a sense of environmental responsibility. The day began with a group of enthusiastic students, accompanied by their teachers and staff, embarking on an exciting journey to Jambu Zoo. The objective of the trip was to provide the students with hands-on learning

about wildlife, various species, and their habitats, enhancing their appreciation for the natural world. Upon reaching the zoo, the students were given an introductory session about the layout and facilities of the zoo. They explored different sections that showcased diverse species, including mammals, reptiles, and birds. The students were particularly fascinated by animals. They learned about the habitats of these species, their diets, and the conservation efforts being made to protect them from threats like habitat loss, poaching, and climate change. The students were encouraged to engage actively with the exhib-

its and participate in discussions with the zoo staff, who provided valuable insights into the ecological significance of each species. The tour also emphasized the role of conservation in safeguarding endangered species and preserving biodiversity for future generations. The visit concluded with a feedback session where students shared their thoughts on the experience. Many expressed their excitement about the animals they saw and their newfound understanding of the importance of protecting nature. They pledged to adopt more eco-friendly practices in their daily lives and promote wildlife conservation in their communi-

ties. The educational tour was coordinated by a team of teachers and staff members, including Sanjay Sharma, Lakshmi Devi, Bindya Rani, Babita Kumari, Sadaket Ali, Nisha, and Sandhya. The school administration also expressed gratitude to the PM Shri Scheme for supporting such initiatives that enrich students' education and help shape environmentally conscious citizens. This educational tour not only enhanced students' knowledge about wildlife but also instilled a deeper sense of responsibility towards nature, promoting a culture of environmental stewardship among young minds.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) ELECTRIC DIVISION JAMMU

SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER
xeenpwelectdiv.jammu@gmail.com

Short e-NIT No.EDJ/127 of 2024-2025 Dated 20-12-2024

For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir e-tenders are invited on Percentage Basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory of J&K, CPWD, Railways, MES and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Name of Division	Estimated Cost (in lacs)	Cost of document (in ₹)	Earnest Money (in ₹)	Time Allowed for completion	Time and date of opening of tender	Class of Contractor
1	Completion of Two Rooms Multi Storied (G3) Residential Quarters on Back side of SMGS Hospital Jammu Electrical Part.	PWD (R&B) Electric Division Jammu	18.35	600/-	36700/-	Linked with Civil Works	28-12-2024 At or after (12:00 A.N)	"A" Class Electrical Contractor

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website <http://jktenders.gov.in> as per below schedule.

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	20-12-2024
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 20-12-2024 to 27-12-2024, 4:00 P.M
3	Bid submission Start Date	20-12-2024
4	Bid Submission End Date	27-12-2024 up to 4:00 P.M
5	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	28-12-2024 at or after 12:00 A.N in the Office of the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Electric Division Jammu
6	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed

1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of **e-challan through Treasury indicating Treasury Voucher No. & date and also indicating the name of work and NIT No. duly crediting to 0059 (Revenue) favouring Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Electric Division Jammu. uploading a copy of treasury challan/receipt.** The original instruments in respect of cost of documents, and relevant documents of **L1** be submitted to the Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Electric Division Jammu. at the time of allotment.

No :- EDJ/9480-57
Dated :- 20-12-2024

DIP/J-8500/24

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
PWD (R&B) Electric Division
Jammu

EDITORIAL

Vir Bal Diwas

Vir Bal Diwas, observed on December 26 each year, is a solemn and inspiring occasion to honor the unparalleled sacrifice of the Chaar Sahibzadas—the four sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the tenth Sikh Guru. This day is dedicated to the memory of Baba Ajit Singh Ji, Baba Jujhar Singh Ji, Baba Zorawar Singh Ji, and Baba Fateh Singh Ji, whose martyrdom exemplifies extraordinary courage, devotion, and an unwavering commitment to their faith and principles. Their story is not just a tale of sacrifice but a profound lesson in standing steadfast in the face of adversity.

The Chaar Sahibzadas lived during a tumultuous period in Indian history when the Mughal Empire sought to suppress diverse religious practices and enforce conformity. Guru Gobind Singh Ji, their father, founded the Khalsa Panth in 1699 to uphold righteousness, justice, and freedom of religion. His sons imbibed these values and became exemplars of bravery and resilience.

Baba Ajit Singh Ji and Baba Jujhar Singh Ji, the elder Sahibzadas, fought valiantly in the Battle of Chamkaur in December 1704. Facing overwhelming odds, they displayed extraordinary valor, sacrificing their lives to defend their people and faith. The younger Sahibzadas, Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba Fateh Singh Ji, aged just nine and six, respectively, were captured by Mughal forces. Despite their tender age, they refused to renounce their faith when subjected to inhumane torture and were ultimately bricked alive for their defiance.

The declaration of Vir Bal Diwas by the Government of India underscores the importance of remembering and honoring the sacrifices of the Chaar Sahibzadas. This day is not merely a commemoration but a reminder of the universal values of courage, resilience, and commitment to justice.

Vir Bal Diwas serves as an opportunity to educate younger generations about the sacrifices made by the Sahibzadas and their relevance in contemporary times. Their martyrdom is a testament to the enduring human spirit—standing up against oppression, defending the right to practice one's faith, and prioritizing moral principles over personal safety.

Unwavering Faith: The Chaar Sahibzadas exemplified an unshakeable belief in their principles, even in the face of death. Their lives teach us the importance of staying true to our values.

The bravery of Baba Zorawar Singh Ji and Baba Fateh Singh Ji, despite their young age, is a powerful reminder that age is no barrier to standing up for what is right.

The Sahibzadas' sacrifices were not for personal gain but for the preservation of their faith and the freedom of others. Their actions inspire selflessness and dedication to higher ideals.

Their martyrdom underscores the importance of resisting tyranny and injustice, a lesson that resonates across cultures and eras.

Vir Bal Diwas is observed with great reverence across India and among Sikh communities worldwide. The day is marked by kirtans (devotional singing), recitation of Gurbani (Sikh scriptures), and storytelling sessions highlighting the lives of the Sahibzadas. Gurudwaras organize special programs, including sermons and lectures, to educate the Sangat (congregation) about their sacrifices.

Educational institutions also play a significant role by hosting essay competitions, debates, and art exhibitions centered around the Sahibzadas. These activities aim to instill the values of bravery, faith, and righteousness in students.

The involvement of national and state governments in commemorating Vir Bal Diwas further elevates its significance. The participation of leaders and dignitaries underscores the importance of unity, harmony, and the protection of cultural heritage.

The story of the Chaar Sahibzadas is not confined to the annals of history. Their sacrifices have contemporary relevance, especially in a world where injustice, intolerance, and oppression still exist. Vir Bal Diwas reminds us to draw inspiration from their lives and to stand resolute against challenges that threaten our values and freedoms.

Modern Housing Architecture and Chilly Winters in Kashmir

By: Abid Hussain Rather

A house or shelter is one of the basic needs of human beings; providing safety, security, and a space for personal and communal life. It serves as a refuge from environmental elements like heat, cold, rain, and natural disasters, ensuring physical protection and comfort. Beyond its practical purpose of protecting against natural elements, it serves as a foundation for emotional and social well-being. The construction and design of shelters are deeply tied to cultural identity, reflecting the traditions, beliefs, and environmental conditions of a community. For instance, indigenous structures such as igloos, mud huts, or stilt houses exhibit resourcefulness and harmony with the local climate and available materials. Additionally, cultural values of a society influence spatial arrangements, decorations, and functionality while a shelter is being constructed in a particular region. Thus, a shelter is not merely a physical structure but a manifestation of cultural heritage and human ingenuity.

When we look at the old traditional house construction style in Kashmir Valley, it reflects a profound harmony between nature, culture and the environment. Our old traditional houses which were often crafted using locally sourced materials like timber, mud, and stones, blend seamlessly with our valley's natural surroundings. The sloping roofs, designed to withstand heavy snow, and intricately carved wooden panels shows the ingenuity and artistic heritage of Kashmiri culture. Such architectural choices ensure thermal insulation, reducing dependence on artificial heating, and highlight an eco-friendly approach. The design and architecture of our old houses was rooted in our cultural values and environmental sustainability; depicting a symbiotic relationship between the people of Kashmir and

their unique ecosystem. Their architecture was not only aesthetically pleasing but also meticulously designed to adapt to the region's climatic extremes. In the biting winters, these homes provided warmth through their efficient use of deodar wood and unbaked clay bricks; which used to work as excellent insulators from scorching heat of summer and biting cold of winter. The sloping roofs allowed heavy snow to slide off effortlessly, preventing structural damage. The use of natural materials such as mud, stone, and timber ensured that the homes were eco-friendly and blended harmoniously with their surroundings. In our old houses, the inner rooms were often adorned with walnut woodwork. Since this wood is soft, it allowed for exquisite carving. This craftsmanship reflected the aesthetic taste of the Kashmiris. All things considered, it can be said that our old traditional homes were more than mere shelters; they were cultural artefacts, embodying centuries of wisdom, craftsmanship, and environmental adaptation.

From last one or two decades, the construction landscape of Kashmir has undergone a dramatic transformation. The advent of concrete and steel structures with flat roofs, large glass windows, and minimalist designs reflects a deep taste for modernity. This shift is driven by several factors, including increased access to technology, the aspiration to emulate urban lifestyles, and the perception that traditional designs are outdated or inefficient. Unfortunately, this trend has come at a significant cost. Modern houses in Kashmir often ignore the region's climatic requirements. Flat roofs, for example, are unsuitable for the heavy snowfall that is a hallmark of winters in Kashmir, leading to water leakage and structural vulnerabilities. The excessive use of glass, iron and steel contributes to poor thermal insulation, making

these homes harder to heat during the winter months and less energy efficient overall. The severe cold climatic conditions of Kashmir valley demand architectural solutions that respect its unique conditions. Traditional houses, with their thick mud walls and small windows, were naturally insulated and reduced the reliance on external heating systems. Modern houses, in contrast, require extensive energy consumption (excessive use of electric room heaters, LPG heaters, Hamaam system etc.) to maintain warmth during winters.

Besides the environmental implications, the loss of traditional architecture represents a profound erosion of cultural identity. Houses are often seen as extensions of one's heritage, and in our Kashmir valley, the architecture was a visual reminder of the valley's unique history and traditions. The complex designs of Khatamband ceilings and Pinjrakari windows in our old houses were displaying the skilled craftsmanship passed down through generations. But these elements are now being replaced in modern houses by sterile designs that could belong to any generic cityscape. This architectural shift alienates our younger generations from their cultural roots. With the disappearance of traditional houses, the stories, values, and skills associated with them are also vanishing, creating a cultural void that cannot easily be filled. The traditional architecture of Kashmir not only connected us to the past but also served as a significant defence against earthquakes. It has been observed that during earthquakes, modern concrete houses collapse, while centuries old houses remain intact. The reason is that after the tremors, the traditional structures return to their original position, whereas concrete structures lack the flexibility to do so.

The need for modernization is undeniable, but it must not come at the expense

of cultural identity and environmental harmony. To preserve Kashmir's architectural heritage, it is essential to rethink our approach to construction and ensure that future developments are sustainable and reflective of the region's unique culture and environment. We should incorporate elements such as sloping roofs, natural insulation, and intricate woodwork into modern designs while constructing our houses. Further, we must use locally sourced, sustainable materials to reduce the ecological imbalance. It is essential to merge traditional aesthetics with contemporary functionality while designing our houses, such as energy efficient windows with Pinjrakari designs. It is pertinent to mention here that in our valley most individuals in the field of engineering are primarily learning concrete based designs. This approach needs a reconsideration and revision. The government has also not taken significant steps to promote the education and innovation of traditional architecture. The misleading notion of modernity has overshadowed traditional knowledge and sciences. The government and private stakeholders must play a proactive role in promoting architectural policies that respect local traditions. The charisma of modernity is undeniable, but Kashmir must not lose sight of what makes it unique. We must keep in mind that the construction of houses that ignore cultural identity and climatic realities may offer short term convenience, but the long term consequences are far reaching.

(The author teaches Geography at GDC Kulgam and can be reached at rather1294@gmail.com)

Kuwait Mai Modi Modi, Strengthening of India-Kuwait bilateral ties

By: Omkar Dattatray

Much after visiting America, Russia and other big countries, Modi embarked on a historical and first visit to a Muslim country-Kuwait where Modi Modi shouts echoed the air and reverberated and the prime minister India's visit after more than four decades is epoch making and has great bearing on the bilateral relations between India and Kuwait. There were chants of Modi Modi everywhere in Kuwait and it showed the popularity of Indian Prime Minister even in a Muslim country. Modi in fact scripted a diplomatic and bilateral history by visiting Kuwait and the visit strengthened the relations and ties between the two countries possessing two diverse cultures. Modi was recently on a two-day visit to Kuwait at the invitation of Emir Sheikh Meshal Al-Jabar, India, Kuwait elevate ties to strategic partnership following PM Modi's talks with top leadership. In their discussion, the two leaders focused on boosting ties in areas of information technology, pharmaceuticals, fintech, infrastructure and security. The last Indian Prime Minister to visit Kuwait was Indira Gandhi in 1981. Prime Minister Modi was on a two-day trip to Kuwait on Saturday -December 21, 2024 in what was the first visit to the Gulf nation by an Indian Prime Minister in 43 years. The Ministry of External Affairs -MEA, announced the visit and said it will provide an opportunity to further strengthen the "multifaceted ties between India and Kuwait. Modi said, Kuwait, India poised to transform relationship into strategic partnership. PM Modi highlighted Indian diaspora's contribution to Kuwait, emphasized potential for strategic partnership in energy and trade. PM Modi said the diaspora has filled Kuwait's canvas with the colors of Indian skills and assured that India has the manpower, skills and technology needed by a 'New Kuwait'. PM Modi who visited Kuwait on the invitation of its Emir addressed a gathering of the Indian community here. India and Kuwait signed a memorandum of understanding on Sunday the last day of the visit of PM Modi to Kuwait. Both India and Kuwait condemned cross border terrorism as well as the terror in all forms and manifestations. Both the countries signed an agreement for promoting defense and security cooperation. During his address to the Indian diaspora in Kuwait, Mr Narendra Modi, PM articulated a vision for India as a future hub of global development and a global growth engine. Speaking at the "Hala Modi" event at the Sheikh Saad Al -Abdullah indoor sports complex, he highlighted India's rapid advancements

in technology, infrastructure, and sustainability, asserting that the nation is now fifth-largest economy globally and a leader in fintech with the third-largest startup ecosystem. He emphasized the extensive progress made in telecommunications, noting that the length of optical fibre laid in the past decade equates to eight times the distance between the Moon and Earth. He underscored the potential for collaboration between Indian startups and Kuwait in sectors such as fintech, healthcare, smart cities, and green technology, positioning India as a prospective skill capital able to meet global demands. He also acknowledged vital role of the Indian diaspora in strengthening India-Kuwait relations, expressing gratitude to Mr. Sheikh Meshal Al -Ahmad Al Jabar Al -Sabah, the Amir of Kuwait, for the invasion that marked the first visit of an Indian Prime minister to Kuwait in over four decades. He praised the contributions the Indian community, which have garnered recognition from both the Kuwait government and society. The prime minister discussed shared goals between India and Kuwait, emphasizing their mutual focus on innovation and economic development. He invited the diaspora to participate in upcoming events in India, including the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas, in January 2025, reinforcing the importance of their engagement in the journey towards a developed India and the strengthening of cultural ties between the two nations. Kuwait bestowed highest honor, "The Order of Mubarak Al Kabeer" to PM Modi. This is the 20th international honor given to Mr. Modi by Kuwait government. The Kuwait government on Sunday December 22, 2024 bestowed its highest honor, "The Order of Mubarak Al Kabeer" to prime minister Narendra Modi. The Order is awarded to Heads of state and foreign sovereigns and to members of foreign royal families in sign of friendship. It has been previously awarded to foreign leaders like Bill Clinton, Prince Charles and George Bush. India, Kuwait elevate ties to strategic partnership following PM Modi's talks with top leadership. In their discussions, the two leaders focused on boosting ties in areas of information technology, pharmaceuticals, fintech, infrastructure and security. India and Kuwait elevated their relationship to a strategic partnership after PM Modi held extensive talks with Kuwait Emir Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al -Jaber Al-Sabah. At the invitation of his highness the Amir of state of Kuwait, Sheikh Meshal Al-Ahmad Al -Jabar Al -Sabah, Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi paid an official visit to Kuwait on 21-22 December 2024. This was his first visit to Kuwait. Prime Minister Modi attended the opening ceremony of the 26th Arabian Gulf Cup in

Kuwait on 21st December 2024 as the 'Gust of Honor' of His Highness the Amir of Kuwait. His Highness the Amir of the state of Kuwait Sheikh Meshal Al -Ahmad Al-Jabar Al-Sabah and his Highness Sheikh Sabah Al Khaled Al-Sabha Al -Hamad Al-Mubara Al-sabah, Crown Prince of the state of Kuwait received PM Shri Narendra Modi at Bayan Palace on 22 December 2024 and was accorded a ceremonial welcome. Prime Minister Modi expressed his deep appreciation to His Highness the Amir of the state of Kuwait for conferring on him highest award of the state of Kuwait "The Order of Mubarak Al Kabeer." The leaders exchanged views on bilateral, global, regional and multilateral issues of mutual interest. Given the traditional, close and friendly bilateral relations and desire to deepen cooperation in all fields, the two leaders agreed to elevate relations between India and Kuwait to a "Strategic Partnership". The leaders stressed that it is in line with the common interests of the two nations and for mutual benefit of the two peoples. Establishment of a strategic partnership between both countries will further broaden base and deepen our long-standing historical ties. Prime Minister Narendra Modi held bilateral talks with the Amir of the Kuwait State -the Prime Minister of Kuwait. In the light of newly established v strategic partnership, the two sides reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen bilateral relations through comprehensive and structured cooperation in key areas including political, trade, investment, defense, security, energy, culture, education, technology and people -to-people ties. The two sides recalled the centuries -old historical ties rooted in shared history and cultural affinities. They noted with satisfaction the regular interactions at various levels which have helped in generating and sustaining the momentum in the multifaceted bilateral cooperation. Both sides emphasized on sustaining the recent momentum in high-level exchanges through regular bilateral exchanges at Ministerial and senior -official levels. The two sides welcomed the recent establishment of a Joint Commission on Cooperation -JCC between India and Kuwait. The JCC will be an institutional mechanism to review and monitor the entire spectrum of the bilateral relations between the two countries and will be headed by the foreign ministers of both countries. To further expand our bilateral cooperation across various fields, new Joint Working Groups -JWG's have been set up in areas of trade, investments, education, and skill development, science and technology, security and counter-terrorism, agriculture and culture, in addition to the existing JWG's on Health, Manpower and Hydrocarbons. Both sides emphasized

on convening the meetings the JCC and JWG's under it at an early date. Both sides noted that trade has been an enduring link between the two countries and stressed on the potential for further growth and diversification in bilateral trade. They also emphasized on the need for promoting exchanges of business delegations and strengthening institutional linkages. The two sides unequivocally condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, including cross-border terrorism and called for disrupting of terrorism financing networks and safe havens, and dismantling of terror infrastructure. Expressing appreciation of their ongoing bilateral cooperation in the area of security, both sides agreed to enhance cooperation to counter-terrorism operations, information and intelligence sharing, developing and exchanging experiences, best practices and technologies, capacity building and to strengthen cooperation in law enforcement, anti-money laundering, drug trafficking and other transnational crimes. The two sides also discussed ways and means to promote cooperation in cyber security, including prevention of use of cyberspace for terrorism, radicalization and for disturbing social harmony. PM Modi congratulated His Highness the Amir on Kuwait's assumption of the presidency of GCC this year and expressed confidence that the growing India-GCC cooperation will be further strengthened under his visionary leadership. The following documents were signed /exchanged during the visit, which will further deepen the multifaceted bilateral relationship as well as open avenues for newer areas of cooperation. MoU between India and Kuwait on cooperation in the field of defense was signed. -1- Cultural exchange Programme between India and Kuwait for the years 2025-2029. -2- Executive Programme between India and Kuwait on cooperation and in the field of sports for 2025-2028 between the Ministry of youth and public Authority for Youth and Sports, government of the state of Kuwait. -3- Kuwait's membership of international Solar Alliance-ISA. To sum up it can be said that the most recent visit of PM Modi to Kuwait will boost and strengthen the bilateral ties between the two countries. In fact after America, Russia, there were the chants of Modi Modi reverberating in the air of Kuwait and the ties between India and Kuwait will have a quantum jump in near future.

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

Shakti Parihar felicitates volunteers of Ekal Abhiyan Doda



Top News Report

DODA, Dec 24: MLA Doda West Shakti Raj Parihar felicitated the karyakartas (volunteers) of Ekal Abhiyan (NGO) Anchal Doda for their commendable job in the field of education and creating awareness in the society.

During a program organised to honor the karyakartas and Samiti members of Ekal Abhiyan Anchal Doda today Shakti Raj Parihar interacted with them and presented gifts to the full

timer karyakartas in recognition to the selfless social services rendered by them. He urged the volunteers to continue their efforts to enable a self-reliant and independent society.

He appreciated the efforts made by the karyakartas of Ekal Abhiyan in Doda district spreading the awareness regarding various welfare schemes launched by the government and providing basic and moral education to the children in tribal and downtrodden

sections of the society.

It is pertinent to mention that Ekal Abhiyan is working nationwide for the welfare of people living in far flung and tribal areas where there is dearth of government institutions and facilities. Vipan Sharma General Secretary (Org.) BJP Doda Udhampur parliamentary constituency and Neeraj Thakur Kendriya Pramukh Jagran Shiksha Ekal Abhiyan along with prominent karyakartas and Samiti members were also present on the occasion.

Three residential house gutted in Kulgam Fire Mishap, 3 persons injured

Top News Report

KULGAM, Dec 24: Three residential houses were gutted in a fire incident at Nowbugh Kund in south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Tuesday morning, sources said.

Sources said that fire broke out in a residential houses of belonging to Mohd Rafiq Naikoo, Mohd Akram Naikoo, Showkat Ahmad Sheikh

and Gull mohd sheikh of Nowbugh Kund.

"Soon after fire tenders were rushed to the spot and the fire was contained, however not before the blaze had razed the structure to ashes", sources said.

The official told Top News JK correspondent Gh Nabi khanday that three persons also injured during the incident, while cause of fire being ascertained.



Health Deptt organizes Hepatitis B, C, AIDS Screening Camp at District Jail Bhandarwah

Top News Report

DODA, Dec 24: Under the directions of the Deputy Commissioner Doda, Harvinder Singh, the District Health Society Doda organized a special screening camp for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and AIDS (HIV) among jail inmates at District Jail Bhandarwah, District Doda.

The camp was held under the guidance of Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Doda, Dr. Om Kumar, in close coordination with the District Jail Authorities Bhandarwah, Sub-District Hospital Bhandarwah, and Government Medical College (GMC) Doda.

The event was graced by Superintendent District Jail Bhandarwah, Hamid Ullah Naik, in the presence of District Epidemiologist Umar Anayat, Dr. Hamid



Parry (Medical Officer), Advocate Isha Hitaishi from DLSA Bhandarwah, and Faizan A. Trambo (Incharge Media Desk, Health Department).

During the camp, a total of 146 jail inmates were screened for Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and AIDS (HIV) by a dedicated team of health professionals, including Dr. Kamaldeep Singh, Dr. Rahat Goni, Asia Beg (Pharmacist), Asha

Devi and Halima Kousar (FMPHWs), Puneet Kotwal (Lab Technician, ICTC), Saima Zargar (Counsellor) and Mohd Altaf (Lab Technician).

The team, drawn from GMC Doda, rendered their services with utmost dedication to ensure the success of the camp.

In addition to the screening, the health department conducted an interactive session

with the jail inmates, sensitizing them on various aspects of health, hygiene, and mental well-being. Special emphasis was laid on raising awareness about preventive healthcare, healthy lifestyle practices, and addressing mental health challenges faced by individuals in confinement besides awareness on ABHA was also given to them. Superintendent Jail,

Hamid Ullah Naik, appreciated the initiative and expressed his gratitude to the Deputy Commissioner Doda and CMO Doda for organizing such a camp, which would significantly contribute to the well-being of the inmates.

He highlighted the importance of continued collaboration between the health and prison departments to improve the quality of life for inmates.

The camp concluded with a strong message of care, inclusivity, and the government's commitment to ensuring equitable health services for all, irrespective of circumstances.

This initiative by the District Health Society Doda demonstrates a proactive approach toward achieving a healthier and more aware society.

National Dentist's Day celebrated in Jammu

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 24: Indian Dental Association (IDA), Jammu branch on Tuesday observed National Dentist's Day to pay tribute to the visionary, Dr. Rafiuddin Ahmed, who laid the foundation of modern dentistry in India. Born on December 24, 1890, his contributions transcend time, inspiring generations to strive for excellence in oral healthcare.

Dr. Rafiuddin Ahmed was an Indian dentist, educator and later minister in the West Bengal cabinet, who founded the first dental college of India, Dr. R. Ahmed Dental College and Hospital, later named 'The Calcutta Dental College', where he remained its principal until 1950. He established the Indian Dental Journal in 1925, and played a key role in founding the Bengal Dentist Act in 1939. In 1946, he established The Bengal Dental Association which was then renamed as the Indian Dental Association. The Government of India awarded him the Padma Bhushan in 1964. Remembered as the father of modern dentistry in India, in 2016, the Indian Dental Association declared 24 December as National Dentist's Day in his honour. Dr. Ahmed received a Fellowship from the International College of Dentists in 1947, and the Royal College of Surgeons of England and the Pierre Fauchard Academy in 1949.

To mark this occasion, Indian Dental Association, Jammu branch, organised a dental awareness camp for the children of Surabhi Nursery school and day care centre in the Dept. of Home Science, University of Jammu with the collaboration of the University Health Centre. In this camp, oral health of the children were examined and free samples of Colgate toothpastes were provided to them. They were also demonstrated the correct way of brushing their teeth and maintain oral hygiene.

Dr. Bharat Bhushan, CMO, University Health Centre along with the faculty and staff of Home Science Dept. including HoD, Prof. Sarika Manhas, Prof. Rajni Dhingra, Prof. Neeru Sharma, Prof. Shashi Manhas, Prof. Samridhi Arora, Mamta Singh, Seema Sharma, Neelam and Suman were present on the occasion. Indian Dental Association team comprising Dr. Gautam Sharma, President, Dr. Vibha Raina, Secretary, Dr. Payal, Dr. Hemani and Dr. Anshu Gupta examined the oral health of the children and gave them the tips to keep the teeth healthy. Sumeet Gandotra from Colgate India provided the free samples of toothpaste for the camp.

Dr. Bharat Bhushan, CMO, University Health Centre along with the faculty and staff of Home Science Dept. including HoD, Prof. Sarika Manhas, Prof. Rajni Dhingra, Prof. Neeru Sharma, Prof. Shashi Manhas, Prof. Samridhi Arora, Mamta Singh, Seema Sharma, Neelam and Suman were present on the occasion. Indian Dental Association team comprising Dr. Gautam Sharma, President, Dr. Vibha Raina, Secretary, Dr. Payal, Dr. Hemani and Dr. Anshu Gupta examined the oral health of the children and gave them the tips to keep the teeth healthy. Sumeet Gandotra from Colgate India provided the free samples of toothpaste for the camp.

Police register 94 Cases; detain 156 under NDPS, 26 booked under PIT NDPS in 2024: SSP Srinagar

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Dec 24: In a major effort to tackle the rising menace of drug abuse, Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Srinagar, Imtiyaz Hussain Tuesday said that in the year 2024 police have achieved a major success in its fight against drugs.

Speaking at a press conference today, Hussain disclosed that the police have registered 94 cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act this year.

Furthermore, 156 individuals have been detained, and 26 more have been booked under the stringent Prevention of Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (PIT NDPS) Act.

SSP said the severity of the drug issue in Srinagar, calling it one of the most pressing challenges for law enforcement. "While the police have success-

fully curbed terrorism to a large extent, the drug menace continues to be a significant concern," he stated.

The SSP added that the police are leaving no stone unturned in their efforts to dismantle drug networks and bring offenders to justice.

In addition to law enforcement, Imtiyaz Hussain urged civil society, parents, and educational institutions to play a proactive role in preventing drug abuse among youth. "Fighting the drug menace requires collective action. Public awareness and cooperation are crucial for achieving long-term success," he noted.

The Srinagar Police have also intensified their surveillance and community outreach programs to identify hotspots and educate the public about the dangers of drug addiction. The SSP reaffirmed the department's commitment to ensuring a drug-free Srinagar.

Department of Dogri GDC R S Pura commemorates Dogri Manta Diwas



Top News Report

R S PURA, Dec 24: 22nd December 2003 is a major milestone for Dogri language because on that day Dogri was recognised as a National language of India in the Eighth Schedule of the Indian constitution which is a matter of pride for all Dogras.

From that day it is celebrated as 'Dogri Manta Diwas' every year. To commemorate the day Department of Dogri in collaboration with NSS unit of Government Degree College (GDC) R. S. Pura organized a Slogan Writing Event on "Mother Language: A way to progress" under the able guidance of Prof. (Dr.) Preetpal Kour, Principal of the College.

The objective of the event was to open new vistas for Dogri language as it is the part of culture, produced or created by cultural

beings and entrusts new responsibilities upon the Dogras in development of Dogri as its study expands over knowledge of its makers and its processors, their creative processes and strategies, their material functions.

Students of the college participated in the event with great zeal, enthusiasm and fervor.

Speaking on the occasion Dr. Sunil Kumar Mangoch, H.O.D Dogri said that, "Mother-tongue education enables better understanding and transfer of the structure of language to several new languages, which flows down into the entire socioeconomic fabric. It also helps in other essential skills, such as critical thinking and literacy skills. By learning in their native language, students will be able to understand and appreciate their culture more effectively which help in

promoting social cohesion and national unity.

Speaking on the event Dr. Chanchal Angral, Senior Faculty and NSS PO of the College highlighted the need for the promotion of Dogri language and culture in today's times and it is a matter of pride that Dogri language was included in the eighth schedule after a long period of struggle and now when it has received recognition it become our duty to take care of it and for this we have to pledge forward by joining hands together.

The whole event was coordinated by Dr. Sunil Kumar Mangoch, H. O. D Dogri and co-coordinated by Dr. Bandana Khajuria and Dr. Jyoti Thappa.

The faculty members who grace the occasion were Prof Shifali Abrol, Prof. Sanjeev Upadhyay and Prof. Rajinder Singh.

GDC Kathua celebrates Dogri Manyta Diwas



Top News Report

KATHUA, Dec 24: Department of Dogri, Govt. Degree College (GDC) Kathua Celebrated Dogri Manyta Diwas with great favour and enthusiasm. The programme was conducted under the guidance of Prof. Seema Mir, worthy principal of the college. The Event showcasing the rich cultural heritage of the Dogri language.

Dr. Pritima Sangra, Assistant Professor,

Dept. of Dogri, conducted the proceeding of the Programme whereas, Prof. Meena Devi, Head, Department of Dogri delivered a lecture on the importance and relevance of Dogri language and literature. She recited a Dogri poem and emphasizing the importance of preserving Dogra heritage.

The event featured Dogri songs, poetry recitations and cultural performances by the stu-

dents. Mukesh Kumar, Lecturer in Dogri, also narrated a poem on the occasion.

Dr. Yash Pal Sharma (HoD, Urdu) also addressed to the students and discussed with them the importance of local culture, language and rituals.

Principal, Prof. Seema Mir during her address appreciated the effort and congratulated the students and staff for the celebration of the

Heritageans clinch bronze in Inter-School Junior Football Tournament



Top News Report

JAMMU Dec 24: Heritage School added another feather to its cap by securing the bronze medal in the Inter-School Junior Football Tournament, organized by Jammu Sahodaya Schools

at Doon International School from December 19 to 21, 2024.

The Heritage School football team exhibited exceptional skill, teamwork, and sportsmanship throughout the tournament. Their efforts culminated in a stellar

2-0 victory against Jammu Sanskriti School in the match for third place.

Heritage School congratulated the winning team on their outstanding achievement and extends its best wishes for their future endeavours.

Rafi@100: When Mohammed Rafi was told his money is illegitimate

Rafi's inclination towards helping out with any religious cause or giving alms to those in need goes all the way back to his childhood in Lahore

Singer Mohammed Rafi, known for being a devout person and someone who would never let a hand reaching out to him go empty, was once told the money he donated to a mosque was "illegitimate".

Rafi's daughter-in-law Yasmin Khalid Rafi recalled the conversation in her biography of the singer, "Mohammed Rafi: My Abba".

Once donations were being collected for the Old Palasia Mosque in Indore. True to his nature, Rafi contributed a generous sum of Rs 5,000 but the money was returned to everyone's surprise.

The reason both shocked and broke Rafi.

"The mosque committee had decided that Rafi Saheb's earnings could not be used for the mosque. His earnings were not 'legitimate' since in Islam singing is not recognized as a permissible occupation and therefore many religious figures would reject money earned from such sources," Yasmin wrote in the 2012 book.

Rafi was known to be a quiet person who spoke with long pauses, but that day he "appeared to lose control and blurted out all at once".

"Allah has bestowed only this talent upon me right from



my childhood, which I practise with great effort and integrity and it is open before the world. Even then my earnings are illegitimate? There might be two opinions on the subject, but if this is the basic message of Islam on this matter, then only Allah knows whose earnings are legitimate or illegitimate," Rafi said, as quoted by Yasmin in the book.

Rafi's inclination towards helping out with any religious cause or giving alms to those in need goes all the way back to his childhood in Lahore when a young Rafi was fascinated by a fakir.

Different accounts also suggest it was the influence of the

fakir, who would sing songs by Sufi poets, that strengthened the resolve in Rafi's heart to pursue a life in music.

According to Yasmin's book, "Abba" always kept a box full of currency and small change with him in the car.

"When the car stopped at the traffic signals, beggars would call out to him, addressing him as, 'Haji Saheb', 'Rafi Bhai' or 'Rafi Saheb', and stretch out their hands. Abba would distribute money throughout the journey. He never refused an outstretched hand," Yasmin writes.

Rafi would explain the reason behind this.

"This has been my habit since childhood. Once that fakir whom

I used to follow in the lane where we lived told me that he needed money. I did not pause to think, for I was anxious to help," he would say.

A barely 10-year-old Rafi took out all the money from the clay money box in which his parents kept their change and some savings, and gave it to him.

"For my pains I was scolded and got a whipping too," Rafi would recall years later.

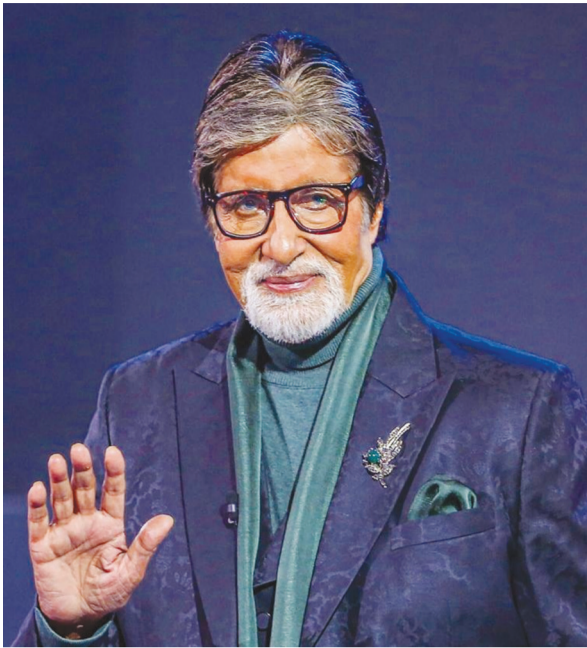
In another instance, recalled by Rafi's son Shahid Rafi to author Sujata Dev in her biography "Mohammed Rafi: Golden Voice of the Silver Screen", the singer was so overtaken by emotions that he gave Rs 100 to a beggar.

Once as the city was in the grip of monsoon, Rafi decided to drop his son to school on his way to the studio. A beggar approached the car that was driving at a snail's pace to ask for alms but Rafi found himself short of coins and said, "Inshallah, agli baar le lena" (God willing, take it next time).

The beggar looked inside from the window and broke into a song "Pehle paisa phir bhagwaan, Babu dete jana daan, dete jana". This was a song by Rafi from "Miss Mary" (1957).

Rafi was so touched that he gave the beggar a Rs 100 note.

Amitabh Bachchan reveals he bunked classes during school



Veteran Bollywood megastar Amitabh Bachchan is known for discipline on the sets, and his penchant for rehearsing the scenes. However, there was a time when Big B let go of the discipline in him for momentary fun.

The veteran actor revealed on the quiz based reality show 'Kaun Banega Crorepati' that he used to bunk his school.

The reality show brings an exciting twist to the format with 'India Challenger Week'. This week, out of 10 play-along contestants, the

top two from the Fastest Finger First (FFF) round competed in the 'Jaldi 5 Buzzer Round' to secure their place on the hotseat.

The winner of this buzzer challenge then continued with the game, starting with the money tree at the 6th question. Jaspal Singh from Punjab, a Science Lab Assistant with a sharp mind and quick reflexes left the audiences impressed with his knowledge.

During the show, a curious Jaspal asked Amitabh Bachchan, "You had a role as the

principal in the movie 'Mohabbatein', where you portrayed a character who was all about 'Parampara, Prathishta, Anushashan' (Tradition, Prestige, Discipline). I'm curious, if you were truly a principal, would you have been that strict? And, did you ever skip classes?"

Responding to the same, Amitabh Bachchan said, "Where did you get the idea that I could have been a principal? Padhaai-likhaai mein zero the hum... so I could never have become a principal. But yes, the principal at my school was very strict. I used to bunk school, not just classes! I was in a boarding school in Nainital, and we couldn't leave the campus. But at night, when everyone else was asleep, I would sneak out. If I got caught, I would be punished".

Jaspal adds, "In that movie, your students did the same thing, didn't they?" Amitabh Bachchan said, "Yes, and when they got caught, they too were punished".

'Kaun Banega Crorepati' season 16 airs on Sony Entertainment Television.

Nikki Tamboli to make debut in Punjabi films with item song



"Badnaam" is just another example of that. I hope my fans enjoy the song as much as I enjoyed working on it," Nikki Tamboli said, speaking about her experience working on the song," she said.

The song is sung by Sunidhi Chauhan. "Badnaam" is scheduled to be released in February 2025. It is a romantic drama starring Jayy Randhawa, Jasmine Bhasin, and Mukesh Rishi.

Talking about Nikki, she started her career as a model. In 2019, she made her acting debut with the Telugu horror comedy film Chikati Gadilo Chithakotudu.

She later made her Tamil debut in the action horror film Kanchana 3 as Divya. Her third film was Thipparaa Meesam in Telugu. In 2020, she made her television debut through participating in the Hindi reality show Bigg Boss 14 where she finished at 3rd place.

In 2021, she participated in the stunt-based reality show Fear Factor: Khattron Ke Khiladi 11, filmed in Cape Town where she finished at 10th place. Apart from reality shows, she was also seen in several music video collaborations.

In 2022, she was seen in the game show The Khatra Khatra Show which was hosted by Bharti Singh and Haarsh Limbachiyaa. Nikki made a special appearance in the song "Cocktail" in Hindi film Jogira Sara Ra Ra opposite Nawazuddin Siddiqui. In 2024, She appeared in the reality show Bigg Boss Marathi Season 5, where she met Arbaz Patel, who was also seen in "Splitsvilla 15".

Their love story began while they were contestants on Bigg Boss Marathi 5. The two developed a close bond.

For Manav Gohil, it's all about discipline!

Manav Gohil, who portrays the role of Ajay Kadam in Amazon MX Player's recently released coming-of-age drama, Karate Girls, shares insights about his character and what makes the series special. He states, "Ajay Kadam is a dedicated teacher and the owner of a karate school called the Dojo. Throughout the story, he holds one end of the narrative and the backdrop is centered around his school and the complex relationships in his life. His bond with his daughter, the estranged connection with his son, and the almost love-hate dynamic with his disciple weave together to form a compelling part of the larger puzzle. And while things start to come together as the story unfolds, the full picture isn't clear until the very end."

Manav further revealed what traits he shared with his character, "For me, it's all about discipline—there's no compromise on that. I believe, and



my daughter would agree, that I am very disciplined when it comes to time, food and conduct. Ajay too is someone who deeply values discipline, so I think that's why I find a strong connect with him."

Here are actors who made a mark with sequels in films and web series



In 2024, several beloved onscreen characters made a triumphant return, much to the delight of fans. These characters, brought to life by some of Bollywood's finest actors, continued their journeys in sequels and new seasons of popular web series. They not only revived beloved characters, but also gave them new dimensions. Their performances remind us why sequels and follow-ups can be just as impactful as the originals.

Emotionally layered Ali Fazal in Mirzapur 3
Ali Fazal's portrayal of Guddu Bhaiya in Mirzapur is nothing short of legendary and with Season 3, he once again proved why he remains one of the most iconic characters on Indian streaming platforms. Guddu Bhaiya's return was marked by rage, grief, and an unyielding thirst for power and vengeance. Ali's portrayal this time was more ferocious and emotionally layered, as Guddu navigated personal loss while remaining focused on his goal of seizing the throne of Mirzapur.

Intense portrayal Bhuvan Bam in Taaza Khabar 2
After the success of Taaza Khabar, Bhuvan Bam reprised his role as Vasant Gawde in its

much-awaited second season. As a man gifted with the power to predict future events, Vasant's journey in Season 2 became even more intense and unpredictable. Bhuvan effortlessly combined humour with emotional vulnerability, allowing audiences to experience the highs and lows of his character's life. His evolution from a street-smart hustler to a man grappling with the consequences of his newfound powers was portrayed with conviction.

Understated charm Jitendra Kumar in Panchayat 3
Jitendra Kumar's portrayal of Abhishek Tripathi, fondly known as Sachiv ji in Panchayat, has become a fan-favourite since the show's debut. In Panchayat 3, Jitendra once again brought his understated charm and wit to the role. His nuanced performance as a city-bred government official navigating the quirks of rural life continued to strike a chord with audiences.

Intense transformation Shweta Tripathi in Mirzapur 3
Shweta Tripathi's return as Gajagami aka Golu Gupta in Mirzapur 3 was nothing short of electrifying. Evolving from a quiet,

book-loving student to a fierce and vengeful rebel, Golu's transformation has been one of the most compelling character arcs in Indian OTT history. In the third season, Shweta infused Golu with even more grit, intensity and emotional depth. Her power-packed performance was raw, unpredictable and deeply human.

Corridors of power Huma Qureshi in Maharani 3
Huma Qureshi returned as the formidable Rani Bharti in Maharani 3, once again delivering a powerhouse performance. Her portrayal of the humble housewife-turned-Chief Minister continued to showcase her growth as a political leader navigating a male-dominated world. In this season, Rani Bharti's character was more assertive, strategic and determined.

Spooky undertone Kartik Aaryan in Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3
Kartik Aaryan's portrayal of Rooh Baba in Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3 was a runaway hit, and his performance became an instant cultural phenomenon. Stepping into the legacy of the Bhool Bhulaiyaa franchise, Kartik managed to make the role uniquely his own. His impeccable comic timing paired with a

spooky undertone made Rooh Baba one of the most beloved characters in recent times.

Fearless cop Ajay Devgn in Singham Returns

When it comes to iconic Bollywood characters, Bajirao Singham is undoubtedly one of the most memorable. Played with fiery intensity by Ajay Devgn, the fearless cop returned Singham Returns. Directed by Rohit Shetty, the film saw Ajay in his larger-than-life cop avatar, with action sequences and dialogues that packed a punch. The franchise is synonymous with high-octane action and patriotic fervour, and Ajay Devgn once again brought gravitas and intensity to the role.

Unforgettable character

Taapsee Pannu in Phir Aayi Haseen Dilliruba
Taapsee Pannu's portrayal of Rani Kashyap in Haseen Dilliruba became one of the most talked-about performances of the year when it was released. Her portrayal of a bold, unapologetic woman caught in a storm of love, deception, and crime made Rani an unforgettable character. Her performance balanced charm, wit and an undercurrent of mystery, making her charac-

ter compelling and quite unpredictable.

Morally ambiguous Jaideep Ahlawat in The Broken News 2

Jaideep Ahlawat once again donned the role of the fiery news anchor Dipankar Sanyal in the second season of The Broken News. Known for his nuanced performances, Ahlawat's portrayal of the morally ambiguous journalist delved deeper into the ethical dilemmas of the media industry. His commanding screen presence and sharp dialogue delivery kept audiences hooked, solidifying his place as one of Bollywood's most powerful performers.

Comic timing

Abhishek Banerjee in Stree 2

Abhishek Banerjee's brilliance as Jana in Stree made him one of the most-loved side characters in Bollywood's horror-comedy genre. Returning with Stree 2, Abhishek's antics, hilarious reactions, and comic timing entertained audiences. His chemistry with Rajkumar Rao's character and his endearing fear of ghosts had viewers laughing out loud. In the sequel, Jana's character arc saw new dimensions as the town once again faced a supernatural being.

PM Modi to lay foundation stone of Ken-Betwa river link project on Dec 25

The project will deliver ample water for irrigation and sufficient water for drinking and industrial use

BHOPAL, Dec 24 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi will, on Wednesday, lay the foundation stone of the Ken-Betwa river linking project, the first such initiative under the national river interlinking policy, at Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh.

Nearly 44 lakh people in 10 districts of Madhya Pradesh and 21 lakh in Uttar Pradesh will get drinking water under the project, which is estimated to cost 44,605 crore, MP Chief Minister Mohan Yadav said on Tuesday.

Nearly 7.18 lakh farmer families of 2,000 villages will be benefitted from the project, which will also generate 103 MW of hydropower and 27 MW of solar energy, he said.

"Prime Minister Modi is coming to Khajuraho in Chhatarpur district on December 25 to lay the foundation of this project which will change the image and destiny of Bundelkhand in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh," Yadav said.

The Ken-Betwa Link Project is a unique example of cooperation and coordination between the central government, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh, he said.

Prime Minister Modi has taken the initiative to realise the dream



of former PM late Atal Bihari Vajpayee of the river linking campaign, Yadav added.

Through this project, farmers will get ample water for irrigation and it will also provide sufficient water for drinking and industrial uses.

Along with the economic and social development of the area, tourism will also be promoted and new employment opportunities will be created. The situation of groundwater in the drought-hit Bundelkhand region will also improve, the CM said.

Yadav said Ken-Betwa is the largest irrigation project in the country, adopting an underground pressurised pipe irrigation system.

Under the project, a 77-metre

high and 2.13 kilometres long Daudhan dam and two tunnels (upper level 1.9 km and lower level 1.1 km) will be constructed on the Ken river in the Panna Tiger Reserve.

The dam will store 2,853 million cubic metres of water, the chief minister said.

The surplus Ken water will be transferred to the Betwa river through the 221-km-long link canal from Daudhan dam, providing irrigation and drinking water facilities in both the states, he said.

With the project, 8.11 lakh hectare area can be irrigated in 2,000 villages of 10 districts - Panna, Damoh, Chhatarpur, Tikamgarh, Niwari, Sagar, Raisen, Vidisha, Shivpuri and

Datia. Nearly seven lakh farmer families will be benefitted from this, the chief minister said.

The Ken-Betwa project will provide an annual irrigation facility in 59,000 hectare area in Uttar Pradesh and stabilisation of the existing irrigation in 1.92 lakh-hectare area, which will provide irrigation facilities in Mahoba, Jhansi, Lalitpur and Banda districts of UP, he said.

The project also includes the work of saving the historical Chandela era heritage ponds in Chhatarpur, Tikamgarh and Niwari districts of MP, where water can be stored during the rainy season.

The Daudhan reservoir will provide drinking water to wild animals in the Panna Tiger Reserve throughout the year, improve the forest ecosystem and bring relief to UP's Banda district from the flood menace, Yadav said.

The water crisis prevalent in the Bundelkhand region will end and migration for employment will also be checked, he said.

A tripartite Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed on March 22, 2021 by the chief ministers of MP, UP and the Union Jai Shakti minister in the presence of PM Modi for the implementation of the project.

People struggling with rising prices, govt sleeping like 'Kumbhakaran': Rahul



NEW DELHI, Dec 24 (Agencies): Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said that the people are struggling with rising prices and are forced to compromise on small things of daily needs while the Government is sleeping like 'Kumbhakaran'.

Gandhi shared a video on his social media handles on his recent visit to a vegetable market in Giri Nagar here and interaction with housewives who narrated their ordeal due to rising prices of food items.

"A few days ago, I went to a local vegetable market and while shopping with customers, I talked to the vendors to know how the budget of the common people is deteriorating and how inflation has troubled everyone," Gandhi said in his post accompanying the video.

"People are struggling with rising prices and are forced to compromise on small things of daily needs," the former Congress chief said in his post in Hindi.

"We discussed the prices of garlic, peas, mushrooms and other vegetables, and heard the real experiences of the people. How garlic at Rs 400 per kg and

peas at Rs 120 per kg have shaken everyone's budget," he said.

"What will people eat and what will they save, he wondered."

"While talking over tea, we closely understood the problems of the lives of housewives - how the income remained stagnant, inflation kept increasing uncontrollably. How saving has become impossible and how it has become difficult to arrange even a rickshaw fare of Rs 10 due to just meeting the food expenses," Gandhi said.

He urged people to share their experiences with him if they are also feeling the effect of inflation.

"Tell us how you are struggling with this problem - you know the condition of the market, you too share your personal experiences with us," he said.

In a post on X, Gandhi said, "Garlic was once Rs 40, today it is Rs 7400! Rising inflation has spoiled the budget of the common person's kitchen - the government is sleeping like Kumbhakaran!"

In the over five-minute video, Gandhi is seen accompanying some housewives as they buy vegetables and haggle

with vendors. The housewives tell Gandhi that they have to curtail their eating habits as they are unable to afford the vegetables they used to earlier.

They also tell him that while wages have remained stagnant, prices have risen sharply.

The Congress on Monday took a swipe at the Modi Government over "rising" prices of food items, saying the bullet train announced by it has not arrived but the inflation, which is spiralling upwards faster than the speed of a bullet train, has broken the back of the common person.

Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh had said the people want answers not more "jumlabazi (rhetoric)".

He had shared a media report on X which claimed that the rates of daily essential goods are increasing day by day and in the last one year, the prices of flour, oil, spices and dry fruits have increased by one and a half to two times.

"The bullet train announced by the Modi government has not arrived, but the inflation, which is spiralling upwards faster than the speed of a bullet train, has broken the back of the common person," Ramesh had said in his post in Hindi on X.

The Congress has been attacking the Government over its handling of the economy and raising concerns over increasing unemployment and price rise.

Christmas celebrations: Orthodox priest criticises PM Modi, BJP

THRISSUR, Dec 24 (Agencies): A senior priest of the Orthodox Church in Kerala on Tuesday took a swipe at the BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi over their Christmas celebrations, citing the recent disruption of festivity in a Kerala school by VHP activists.

The sharp criticism from the Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church's Thrissur diocese metropolitan, Yuhanan Mor Meletius, on his social media handle came a day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the Christmas celebrations hosted by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India in New Delhi.

"Over there, bishops are honoured, and cribs

are revered. Here, cribs are destroyed. There must be a term in Malayalam for such behaviour, right?" the priest said in a Facebook post.

The alleged disruption of Christmas celebrations in a school by local activists of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the destruction of a symbolic crib erected by children in another school by unknown miscreants in Palakkad district triggered widespread protest in Kerala recently.

The state government deployed a special police team to investigate the incidents. Meanwhile, CPI, the second largest coalition partner in the ruling LDF in the state, also vehemently criticised the

PM's participation in the Christmas celebrations organised by the CBCI in New Delhi and termed it as Modi's "drama of political hypocrisy."

While the PM was preaching about Christ and his love to cardinals and bishops in New Delhi, his "sangh bandhus" were disrupting Christmas celebrations in Kerala's Nallepilly and committing blasphemy, Binoy Viswam, the state secretary of the CPI, alleged in a statement.

The Left leader further said if there is any sincerity in the words that the PM had said at the CBCI headquarters, he should be going to Manipur during this Christmas with the message of love and peace. Viswam also sought to



know whether the PM was ready to go to Manipur. Prime Minister Modi on Monday said it pains his heart when there are attempts to spread violence and cause disruption in society.

Speaking at the Christmas celebrations hosted by the Catholic Bishops' Conference of India,

Modi stressed the importance of strengthening the spirit of love, harmony and brotherhood in line with the teachings of Jesus Christ.

It was the first time that a prime minister had attended such a programme at the headquarters of the Catholic Church in India.

Girl, 3, stuck in 700-foot borewell in Rajasthan for 20 hours, rescue ops on

JAIPUR, Dec 24 (Agencies): A three-year-old girl has been stuck in a 700-foot borewell in Rajasthan's Kotputli-Behror district for more than 20 hours with the teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and its state counterpart, SDRF, involved in the rescue operations.

The girl, Chetna, was playing on his father's farm when she accidentally slipped into the borewell.

She is stuck at a depth of nearly 150 feet and her movements are being monitored through a camera.

An oxygen pipe has also been lowered into the borewell to supply oxygen. The officials had first tried to dig but faced difficulties as the soil around her was compacted due to moisture.

They are now trying to pull her out with the help of a hook attached to a rod.

She is expected to be rescued in some time.

Second Borewell Incident in 2 Weeks The incident comes two weeks after a five-year-old boy fell into a borewell in Rajasthan's Dausa district.

The boy, Aryna, was rescued after a 56-hour-long operation but was declared dead in the hospital.

He fell into the 150-foot-deep borewell while playing in a field.

The National Human Rights Commis-



sion (NHRC) last week issued a notice to the Rajasthan government and police over the tragic incident.

"It seems that the guidelines issued by the Supreme Court and the Centre are not being followed by authorities to prevent such unfortunate incidents/fatal accidents of small children falling into open/abandoned borewells and tube wells.

"This apparent negligence not only amounts to dereliction of duty on their part but (is) also tantamount to violation of people's right to life," the NHRC said in a statement.

The NHRC has sought a detailed report on the matter within two weeks. The report, the commission said, should include the status of the FIR registered in the reported matter, action taken against public authorities responsible and compensation, if any, provided to the family of the victim.

BJP running 'double blunder' Govt, not 'double engine' one: Akhilesh Yadav

LUCKNOW, Dec 24 (Agencies): Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav took a jibe at the BJP-led governments at the Centre and in Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday, calling them a "double blunder" instead of a "double engine" Government.

The former Uttar Pradesh chief minister shared a post on his official social media account on 'X' with a



news item on the Vande Bharat train incident: "Rasta bhatak gayi

Vande Bharat' - jana tha Goa, nikal gayi Kalyan" (Vande Bharat lost its

way - ?was supposed to go to Goa but ended up in Kalyan).

Along with the image of the train's news, Yadav wrote, "The BJP is not a 'double engine' Government, but a 'double blunder' Government."

In the same post, he remarked, "BJP has even derailed the country's engine onto the wrong track."

The CSMT-Madgaon Vande Bharat express

train deviated from its regular route on Monday morning due to a technical snag at Diva station in Thane district of Maharashtra, delaying its onward journey to Goa by 90 minutes, officials said.

Instead of proceeding towards Panvel station on the Diva-Panvel railway line used by Konkan-bound trains, the express train took the Kalyan route.

Jaipur gas tanker crash: Death toll mounts to 15

JAIPUR, Dec 24 (Agencies): The death toll in the gas tanker crash on the Ajmer highway climbed to 15 on Tuesday, with two more persons succumbing to their injuries, hospital authorities said.

"Two patients undergoing treatment died in the morning. Three were discharged yesterday. At present, 18 patients are under treatment and five of them are critical," Dr Sushil



Bhati, Superintendent of the SMS Hospital, said.

He said one or two persons would be discharged later in the day as their condition has improved.

An LPG tanker collided with a truck on December 20, sparking a massive fireball that turned a stretch of the Jaipur-Ajmer highway into an inferno.

Eleven persons had died on the day of the incident.

A blast at a Turkish armament factory kills at least 12 people

Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said the cause of the blast at the factory, which is located away from residential areas, was not immediately known. Authorities have ruled out the possibility of sabotage.

ISTANBUL, Dec 24 (Agencies): A powerful blast ripped through an explosives plant in northwestern Turkey on Tuesday killing 12 people and injuring four others, officials said.

Footage showed shards of glass and metal scattered outside the plant, where ambulances stood by.

"According to initial reports, 12 employees died and four were taken to hospital with injuries as a result of the explosion" in the Karesi district of Balikesir province, local governor Ismail Ustaoglu said.

"I wish God's mercy upon our deceased citizens and a speedy recovery to our wounded," he added. Officials said the injured were not in a serious condition.

There was no staff left inside the factory and the blaze was put out, they added.

The blast took place at 8:25 am (0525 GMT) at a section of



the plant which local officials said collapsed under the force of the explosion.

Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said the cause of the blast at the factory, which is located away from residential areas, was not immediately known.

"We are trying to find out what caused it," he said.

Local officials pointed to "technical reasons" without elaborating as experts were still investigation at the scene.

Authorities ruled out sabotage and prosecutors have launched a thorough investigation.

Battlefield
The plant, located in the north

of Balikesir, makes munitions, explosives and flares for the domestic and international markets.

Witnesses told local media that part of the building was "like a battlefield".

The bodies of the dead were due to be carried to the morgue.

Security forces took measures in case of a second blast. Civilians and members of the press were not allowed nearby.

Turkey has become a major defence exporter, particularly for drones, with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan a major supporter of the industry.

In 2020, an explosion at a fireworks factory in northwestern Turkey killed seven people and injured 127 others.

In 2023, a blast at a military explosives factory killed five people. That factory -- some 40 kilometres (25 miles) east of the capital Ankara, was part of Turkey's defence ministry.

Bangladesh launches \$5 million corruption probe against Sheikh Hasina, family



DHAKA, Dec 24 (Agencies): An anti-graft panel in Bangladesh has launched an investigation against former prime minister Sheikh Hasina and her family in connection with the allegations of embezzling USD 5 billion in the Rooppur nuclear power plant, according to a media report.

Indian companies are participating in constructing the Rooppur nuclear power plant which is being built by Rosatom, Russia's state-run corporation, in Bangladesh.

The first Bangladeshi nuclear power plant, the Russian-designed Rooppur, is being built 160 km west of the Bangladeshi capital of Dhaka.

Along with Hasina, her son, Sajeeb Wazed Joy, and Tulip Siddiq, her niece and the UK's Treasury minister, were also questioned, agency reported. There are accusations of embezzling

USD 5 billion in the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project, the report added.

The development came two days after the High Court issued a rule asking why the Anti-Corruption Commission's (ACC) inaction over an alleged transfer of USD 5 billion from the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project to a Malaysian bank by Hasina, Joy, and Tulip should not be declared illegal, the report added.

According to ACC documents, the allegations of corruption in the Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant project were brought to light by Bobby Hajaj, chairman of the National Democratic Movement (NDM).

Hasina, 77, has been living in India since August 5 when she fled the country following a massive student-led protest that toppled her 16-year regime.

Her sister Rehana accompanied her. Joy resides in the US, while her niece Tulip is a member of the British parliament.

Bangladesh-based International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) has issued arrest warrants for Hasina and several former Cabinet ministers, advisers, and military and civil officials for "crimes against humanity and genocide".

They are also named in multiple murder cases filed in connection with the demonstrations.

Japan, US blame this country for \$300 million crypto theft

TOKYO, Dec 24 (Agencies): A North Korean hacking group stole cryptocurrency worth over \$300 million from the Japan-based exchange DMM Bitcoin, according to Japanese police and the United States' FBI.

The TraderTraitor group -- believed to be part of Lazarus Group, which is allegedly linked to the Pyongyang authorities -- carried out the heist, Japan's National Police Agency said Tuesday.

Lazarus Group gained notoriety a decade ago when it was accused of hacking into Sony Pictures as revenge for "The Interview," a film that mocked North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

The FBI detailed "the theft of cryptocurrency worth \$308 million US dollars from the Japan-based cryptocurrency company DMM by North Korean cyber actors" in a separate statement dated Monday.

It described a "targeted social engineering" operation where a hacker pretended to be a recruiter on LinkedIn to contact an employee of a different crypto wallet software company.

They sent the employee what appeared to be a pre-employment test, which actually contained a malicious line of code.



That allowed the hacker to compromise their system and impersonate the employee, the FBI said.

"In late May 2024, the actors likely used this access to manipulate a legitimate transaction request by a DMM employee, resulting in the loss of 4,502.9 Bitcoin, worth \$308 million at the time," it said.

"The FBI, National Police Agency of Japan, and other US government and international partners will continue to expose and combat North Korea's use of illicit activities -- including cybercrime and cryptocurrency theft -- to generate revenue for the regime," it said.

North Korea's cyber-warfare program dates back to at least the mid-1990s.

It has since grown to a 6,000-strong cyber-warfare unit known as Bureau 121 that operates from several countries, according to a 2020 US military report.

Tonga's parliament elects a new prime minister after his predecessor quit this month

Tonga's parliament has elected Aisake Eke as the country's new prime minister

PERTH, Dec 24 (Agencies): Tonga's parliament elected Aisake Eke as the country's new prime minister on Tuesday in a special session of the house on Christmas Eve, after his predecessor quit earlier this month just ahead of a no-confidence vote by lawmakers.

Eke assumes office less than a year before the South Pacific island nation of 105,000 people is to hold its next election.

A former finance minister, Eke won the secret ballot by 16-8 votes, defeating the only other candidate, Trade Minister Viliamue Latu, who was nominated by the current government. They both addressed parliament for about 20 minutes before the results were announced on Tuesday afternoon.

The tourism-dependent Tonga has struggled to rebound from the impact of the coronavirus pandemic, growing threats from climate change and a catastrophic 2022 volcanic eruption



and tsunami, which battered beachfront resorts, homes and businesses around the country's 171 islands.

Tonga's parliament consists of 17 lawmakers elected by the public and nine who are nobles, elected by a group of hereditary chiefs. Two members of parliament were unable to vote.

The resignation of Eke's predecessor Sioasi Sovaleni capped a period of fraught relations between his govern-

ment and Tonga's king. Eke, who initiated the motion for the no-confidence vote in Sovaleni late last month, will be officially sworn in at the next parliament session in February.

Eke's emerged on Tonga's political scene in 2010 and held several profile positions before losing his parliament seat in 2017. As finance minister, he spent time at the World Bank in Washington working on financial reform programs for Tonga.

His government also had difficult relations with Tonga's head of state, King Tupou VI, who retains powers to dissolve parliament, appoint judges and veto laws.

In September, Tonga won the bid to host the 2031 Pacific Games, a multi-sport event held every four years among athletes from Oceania. Tonga controversially withdrew from hosting the 2019 Pacific Games, with Eke set to be tasked with ramping up preparations amid logistical challenges.

Pak government agrees to consult Imran Khan as negotiations begin

ISLAMABAD, Dec 24 (Agencies): As negotiations between the treasury and the opposition began to address political disputes, Senator Irfan Siddiqui, a member of the government's committee, said that they have agreed to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) demand to consult Imran Khan - the incarcerated founder of the party, as reported by agency.

The PTI and the government started the negotiation process at the Parliament House in Islamabad with "hopes of a positive outcome" with an aim to ease the country's political tensions.

Siddiqui, speaking on a Geo News programme, said, "People want peace and democratic norms rather than anarchy and economic instability in the country."

Speaking about the deferment of the verdict in the 190 million GBP Al-Qadir Trust case against Imran Khan and his wife, Siddiqui clar-

fied that the government was not involved in judicial matters.

"The government has nothing to do with the judicial matters, ruling out any connection with the ongoing negotiation process," he claimed.

He added that the next round of talks is scheduled for January 2 with the mutual consultation of both committees. Siddiqui mentioned that both committees would meet again to continue the dialogue process.

He also confirmed that both sides had agreed to keep their discussions behind closed doors and avoid public statements that could disrupt the negotiations. "We want a logical conclusion of the talks. We told them [PTI] to present their demand in the shape of charter of demand," he said.

However, Siddiqui was careful to avoid making any promises about the outcome of the talks at this early stage. He explained that the government could not give assurances at the moment but would con-



sider PTI's demands once they were presented in writing, reported agency.

"The government committee, comprising senior members who know the constitutional and legal matters, will mull over options after receiving the former ruling party's demands," he added.

Senator Raja Nasir Abbas, the chief of the Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM), also shared his thoughts on the negotiations. Speaking on the same programme, Abbas

expressed optimism about the ongoing talks, stating, "I have witnessed many positive things during the meeting summoned by the incumbent government."

He praised the formation of the PTI negotiation committee and criticised the government for delaying the formation of its own dialogue committee. According to Abbas, it was important to arrange a meeting between Imran Khan and the PTI negotiating team to ensure a positive direction in the talks. "It is necessary

to arrange a meeting between the PTI committee and Imran which would exhibit a positive approach by the government," he emphasised.

Abbas also urged the government to take full advantage of the opportunity provided by these talks to address Pakistan's political disputes.

The meeting was attended by key figures, including Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, PM's Adviser Rana Sanaullah, and Senator Irfan Siddiqui. The opposition's side was represented by former National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser, Sunni Ittehad Council Chairman Sahibzada Hamid Raza, and MWM's Raja Nasir Abbas. PTI's committee was composed of other high-ranking members, though some were unable to attend the meeting, Geo News reported.

Following the first round of discussions, PTI has committed to submitting its demands in writing to the government committee.

Man finds bear in living room as Japan relaxes laws on shooting animals



TOKYO, Dec 24 (Agencies): A man in rural Japan found a bear snuggled up in his living room, local media reported Tuesday, as the government prepares to relax laws on shooting the fearsome creatures.

Reports said a man in snowy Fukushima region on Monday evening found a bear lying under his kotatsu -- a low table with a heating element underneath and a surrounding blanket that is common in Japanese houses.

"I came home from work and there was a bear with its head shoved into the kotatsu," the man was quoted as saying. The bear was said to be about 90 centimetres (three feet) long.

The man, who is in his 60s and lives alone, fled to a neighbour's place and phoned the police before returning over an hour later to find the bear and his food scattered around.

Police urged nearby residents to evacuate or lock their doors, accord-

ing to Kyodo News. No injuries were reported.

Public broadcaster NHK said around midday on Tuesday that the bear was still inside the house, showing footage of police among the tall trees and heavy snow around the dwelling.

It was the latest in a series of human encounters with bears in recent years that have prompted the Japanese government to propose loosening restrictions on shooting the animals.

The plan, set to take effect next year, will give local governments the power to authorise hunters to carry out "emergency shootings" even in more populated areas.

Experts say the dwindling human population in rural areas of Japan is causing hungry bears to come closer to towns.

Other factors include climate change affecting the omnivores' food supply and their hibernation times. This summer was tied for Japan's warmest on record.

There were a record six human fatalities from attacks and more than 9,000 bears killed in Japan in the previous fiscal year.

Earlier this month, a bear rampaged through a supermarket in northern Akita region for two days before being lured out with food coated in honey.

It wounded a 47-year-old man in the supermarket before shoppers were evacuated and the bear laid waste to the meat department.

Major General Anupinder Bevli visits 2 J&K Bn NCC Jammu



Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 24: Major General Anupinder Bevli, VSM, Additional Director General of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh Directorate visited 2 J&K Battalion NCC in Jammu to assess and review the systems and procedures in place that contribute to the efficiency and effectiveness of the NCC curriculum. During his visit, Major General Bevli conducted a thorough inspection and praised the dedicated efforts of the officers, Permanent Instructor Staff and civilian staff. He emphasized the importance of maintaining high standards across all aspects of training and administration, encouraging everyone to continue their excellent work to fulfill the aims and objectives of the NCC.

The General Officer expressed particular appreciation for the excellent standard of drill demonstrated by the cadets from MAM College, recognizing their commitment and discipline. He also commended the collective efforts being made by all involved in NCC activities, underscoring that such commitment is vital to the growth and development of the NCC in the region. In addition, Major General Bevli placed significant emphasis on institutional

training and the role of Associate NCC Officers and Permanent Instructors in ensuring the continued high quality of training. He further commended the contributions of the Commanding Officer and the staff of 2 J&K BN NCC, for the battalion's achievements and encouraged to further enhance the standards and performance of the unit. The visit served to reinforce the commitment to quality training and leadership development within the NCC, ensuring that the cadets in Jammu & Kashmir receive world-class training and opportunities for growth.

National Mathematics Day celebrated at Shoolini University

Top News Report

JAMMU/SOLAN, Dec 24: In honor of the legendary mathematician Srinivasa Ramanujan, Yogananda School of AI, Computer and Data Sciences, Shoolini University, in collaboration with the mathematics club, Sanchay, Shoolini University celebrated National Mathematics Day with a series of engaging events.

The celebration commenced with an aptitude quiz hosted on the university's eUniv platform. The quiz challenged participants with 30 thought-provoking questions to be solved within 25 minutes. A total of 54 students from various departments participated and showcased their mathematical prowess. The highlight of the event was a webinar featuring guest speaker Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vats, Associate Professor at NIT Hamirpur. Dr. Vats delivered lecture on Srinivasa Ramanujan's life and his groundbreaking contributions to mathematics. He also introduced students to the ancient

wisdom of Vedic mathematics, explaining its 16 sutras and their practical applications in modern life.

The celebrations concluded with the announcement of the quiz winners by Sanchay president Anshika Jain. Mohit Kumar, a first-year B.Tech (CSE) student, emerged as the champion, while Paarth Sarthi, a first-year B.Tech (CSE AI) student, secured the second position. Richa, a second-year B.Tech (Bioinformatics) student, claimed the runner-up spot. The winners were awarded certificates and cash prizes, while all participants received certificates of participation. The awards were presented by Chancellor Prof. PK Khosla. The Associate Dean Student Welfare, Prof. Neeraj Gandotra shared, that the celebration of National Mathematics Day was insightful and engaging. The webinar was organized and coordinated by Dr. Sahil Kashyap, Dr. Kanika, Dr. Sushil Kumar and other faculty members of the School.

Zorawar releases devotional album "Daati Tere Dar Pe, Jo Bhi Aaya"



Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 24: In a significant cultural event, Chairman of Team Jammu, Zorawar Singh Jamwal, officially released the devotional album "Daati Tere Dar Pe Jo Bhi Aaya", a compilation of bhajans rendered by renowned vocalist Poonam Sharma. The album release function took place at Bishna, Jammu, in the presence of an esteemed gathering of music industry professionals and local dignitaries. The album is a collaborative effort between producer Avinash Sharma and Arun Sharma, with music production handled by Ravi Raguvanshi at T.L. Music Studio. The lyrical composition for the album was provided by Jagdish Chander, while the overall album direction was managed by K.K. Films (Production). During the launch event, Zorawar Singh Jamwal extended his heartfelt con-

gratulations to the entire production team, emphasizing the album's potential to create a substantial impact in the devotional music sector. He expressed confidence that the album would garner widespread acclaim among listeners, particularly among digital audiences, and would contribute significantly to the evolution of the regional music industry. Zorawar Singh Jamwal further endorsed for the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory's government to actively promote the integration of the music and film industries, urging for the establishment of more structured platforms to support emerging artists. He highlighted the necessity of creating avenues for the youth to engage in artistic and cultural expressions that contribute to both personal growth and societal well-being. Poonam Sharma expresses heartfelt grati-

tude to her family, particularly her husband, Avinash Sharma, whose constant support and encouragement have been a source of immense strength throughout her journey. She acknowledges that this album would not have come to fruition without the dedication and creative contributions of the entire team. The album, she believes, resonates deeply with listeners, helping them connect more profoundly with the divine. Team Jammu Chief underscored the positive social impact of spiritual and devotional music, particularly in encouraging youth engagement in meaningful activities that foster mental wellness and reduce the likelihood of anti-social behavior. He also reiterated the importance of preserving Jammu and Kashmir's rich cultural heritage, stressing the role of communal harmony in maintaining the region's cultural integrity and collective identity.

Alchemy Educare launches Doda Centre to empower NEET, JEE aspirants

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 24: Alchemy Educare has inaugurated its first coaching centre in Doda, introducing NEET and Foundation courses for students across Chenab Valley. Speaking at the launch and interaction with media, Pritam Bijyal, founder of Alchemy Educare, emphasized that the centre aims to provide quality education to meritorious students and those from economically weaker sections. With 20 years of teaching experience and collaborations with leading national brands in Kota and Delhi, Bijyal expressed

his commitment to fostering academic excellence in the region. He noted that the long-standing demand for a premier coaching institute in Chenab Valley has now been met. Alchemy Educare is dedicated to delivering top-notch education aligned with NEET and JEE exam patterns, ensuring personalized attention, one-on-one mentorship, and regular feedback to parents. Students from classes 8 to 12, including 12th-grade pass-outs, are invited to apply for scholarships. They can visit the centre to learn more about the admission process and the exclusive benefits offered to the inaugural batch.

BBAJK to hold selection trials on Dec 25

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 24: The Body Building Association of India has intimated that it is going to organize 16th Senior Body Building and Physique Sports Championship 2025 at Belagavi, Karnataka from January 14 to 16, 2025. In this regard, the Body Building Association of Jammu and Kashmir (BBAJK) has announced to conduct selection trials to select Jammu and Kashmir Body Building team for the aforesaid National Championship on December 25, 2024 between 11:00 AM to 12:00 Noon at International Gym, Rehari Colony, Jammu. Body Builders from across the Jammu and Kashmir district units are expected to participate. All athletes must bring a health certificate, Aadhaar card or passport, Passport-sized photographs, and a waiver of liability form to the trials. For any query, Body Builders can contact to Rajesh Dutta of BBAJK on (7006202407).

FROM PAGE 3

Amit Shah reviews implementation of three new criminal laws

senior officers as per pre-define timelines will help in expediting the process of investigation," Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) said in a statement, quoting Shah. Shah highlighted that a team of officers of the MHA and NCRB should visit all the states to increase the adoption of technical projects and assist them in all possible ways. During the discussion in the meeting, the Home Minister asked NCRB to facilitate the complete implementation of new criminal laws in the Inter-Operable Criminal Justice System (ICJS 2.0) and emphasised on use of applications like eSakshya, Nyaya Shruti, eSign and eSummons in every state as well as Union Territory.

The Union Home Minister has instructed the NCRB to develop a data-rich platform aimed at assisting investigation officers and other stakeholders in the criminal justice system.

The meeting reviewed the implementation of integration of Crime and Criminal Tracking Networks and Systems, National Automated Fingerprint Identification System, Prisons, Courts, Prosecution and Forensics with ICJS 2.0 at all India level. Union Home Secretary, Director NCRB and several senior officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs, NCRB and NIC were present in the meeting.

'We should try again': Punjab Assembly Speaker on Vajpayee's failed India-Pak peace initiative

there is a real possibility of restarting the peace process," says Khan, who is a senior member of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N). Khan says the future of the region depends on free trade and unrestricted movement between countries. "Peace in the region is not just a good idea - it is necessary for growth and prosperity," the Punjab Speaker adds. Another senior PML-N leader from Punjab, Mohammad Mehdi, describes Vajpayee's Lahore visit as historic. He believes the visit could have led to lasting

peace if the Kargil conflict had not happened. "The Western media paid a lot of attention to Vajpayee's visit because it came just months after both countries became nuclear powers," Mehdi says, referring to nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in May 1998. "There was excitement, especially within PML-N ranks, when Vajpayee arrived in Lahore in February 1999. His speech, saying 'Pakistan is a reality, and both countries now need to move forward and leave the past behind,' gave hope to many," Mehdi recalls. Unfortunately, the Kargil conflict happened soon after, and the peace efforts were unsuccessful, he says. Mehdi says Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) held protests during Vajpayee's visit, which many believe were organised by the military led by General Pervez Musharraf. "Jamaat-i-Islami workers even attacked the Turkish ambassador's car near Lahore Fort, mistaking it for an Indian delegation," he says. Mehdi believes back-channel talks between Pakistan and India are still happening. "Right now, relations between the two countries are at their lowest point. Neither country has an envoy in the other's capital. However, businessmen on both sides desperately want to restore ties to improve trade and use shorter routes through Pakistan to reach Central Asia and Europe," he says.

Political expert Brig (ret.) Farooq Hameed says Nawaz Sharif should have involved the powerful Pakistan Army in the peace process. "The initiative failed because the military was not consulted, which led to the Kargil conflict and ended the peace process. If Nawaz Sharif had taken the military on board before Vajpayee's visit, the chances of the peace talks being successful would have been higher." Hameed says Nawaz has repeatedly shown interest in improving ties with India, including his desire to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi after returning to Pakistan last year from a four-year self-imposed exile in London. However, he pointed out, that Nawaz's younger brother, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, has not made any recent public statements indicating a similar desire. "Nawaz should first consult Shehbaz, who enjoys the military establishment's favour, to determine if he shares this vision for improved relations with India," he says. He also notes the lack of progress after Indian Foreign Minister S Jaishankar visited Pakistan recently.

Congress holds Ambedkar samman march in Jammu, seeks apology from Shah

Kashmir working president Raman Bhalla, scores of workers, former ministers, ex-legislators and senior leaders marched from Ambedkar Chowk. Slogans against the BJP and Shah, and hailing Ambedkar, reverberated in the rally, which culminated at the divisional commissioner's office. Congress leaders submitted a memorandum demanding respect and dignity for Ambedkar. "The agitation has now reached the 'sadak' from Sansad. We will continue to hold marches to ensure justice for the architect of the Constitution. We will not tolerate any insult to Ambedkar," Bhalla told reporters. The Congress demands Shah's resignation and a public apology for his remarks, he said.

Gudoora incident: Woman died after son-in-law reportedly pushed her, say Police

FIR No. 257/2024 under relevant sections of law has been lodged at PS Pulwama and investigation taken up, police in a statement added. National Conference slams party MP Aga Ruhullah for leading student protest there, giving them an opportunity to exploit the situation," Salman said, adding that such actions inadvertently strengthen the position of political rivals like the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP). Salman accused the protest organisers of failing to consider better ways to address grievances. "If grievances truly

needed redressal, there were better ways to address them. What happened yesterday, in my personal opinion, was pure drama. It didn't benefit anyone," he said. While reiterating his support to students' concerns, Salman said that the National Conference stands with the students of the open merit category. "I openly declare in front of you that I stand with the students of the open merit category. Their grievances must be addressed based on their population percentage. However, we will not allow politics to be played on this issue," he said. He also took a dig at political opportunism, stating that the protest gave a platform to individuals who have no real stake in the issue. "People with no mandate, those who have been rejected by the public with barely 200 votes, were speaking on behalf of thousands or even millions. This kind of behavior undermines genuine efforts," Salman said. Salman expressed concern about the damage such actions could inflict on the party's credibility and unity. "The National Conference is a very large party, and small incidents or dirty politics won't affect us. But actions like these create unnecessary internal strife. We have faith that under Omar Abdullah's leadership, the aspirations of the open merit category will be addressed through the reservation policy," he said. Salman also questioned the role of those who organised and participated in the protest. "If genuine stakeholders had been engaged, it would have been meaningful. But this was clearly about internal issues and political point-scoring," he said. National Conference leader and Member of Parliament from Srinagar Monday led a protest march outside chief minister's official residence in the Gupkar area of Srinagar over reservation policy row. The protest led by the MP is being viewed, by many, as growing discord within the National Conference, as it was seen as defying the party's norms and discipline.

Don't fiddle with rights of Dalits, Gujjars, Paharis: Tarun Chugh to J&K CM on anti-reservation protest

himself in finding solutions to the basic problems being faced by the people, Omar Abdullah is raking up superfluous issues. His government has failed to address the problems with electricity and drinking water facilities for the people, and in order to distract the public attention, they have raked

up the reservation issue." "It is strange that during his lifetime, the Congress never gave Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar his rightful respect and after his death, they speak of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar now. Pandit Nehru and Indira Gandhi were honoured with the Bharat Ratna, but not Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar during the Congress rule," Chugh said. He alleged that Congress opposed the views of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar before Independence and also after Independence during their governments. "He was forced to resign and if you study the letter written by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, you will realise how strongly he opposed reservations in Independent India," Chugh said. It must be mentioned that the NC Lok Sabha member, Syed Ruhullah Mehdi led a protest march against the reservation policy at CM Abdullah's residence in Srinagar on Monday. This move, against his government by a Lok Sabha member of the ruling NC, is believed to have embarrassed the chief minister, who has assured to address the reservation policy by rationalising it within six months.

No respite from cold: MeT says chill to continue till Dec 26

reaches of Chenab and Pir Panchal range towards December 27 late afternoon to December 28 forenoon. An official of Meteorological Centre Srinagar informed that from today onwards till December 26 the weather conditions will likely remain dry. He said from December 27 to 28, there is a possibility of cloudy weather with light rain over plains of Jammu, and light snow over higher reaches of Chenab valley and Pir Panchal range towards December 27 late afternoon to December 28 forenoon. He also said from December 29 to 30, the weather conditions likely to remain dry. On December 31 there is a possibility of cloudy with light snow at isolated higher reaches, he said. He added from January 1 to 3, there is a forecast of cloudy weather with light snow at isolated to scattered places of Jammu and Kashmir. While issuing advisory, the official maintained that cold wave conditions to continue at isolated places in Jammu and Kashmir till December 26. He underlined that in view of fresh snowfall, sub-freezing temperature and icy conditions over roads of important passes and higher reaches, the tourists, travelers and transporters are advised to follow advisories from administration and traffic department.

Sensex, Nifty close lower in a choppy session; IT and metal stocks weigh

The S&P BSE Sensex was down by 67.30 points to close at 78,472.87, while the NSE Nifty50 lost 23.35 points to end at 23,730.10.

NEW DELHI, Dec 24 (Agencies): Benchmark stock market indices closed marginally lower on Tuesday, dragged by a decline in IT, metal and public sector banking stocks.

The S&P BSE Sensex was down by 67.30 points to close at 78,472.87, while the NSE Nifty50 lost 23.35 points to end at 23,730.10.

Aditya Gaggar Director of Progressive Shares said that after a subdued opening, the Index soared higher under the leadership of the Auto and IT counters but however once again, the level of 23,850 worked as a strong hurdle and the Index reversed to settle the trade at 23,727.65 with a loss of 25.80 points.

The top gaining stocks were Tata Motors, which rose 1.79%, Adani Enterprises increasing 1.41%, Eicher Motors gaining 1.04%, Nestlend advancing 0.86%, and BPCL up 0.85%.



On the downside, Power Grid Corporation fell 1.68%, JSW Steel declined 1.41%, SBI Life Insurance dropped 1.28%, Titan decreased 1.12%, and Infosys lost 1.09%.

"Auto and FMCG were the top performers on a sectoral front while Metal and PSU Banks corrected the most. The disparity was seen in the Broader mar-

kets where Midcaps moved in tandem with the Frontline Index while Smallcaps marginally outperformed by ending the day in green. The Index is oscillating in a well-maintained range of 23,650-23,850 and a breakout on either sides is necessary for a concrete inference," he added.

In today's trading session, most sectoral indices on the

National Stock Exchange painted a predominantly red picture. The steepest declines were witnessed in Nifty Metal and Nifty Financial Services Ex-Bank, which fell 0.73% and 0.62% respectively.

Nifty IT and Nifty Media both declined 0.45%, while Nifty Midsmall Financial Services dropped 0.39%. Other indices in the red included Nifty Midsmall IT & Telecom (-0.31%), Nifty Realty (-0.28%), Nifty Consumer Durables (-0.28%), Nifty Midsmall Healthcare (-0.14%), and Nifty Financial Services (-0.12%).

On the brighter side, a few sectors managed to buck the trend, with Nifty Oil & Gas leading the gainers with a 0.54% rise, followed by Nifty FMCG increasing by 0.44%, Nifty Auto edging up by 0.45%, and Nifty Private Bank rising marginally by 0.17%.

Razorpay grants employees Rs 1L ESOPs to mark 10 years of operation

Razorpay said it believes that employees are the driving force behind its growth, and ESOP allocations show appreciation for their contributions.



BENGALURU, Dec 24 (Agencies): Fintech major Razorpay is awarding employee stock option plans (ESOPs) worth Rs 1 lakh to all its current employees as part of its 10 years celebration. For many employees, this marks their first-ever ESOP allocation. ESOPs have long been a valuable means of wealth creation in the start-up ecosystem. Razorpay said it

believes that employees are the driving force behind its growth, and ESOP allocations show appreciation for their contributions.

Its first ESOP buyback was in 2018, and that enabled 140 employees to liquidate their vested shares. In 2022, the \$75 million ESOP buyback benefited 650 existing and former employees.

Over the past decade, it has grown exponen-

tially, and has reached over 300 million end consumers across the country. With an annualised payment volume (TPV) of \$180 billion, Razorpay has launched over 40 products every year. The fintech major powers payments for 80 of the country's 100 unicorns.

Harshil Mathur, co-founder & CEO of Razorpay, said, "Back in 2014, when we started Razorpay, we didn't think of it as a start-up, it was a massive customer problem we wanted to fix - the complexity of integrating payment systems intrigued us. That's been the common denominator till now."

NARCL takes over Anil Ambani-run Mumbai Metro's Rs 2,658 crore debt

MUMBAI, Dec 24 (Agencies): With the state government dilly-dallying on taking over the financially crippled Mumbai Metro One (MOMOPL), one of the few operational assets that the Anil Ambani group has, the lenders, who had already declared their exposures to the entity as bad loans, have sold their debt to the national bad bank, National Asset Reconstruction Co (NARCL).

According to sources, NARCL has acquired Mumbai Metro One's debt of Rs 2,658 crore from five domestic banks: State Bank of India, IDBI Bank, Canara Bank, Indian Bank, and Bank of Maharashtra. British developmental lender IIFCL also has some exposure to the company.

The NARCL deal is for Rs 1,063 crore, which means banks will get only about 35 per cent of their money. The loan break-up is not known, and neither is the expo-

sure of IIFCL.

NARCL did not respond to a message from TNIE.

In July this year, the state government had asked the city's development agency, MMRDA, to give an exit to Reliance Infra by offering a one-time settlement and taking over the operations. But citing a lack of finances, the agency backed out of the deal.

According to a banker, MOMOPL will restructure the debt with NARCL for Rs 1,063 crore. The debt acquisition has been done through competitive bidding following the Swiss challenge process.

MMOPL is a 74:26 joint venture between Reliance Infrastructure and the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA). It is also the first metro line of the megapolis and among the first in the private space in the country.

It carries over 4 lakh passengers daily, even though the line is a short

11 km network connecting the overcrowded Versova-Andheri-Ghatkopar areas of the megapolis.

The state had, in July, asked MMRDA to explore a one-time settlement with the MOMOPL lenders, but the agency could not go ahead due to its own poor finances. The move came a week after the state reversed its decision to acquire the MOMOPL.

This came after the state cabinet had, in early March, decided to buy out R-Infra's 74 per cent stake for Rs 4,000 crore.

The MMRDA was to operate the project. However, MMRDA stated it could not finance the acquisition.

In March 2024, MOMOPL had signed a debt settlement agreement with the lenders, committing to pay Rs 1,700 crore as a one-time settlement. As part of the agreement, MMRDA and MOMOPL made an upfront payment of Rs 171 crore to the lenders.

Swiss terminal major TIL to invest Rs 20,000 crore in Vadhavan Port

MUMBAI, Dec 24 (Agencies): The Switzerland-based container terminal major, Terminal Investment Sarl (TIL), has agreed to invest Rs 20,000 crore in the upcoming Vadhavan Port northwest of Mumbai.

The project, being developed by the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority (JNPA), involves a total investment of Rs 76,200 crore.

On completion in two phases, the port will be one of the largest facilities in the country. The first phase of the project is scheduled to be completed in 2029, and the second in 2039, when it will be able to handle 23.2 million TEUs (twenty-foot equivalent units).

The project was first planned 25 years ago but could not go ahead due to opposition from the locals and environmentalists ever since it was announced in 1997.

The JNPA has said TIL will invest around Rs 20,000 crore to develop the Vadhavan Port and the surrounding ecosystem, establishing it as a world-class facility. A memorandum of understanding was signed with TIL.

The facility, coming up at Dahanu in the Palghar district, is being developed by Vadhavan Port Project (VPPL), the special purpose vehicle in



Terminal Investment Limited

which JNPA holds 74 per cent and the Maharashtra Maritime Board owns the remaining 26 per cent.

The JNPA said the collaboration will help develop the Vadhavan Port into a world-class port in the future, which will go a long way in decongesting the JNPA.

TIL has a diverse portfolio of container terminals, strategically located at key ports on the major global shipping routes, numbering over 30 ports and providing access to key mature and developing markets.

"This partnership not only reflects the confidence of global investors in our maritime sector but also ensures the integration of cutting-edge technology, sustainable practices, and world-class infrastructure," said Unmesh Sharad Wagh, the JNPA chairman, and the chairman of VPPL, in a statement.

Together, the two partners aim to create a port ecosystem that sets new benchmarks in efficiency and innovation, he added.

Earlier this month, the VPPL had said it began the process of acquiring 574 hectares to connect the port with a highway and railhead, which will be respectively built by the National Highways Authority and the Railways.

Following the initial phase of commencement of the project on the ground, the land acquisition process will continue through correspondence and payment of compensation, Wagh had said then.

Of the 574 hectares, 50 per cent is forest land, while the remaining is owned by various private players. The NHAI has applied for forest clearance to build an 8-lane access-controlled highway to connect to the port.

The all-weather greenfield deep-draft port is being built at an estimated cost of Rs 76,220 crore and will be the 13th major port in the country, and the third in Maharashtra. It will be able to handle 23.2 million TEUs.

An arm of the dedicated freight corridor, the Mumbai-Vadodara Highway, and the under-construction Mumbai-Vadodara

Expressway will be linked to the port. The road arm will be 32 km, and the rail will be 12 km long.

The offshore port project has three components: 15,363.5 hectares of waterfront, 1,488 hectares of intertidal zone that will be reclaimed, and 63.5 hectares of berth zone.

The port will have nine container terminals, each of them 1 km long, four liquid cargo berths, four multipurpose berths, a Ro-Ro berth, and a Coast Guard berth. These will be developed and operated on a public-private partnership basis.

The groundbreaking was done by Prime Minister Modi in late August 2024. It will be the country's first offshore port, in which the port will be built on an artificial island, and will be the third mother port in the country after Vallarpadam in Kochi and Vizhinjam International Seaport in Thiruvananthapuram.

The port will have an artificial harbour, and its berths, along with the inner navigable channel, will be surrounded by breakwaters, while the outer navigable channel will be the open sea.

The port will have a natural depth of 20 meters, making it possible to berth large ships, such as ultra-large container vessels of 233,000 DWT.

ICMR develops AI tool to predict IVF outcomes in men with infertility

The AI-based tool—'Fertility Predictor'—developed by the ICMR-NIRRH in collaboration with Amity University, Noida can predict sperm retrieval rates and success rates of assisted reproductive technology (ART) in men having this genetic problem

NEW DELHI, Dec 24 (Agencies): The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) in collaboration with Amity University has developed an artificial intelligence-based tool to detect the type of 'Y' chromosome microdeletion—a genetic cause of male infertility—and predict IVF outcomes.

The study regarding the AI tool was published in the Journal of Assisted Reproduction and Genetics last week.

In nearly 50 per cent of couples experiencing infertility, the problem is with the male partner, said Dr Deepak Modi, senior scientist at ICMR's National Institute for Research in Reproductive and Child Health (NIRRH) and the lead author of the

study.

"In them there could be problems with sperm production. One of the leading causes, Y chromosome microdeletion (YCMD) is observed in one in every 10 men with infertility. Because of this genetic defect, the testes are unable to make enough sperm leading to infertility," Dr Modi said.

Men with YCMD cannot benefit from medical treatment for improving the sperm count.

To become fathers, such men require assisted reproductive techniques such as in-vitro fertilization (IVF) for parenthood, he said.

The AI-based tool—'Fertility Predictor'—developed by the ICMR-NIRRH in collaboration



with Amity University, Noida can predict sperm retrieval rates and success rates of assisted reproductive technology (ART) in men having this genetic problem.

It also predicts the rate of fertilization, clinical pregnancy and live birth rates based on the type of Y chromosome microdeletion, Dr Modi said. This helps the couples make informed deci-

sions, he said.

However, Dr Modi cautioned that the male babies born through IVF from men with YCMD will inherit the same defect and will be infertile as it is 100 per cent transmitted from fathers to their sons.

Developing this tool took about two years by collating data of more than 500 men having YCMD and undergoing

ART.

After applying an artificial intelligence algorithm based on machine learning on this data, the tool could predict the outcomes. This was then validated on another sub-set and it was found to have accuracy of about 80 per cent, Dr Stacy Colaco, a scientist at NIRRH and the first author of the study, said.

"Fertility Predictor also provides a numerical output for chance of clinical pregnancy and live birth in men with YCMD. The validation studies indicated its robustness and high accuracy in predicting both these parameters solely based on the type of YCMD," said Dr Abhishek Sengupta of Amity University, Noida.

Health of blood vessels can reveal health of brain: Study

NEW DELHI, Dec 24 (Agencies): Brain imaging of 70-year-olds has shown that factors risking the health of blood vessels, such as inflammation and high glucose levels, are related to an older-looking brain, whereas healthy lifestyles to a younger one.

As population around the world ages, dementia cases are projected to rise.

However, researchers from Karolinska Institutet, Sweden, said that the speed at which one's brain ages is affected by various risk and health factors.

"Despite the recent introduction of new Alzheimer's drugs, they will not work for everyone with dementia. So, we want to study what can boost the

brain's resilience against pathological ageing processes," Anna Marseglia, a researcher at Karolinska Institutet and lead author of the study published in the Alzheimer's & Dementia: The Journal of the Alzheimer's Association, said.

The researchers took 739 MRI scans of cognitively healthy individuals, 389 of whom were women, and estimated the brain age, using their own AI-based algorithm. Blood samples were taken for measuring lipids, glucose, and inflammation. Cognitive test scores, along with lifestyle, were also analysed.

On average, the brain age for both sexes was found to be 71 years by the AI-based tool.

EXTENSION OF PERIODICITY OF FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAIN

For the convenience of Rail Passengers, Railways have decided to extend the Periodicity of following festival special train as per details given below:-

Train No.	From	To	Frequency/ Days of Run	Earlier Notified Upto	Extended Period	
					From	To
03309	Dhanbad Jn.	Jammu Tawi	Bi-Weekly / Tue, Sat	31.12.2024	04.01.2025	28.01.2025
03310	Jammu Tawi	Dhanbad Jn.	Bi-Weekly / Wed, Sun	01.01.2025	05.01.2025	29.01.2025

Rest of all information will hold good

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Let's not worry about who bats where: Rohit ahead of Boxing Day Test

The India skipper dismisses fears about knee injury he suffered during practice, saying it is fine

MELBOURNE, Dec 24 (Agencies): Ahead of the Boxing Day Test, India skipper Rohit Sharma on Tuesday dismissed fears about the knee injury he suffered during practice, saying it was fine, while keeping the suspense over his batting position.

Rohit had got hit on the left knee during the training session at the MCG on Sunday and there was speculation about the seriousness of the injury.

"My knee is fine," said Rohit during a media interaction ahead of the fourth Border-Gavaskar Test here from December 26.

Rohit missed the opening Test Down Under to be with his family for the birth of his second child. He was expected to reclaim the opener's spot but KL Rahul's impressive 77 in India's win at Perth prompted a rejig of the



batting order with the skipper moving down to No.6.

The change though has not been fruitful for Rohit as he has managed 10, 3 and 6 runs in the last three innings, while Rahul has cashed on the opportunity by notching up a fine 84 in the first innings at Brisbane in the third Test.

The skipper said, he would do

whatever is best for the team.

"Let's not worry about who bats where. Something that we need to figure and not something I would be discussing here. We will do what is best for the team," Rohit.

On Kohli's form, and his supposed shortcoming outside off-stump, Rohit said, the stalwart will find a way out of the slump.

"Kohli's off stump... you only say modern day great. Modern-day greats figure out their own path," said the skipper.

Kohli scored a century in the second innings of the Perth Test, which India won after being dismissed for 150 in the first essay.

However, he was dismissed for 7 and 11 in the second Test, which Australia won by 10 wickets to level the series, while in the drawn third Test at Brisbane he made 3.

Young Yashasvi Jaiswal has failed to fire following his match-winning 161 in the first Test but Rohit said he will be encouraged to play his natural free-flowing game.

"You don't want to tamper Jaiswal's mindset. He understands his batting more than anyone of us. You encourage him to play freely."

Kotian replaces recently retired Ashwin in India's squad



MELBOURNE, Dec 24 (Agencies): Mumbai off-spinner Tanush Kotian is set to join the India squad in Australia as a replacement for the recently retired Ravichandran Ashwin. It is understood that the 26-year-old Kotian, who was part of India A's tour of Australia, has also been added as a cover for Washington Sundar.

"Kotian has been added as a safety net and also to keep the squad number intact for the last two games.

He only comes into the picture if either among Washy or Jaddu (Ravindra Jadeja) gets injured," a senior BCCI source told PTI on conditions of anonymity.

Kotian, who is currently in Ahmedabad for Vijay Hazare Trophy, is expected to leave Mumbai on Tuesday and will reach Melbourne before the start of Boxing Day Test.

The bowling all-rounder picked two wickets and scored an unbeaten 39 for Mumbai in their Vijay Hazare Trophy

match against Hyderabad on Monday.

Kotian has fond memories of the Melbourne Cricket Ground where he scored 44 batting at No. 8 for India A and looked the part.

He already has 101 wickets to his name and 1525 runs with two centuries in 33 first-class games.

Originally, Axar Patel was supposed to be summoned to Australia but as per sources, the left arm spinner had sought a break after first two matches of Vijay Hazare Trophy due to a family commitment.

Kotian has been added to the squad following Ashwin's surprise retirement from international cricket following the draw Test in Brisbane.

The 38-year-old ended his glorious career as the second highest wicket taker for India behind Anil Kumble.

India name 15-member squad for ICC Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup

NEW DELHI, Dec 24 (Agencies): India on Tuesday named a 15-member squad for next year's ICC Under-19 Women's T20 World Cup to be played in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from January 18 to February 2.

The Women's Selection Committee of the BCCI announced the squad to be led by Niki Prasad, while Sanika Chalke will be the vice-captain.

The squad has two wicketkeepers in Kamalini G and Bhavika Ahire, while three stand-by players, Nandhana S, Ira J and Anadi T, have also been included.

The 16 competing teams have been divided into four groups.

India are the defending champions, and are placed in Group A alongside hosts Malaysia, West Indies and Sri Lanka.

The tournament will be hosted by Bayuemas Oval.

India will begin their campaign against West Indies on January 19, followed by matches against Malaysia (January 21) and Sri Lanka (January 23).

Following the group phase, which runs from January 19-23, the top three teams from each group will advance to the Super 6 stage—two groups of six —, which will take place from January 25-29.

Group 1 in Super 6 will include the top three teams each from Group A and D, while Group 2 will have the top three teams each from Group B and C.

The teams will carry forward their points and net run rates from the initial group phase and will play the two sides who were not in their original group and who finished at a different position.

The top two sides from the two Super 6 stage groups will qualify for the semifinals, slated

for January 31 while the final will be played on February 2.

Australia, Bangladesh, England, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka, and the West Indies have qualified through their participation in the 2023 edition, while Malaysia earned automatic qualification as hosts.

Nepal, Nigeria, Samoa, Scotland and the United States have earned their spots through the various regional qualification tournaments.

India squad: Niki Prasad (captain), Sanika Chalke (vice-captain), G Trisha, Kamalini G (wk), Bhavika Ahire (wk), Ishwari Awasth, Mithila Vinod, Joshitha VJ, Sonam Yadav, Parunika Sisodiya, Kesari Drithi, Aayushi Shukla, Anandita Kishor, MD Shabnam, Vaishnavi S.

Standby players: Nandhana S, Ira J, Anadi T.

Konstas set to make Test debut at MCG, injury cloud over Travis Head

MELBOURNE, Dec 24 (Agencies): Teen batter Sam Konstas is set to make a dream debut at the MCG during the Boxing Day Test against India as an injury cloud looms over prolific run-getter Travis Head, who suffered a quadriceps muscle strain during the third game at the Gabba.

Konstas, 19, will become the 468th Australian men's Test cricketer to don the Baggy Green during the fourth Border-Gavaskar game on December 26 after selector, Tony Dodemaide, informed him about his inclusion during training at the MCG here on Tuesday morning.

Konstas will become the youngest Test debutant for Australia since 18-year-old Pat Cummins broke into the squad in 2011.

"We wanted clarity for our batting unit before the team meeting," Australia coach Andrew McDonald said ahead of



the fourth Test with the series locked at 1-1.

Dodemaide informing Konstas about his inclusion was a departure from protocol as traditionally, it's the Australian skipper who confirms the playing XI on match eve or on the morning of the match.

"It's (breaking the news) something we don't usually do because haven't had too many moving parts, but we thought we'd get that out of the way so everyone knows that he's in the team," said McDonald.

"He (Konstas) has

been very similar to what I've seen on the outside within (the team) — composed, relaxed, knows his game. And what he's shown is an array of shots, the ability to put pressure back on to opponents and he gets his opportunity," he added.

Konstas replaces Nathan McSweeney in the side after the opener was dropped because of a string of poor scores in the three Tests so far.

However, McDonald said, Head, one of the in-form batters having scored two centuries so

far in the series, had a "a small strain to the quad" picked up during the last day of the third Test at the Gabba.

The 'player of the match' in the last two Tests faced only throw-downs from assistant coach Brad Hodge rather than his fast-bowling teammates at the nets on Tuesday.

"I thought he looked good with the bat in his hands so obviously the skills are in good order. It will just be what risk is associated with that," said McDonald.

"But no concerns from my end, he's been able to do his running so I think he'll be functional come game time."

The coach did not speculate on who could fill the spot in the middle-order if Head fails to prove his fitness. The uncapped pair of Josh Inglis and Beau Webster are the stand-bys in the squad.

However, pacer Scott Boland has been all-but

confirmed to replace Josh Hazlewood, who is nursing a calf strain.

McDonald said with temperatures expected to soar to over 40 degrees during the Boxing Day Test, the pitch could end up being more batter-friendly.

"I think this wicket might offer the batters a little bit more in terms of the surface as the game draws on. If we didn't pick Scotty (Boland) here—and I know I'm not allowed to declare the team because that's Pat's (Cummins) job tomorrow—but I don't think I'm coming to the ground Boxing Day if Scotty's not in the eleven.

"We've got great depth in our bowling, and (all-rounder) Mitch Marsh is fully fit and able to bowl. But he (Boland) is ready to go and I think he'll play a role in this Test match with the ball more so than the previous ones."

Gill needs to back himself, he's changed things up too much: Ponting

MELBOURNE, Dec 24 (Agencies): India's top-order batter Shubman Gill has made far too many changes in his batting approach, which is hindering his run-scoring ability on away tours, feels former Australian captain Ricky Ponting, adding that the way out for the young cricketer is to trust his instincts.

Gill missed the opening Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy in Perth due to a thumb injury he suffered during India's simulated training game. In the second Test at Adelaide, he failed to convert good starts into big scores as Australia levelled the series 1-1.

The third Test at Brisbane saw him getting out for one in the first innings, putting India in a spot of bother before KL Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja struck half-centuries to halt the slide.

"I love watching him play. When you're watching him bat and



bat well, he looks as good as anyone in world cricket. But the numbers don't really stack up, do they, away from home?" Ponting said on ICC Review on Tuesday.

Ponting said he had observed several changes in Gill's technique during the second Test at Adelaide, which were impeding his ability to score runs.

"I watched him a little bit in Adelaide and it almost looked like he changed things up too much."

"Scott Boland was bowling and he changed his guard, he moved across to the off stump, presented his front pad

to Boland, and Boland got him out with a full straight one," he said.

The Australian legend added that rather than making wholesale changes in his technique, Gill should fall back upon trusting his instincts to improve his batting.

Gill's composed 91 at the Gabba during the 2021 tour had helped India clinch a historic series win, but since then he has scored just one Test ton away from home—in Bangladesh in 2022.

Gill averages 23.8 across nine Tests in England, Bangladesh, the West Indies, South

Africa and Australia but at home he has accumulated 1,177 runs and four centuries across 17 Tests at an average of 42.03.

"If anything, I think he needs to back himself a little bit more, needs to back his defensive technique a little bit more here in Australia and still find a way to be able to score and score quickly," Ponting said. "I'm sure when he's at home or when he's generally scored runs anywhere around the world, he scores them in a nice, attacking mode and almost to the point where he's not really thinking about getting out—he's only thinking about scoring runs." With the Boxing Day Test looming, Ponting said a change of mindset can work wonders for Gill.

"If he goes in with that mindset and that attitude, then things could change here in Melbourne for him."

As India's Shami hopes fade, time for Bumrah's support group to step up

MELBOURNE, Dec 24 (Agencies): The Indian team management received a massive setback as their star speedster Mohammed Shami failed to recover fully in time for the last two matches of the ongoing Test series against Australia. Notably, the Indian cricket board (BCCI) informed that Shami's left knee has exhibited minor swelling due to increased joint loading from his bowling workload in domestic cricket.

Hence, he has not been deemed fit for consideration for the remaining two Tests of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. The news comes as a massive setback for the team management, who were eagerly waiting for Shami to regain his fitness and support pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah in the remaining two Tests.

Bumrah has been India's lone warrior with the ball in the ongoing series with 21 wickets from three matches at an average of 10.90 with two five-wicket hauls to his name. However, despite his remarkable performance, India has struggled with the ball in the last two Tests, as Bumrah hasn't got the support from the other bowlers.

Indian bowling sans Bumrah: A major problem

Bumrah's new-ball partner, Mohammed Siraj, has looked off-colour in the last two matches, picking eight wickets across four innings, out of which four have been tailenders and one was Travis Head

on 140. His stats have been completely contrasting from Perth when he registered figures of 5/71 in the match, out of which just one wicket was of the tailender.

Apart from Siraj, Akash Deep showed great heart in his first Test of the series in Brisbane. However, his first innings figures of 1/95 in 29.5 overs, don't show how unlucky he was when the ball went past the outside edge of the batters more often than not. Akash finished the match with figures of 3/123 and failed to impress after replacing Harshit Rana in the playing XI.

On the other hand, Rana made headlines on his Test debut as he registered figures of 3/48 in the first innings. The 23-year-old also got the prized scalp of India's chief tormentor, Travis Head, with a peach of a delivery. However, Rana failed to continue with the same intensity in the second innings, leaking 69 runs in 13.4 overs.

He further didn't have a memorable game in Adelaide going wicket-less in 16 overs and giving away 86 runs. Apart from the trio, Nitish Kumar Reddy has served as the fourth seam option in the series. He has been promising as a batter, scoring crucial runs lower down the order, but hasn't been that good with the ball, having taken three wickets at an average of 41 and a high economy of 4.55.

Bumrah being pushed beyond his

limits

As a result, Bumrah has had to do much of the heavy lifting in the series with the captain Rohit Sharma bringing him on, every time the team has been in desperate need of a breakthrough. However, the heavy workload has taken a lot of toll on Bumrah's body already as he's played seven out of the last eight Tests in the ongoing season.

Bumrah has bowled the second most number of overs amongst seamers in world cricket in the ongoing year (303.4) and has also bowled in the most number of innings (24). The Indian vice-captain has already played 12 Tests in the ongoing year, the most in his career so far, and also featured in the T20 World Cup 2024 where he bowled 29.4 overs collectively.

Hence, with two more matches to go against Australia, Bumrah still has a lot of work left to do, and constant Indian batting collapses have meant that he hasn't got enough rest between the innings. The speedster has already scripted history having become the most successful Asian fast bowler in Australia and has joined several legends in the list.

However, he desperately seeks support from his teammates as with every Test, his body is pushing its limits, which could further invite more misery for India with the World Test Championship (WTC) final qualification on the line.

Executive Committee of Ram Mandir, Sainik Colony elected

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 24: Much-awaited election for the Executive Committee of the prestigious Ram Mandir, Sainik Colony, Jammu has concluded successfully. This long-overdue election witnessed an enthusiastic response with 33 candidates trying for 15 member committee positions.

The newly elected committee members will work towards the effective management and upliftment of this historic and religious institution. The elected 15 members for the Ram Mandir Executive Committee included Col. C.D. Monotra, Kulbir Singh Sambyal, Ajay Partap Singh, Dr. Khem Raj Sharma, Kamal Natar Sharma, Davinder Nath Sharma, Kalyan Singh, Santosh Sharma, Govind Singh Balloria, B.S. Slathia,



Chaman Lal Sharma, Charanjit Singh Charak, Kamlesh Kumar Shrikul, Col. Sukhvir Singh Maj. Chaman Lal Gupta, the members have elected their President Kulbir Singh Sambyal, Vice President Kamlesh Kumar Shrikul and Secretary Ajay Pratap Singh, Treasurer Charanjit Singh Charak, Property Member Devender Nath Sharma and Joint Property member Bhagat Singh Slathia to carryout the smooth sailing of management, control and functions of the Ram Mandir Sainik

Colony. The president Sambyal assured in his address that this committee oversee the temple's operations and ensure its continued legacy as a centre of devotion and community service. The President of the committee expressed heartfelt gratitude to the residents of Sainik Colony for their active participation and support in the election. He assured the public that the committee would leave no stone unturned in its efforts to develop the temple and promote

religious activities, along with community welfare initiatives. Prominent citizens of sainik colony jammu who participated in the Election Process were B.S. Jamwal (Advocate), Sanjeev Manmotra, Prakash Singh Jamwal (Social Activist), Subhash Singh Jamwal, V.P. Mehta, O P Magotra, Brig Swarn Singh Billoria, Maj Gen Shamsher Singh Jamwal, Ch. Sukhdev Singh, Col. Darshan Sharma, Mahesh Sharma, Sanjay Sehgal, Ajay Singh Jamwal (Retd.

Commissioner), R.B.S. Jasrotia, Fateh Singh Jasrotia, R.K. Sharma, Madam Namrata Sharma, Sikander Singh Bhau, Col. Bhaskar, Col. Mangotra, Col. Bhagwan Singh, Er. Vijay Singh Pawar, Prof. P.S. Pathania, Dr. Rajinder Sharma, Girdhari Lal Chanda, Capt. Ratan Singh, Ravi Bakshi, Col. Amar Singh, Brig.R.S. Jamwal, Satish Sharma, Abhimanyu Jamwal (President, Dussehra Committee), O.N. Bharu, Ch. Dev Raj, Sanjeev Parmar, Rajinder Singh, Vikram Singh Jamwal and many others.

This newly elected committee is committed to maintain the sanctity of the temple while addressing the needs of the community. Plans for infrastructural development, enhanced facilities for devotees and cultural events will be announced soon.

Merit sidelined as promises remain unfulfilled: Mehbooba

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Dec 24: PDP President and former CM Mehbooba Mufti Mehbooba Mufti has raised serious concerns over the "erosion of meritocracy and the unfulfilled promises" of the National Conference.

Talking to media on Tuesday here, she criticized the lack of action on key issues affecting the youth, particularly the neglect of merit in recruitment processes.

She highlighted the frustration of young aspirants, stating, "What will we tell our children? Work hard, become capable—then what? Their opportunities are being restricted."

She took a dig at the National Conference, accusing its Members of Parliament of failing to voice these concerns in Parliament. "People voted for them hoping they would address our problems

or at least speak up in Parliament. It's been over a year, and not a single MP has raised a reservation policy issue. The matter has been conveniently left to the courts, which is deeply unfortunate," she said.

She also pointed out the 2018 introduction of SRO 49, which reserved 75% of postgraduate positions for open categories stating the importance of merit in specialized fields.

She called for immediate intervention to ensure fair representation for open merit candidates and urged political leaders to act rather than wait for court decisions.

The PDP president expressed disappointment in the current government's inaction, saying, "With such a strong majority, I had hoped they would resolve this. Instead, they've chosen to ignore it, leaving the youth helpless and disillusioned."

Surbhi Sharma awarded Ph.D

Top News Report

KATRA, Dec 24: Shri Mata Vaishno Devi University (SMVDU) announced that Surbhi Sharma has been conferred with the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.). She defended her research work on the topic "Locating Black Feminist Standpoint in Autobiography: An Inquiry into the Experiences of Maya Angelou". Sharma's groundbreaking research provides critical insights into the experiences and narratives of the renowned African-American author and activist Maya Angelou, exploring them through the lens of Black feminist theory. Her work significantly contributes to the



fields of literary studies and feminist discourse. The research was conducted under the supervision of Dr. Anurag Kumar and co-supervision of Dr. Amitabh V. Dwivedi. Their guidance and expertise played a pivotal role in the successful completion of the thesis. Surbhi Sharma was formally congratulated by Prof. Pragati Kumar, Vice Chancel-

lor of SMVDU, along with other members of the committee. Prof. Kumar lauded Sharma's dedication and scholarly contributions, stating that her work reflects the academic rigor and research excellence that SMVDU aims to foster among its scholars. On this momentous occasion, Sharma expressed her gratitude to her supervisors, faculty members, and the university for their unwavering support throughout her academic journey. The entire SMVDU fraternity extends its heartfelt congratulations to Surbhi Sharma and wishes her success in her future academic and professional endeavors.

GCW Bhagwati Nagar organizes Seminar on "Gender Sensitization and Prevention of Violence"



Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 24: Women Development Cell and Deptt. of Sociology of GCW Bhagwati Nagar, in collaboration with Centre for Women Studies University of Jammu, organized One-Day Seminar on "Gender Sensitization and Prevention of Violence" on, with the goal of promoting awareness and understanding of gender issues, as well as addressing the critical topic of violence prevention. This seminar was designed to foster discussions around the importance of creating safe spaces and developing strategies to combat gender-based violence. It aimed at providing attendees with the knowledge, tools, and approaches to challenge gender inequality.

The seminar commenced with a wel-

come address by Principal of the college Dr. Meeru Abrol who highlighted the importance of gender sensitization and prevention of violence in today's society. She emphasized on the role of education, awareness, and advocacy in combating gender-based violence and creating a more inclusive environment for all genders. The first session of the seminar started with the presentation delivered by Prof. Savita Nayyar, Director Centre for Women Studies University of Jammu, a renowned expert in gender studies and violence prevention. In her speech, she discussed the global and national landscape of gender-based violence, shedding light on the various forms of violence that affect different genders, particularly women,

children, and marginalized communities. She stressed on the importance of moving beyond just legal frameworks and adopting a holistic approach that includes cultural, social, and psychological interventions to address the root causes of violence. In the second session, Dr. Saranjeet Kour, Asstt. Prof. Centre for Women Studies University of Jammu, was the resource person who in her address discussed the need for early education on gender equality, the role of media in shaping gender perceptions, and the importance of gender-inclusive policies in schools and workplaces. The discussion highlighted how harmful stereotypes and patriarchal attitudes contribute to gender-based violence and how these can be dismantled through awareness and

education. The participants were encouraged to participate in interactive discussions where real-life case studies were shared. These case studies explored different forms of violence, including physical, psychological, sexual, and emotional abuse. The

seminar concluded with closing remarks by Prof. Nisha Bhagat, who summarized the key takeaways from the event. She reiterated the importance of collective action in addressing gender-based violence and promoting gender equality.

Safala Ekadashi fast on Dec 26

Top News Report

JAMMU, Dec 24: The Safala Ekadashi fast, falling on Thursday, December 26, 2024, is a spiritually significant day in the Hindu calendar.

This Ekadashi occurs during the Krishna Paksha (waning moon phase) of the Paush month.

According to Mahant Rohit Shastri, Jyotishacharya and President of Shri Kailash Jyotish Avim Vedic Sansthan Trust, the Ekadashi Tihti begins on Wednesday, December 25, at 10:30 PM and ends on Thursday, December 26, at 12:44 AM (24:44).

Since the Ekadashi Tihti coincides with sunrise on December 26, devotees will observe the fast on this day. The fast concludes (Parana) on Friday, December 27, during the Dwadashi Tihti, before 10:40 AM.

This Ekadashi holds particular importance as it is the last Ekadashi of the year 2024 and is further auspicious



due to the occurrence of Sukarma and Dhriti Yogas.


These yogas enhance the spiritual benefits of fasting, making the day an ideal time for devotees to seek blessings and prosperity.

Safala Ekadashi is associated with immense spiritual merit, as highlighted in the Padma Purana, where it is described as a day that absolves sins and brings relief from sorrows, misfortunes, and hardships. Even during the Mahabharata era, Yudhishtir observed this fast.

The fast is dedicated to Lord Vishnu in the form of Shri Lakshmi-Narayan, along with worship of Lord Ganesha and

Lord Shiva. Devotees perform rituals, including reading or listening to the Ekadashi Katha, offering prayers, and conducting Aarti. Offerings such as gold, fruits, clothes, sweets, food grains, and cows are considered highly auspicious and are believed to bring divine blessings. Fasting requires abstaining from tamasic foods, rice, and intoxicants, while consuming only sattvic meals.

Mahant Rohit Shastri emphasizes that the Safala Ekadashi fast promotes self-control and discipline, which help balance the mind and rejuvenate the body. The fast encourages devotees to rise above material desires, embrace righteousness, and seek salvation. Observing this fast guarantees divine blessings and the possibility of attaining Vaikuntha, the eternal abode of Lord Vishnu. For devotees, it is a day of spiritual growth, health, and a step toward liberation.



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