# TOP NEWS OF J&K



JAMMU, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 01, 2025

**ENTERTAINMENT** 

16

**Triptii Dimri craves** for clear sky this **New Year** 



**NATIONAL** 

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Daily Evening Newspaper

No one can ever stop Taiwan's reunification with China, says President Xi in his **New Year message** 



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**PM Modi greets** 

nation on New Year

Vol.-16 Issue-01 Pages-12 Rs.-2/-

#### BRIEFLY

**Dr Raghav** Langar among seven officers promoted to **Secy Grade** in Uttarakhand



JAMMU, Jan 1 (Agencies): Dr Raghav Langer, who served in various key positions in Jammu and Kashmir, including as Divisional Commissioner Jammu, has been promoted to the Super Time Scale (Secretary Grade) in Uttarakhand along with six other offi-

The other officers elevated to this grade are Savin Bansal, C. Ravi Shankar, Jyoti Yadav, Yugal Kishore Pant, Ranveer Singh Chauhan, and Dheeraj Singh Garbiyal.

#### ATF price cut by 1.5 pc, commerciai **LPG** rates **down Rs 14.5** per cylinder

NEW DELHI, Jan 1 (Agencies): The price of Jet fuel, or ATF, on Wednesday was reduced by 1.5 per cent and rates of commercial LPG that is used in hotels and restaurants was cut by Rs 14.5 per 19-kg cylinder in the monthly revision done in line with benchmark international prices.

The aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was reduced by Rs 1,401.37 per kilolitre, or 1.52 per cent, to Rs 90,455.47 per kl in the national capital – home to one of the busiest airports in the country, according to state-owned fuel retailers.

The rate cut follows two rounds of monthly increases. Prices were increased by Rs 2,941.5 per kl (3.3 per cent) on November 1, and by Rs 1,318.12 per kl (1.45 per cent) on December 1, 2024.

The ATF price in Mumbai has been reduced to Rs 84,511.93 on Wednesday, from Rs 85,861.02 per kl previously.

Oil firms also reduced the price of commercial LPG by Rs 14.5 to Rs 1,804 per 19-kg cylinder in the national

capital. This the first reduction in the prices after fifth straight monthly

■Turn to page 9

#### **J&K holds first Assembly Polls since Article 370 repeal**, gets elected Govt after six years in 2024

SRINAGAR, Jan 1 (Agencies): Jammu and Kashmir got an elected government after six years in 2024 but statehood remained elusive as a hybrid model of governance kept hampering full restoration of democratic rule.

The assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir — held after a gap of 10 years — had many firsts associated with them.

The polls were the first

since the abrogation of Article 370, the first for Jammu and Kashmir in its Union Territory set up, and the first since the outbreak of militancy in which cadre of the banned Jamaat-e-Islami, a socio-religious party, participated. It was also the first election in which one party almost managed a majority on its own, with the National Conference — which ran a campaign on the restoration of special status



to Jammu and Kashmir - won 42 seats in the

90-member House. National Conference leader Omar Abdullah became only the fourth Jammu and Kashmir leader to be sworn in as chief minister for a second term. The other three leaders to achieve the feat were his grandfather Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, father Farooq Abdullah, and Mufti Mohammad

Sayeed of the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

The BJP emerged as the second largest party and cemented its vote bank in Jammu, bagging 29 of the region's 43 seats. However, the saffron party yet again drew a blank in the valley.

The Congress, which was hoping to improve its performance in the Jammu region, drew a blank in Hindu-dominated areas. The party

won six seats — five from the valley and one from Muslim-dominated Rajouri.

worst among the mainstream parties, managing just just three seats against the 28 it won in the 2014 polls.

The launch of former Bijbehara bastion also

The PDP fared the

chief minister Mehbooba Mufti's daughter Iltija Mufti into electoral politics from the family's

In Jammu, the BJP's then-Jammu and Kashmir unit president Ravinder Raina — once tipped to be the saffron party's chief ministerial candidate — was humbled in the polls.

The assembly elections witnessed massive participation even in areas known for poll boycotts. Several former separatist leaders or their relatives contested the elections.

The resentment against the reading down of Article 370 favoured the National Conference as its tally of seats rose almost three times against the 15 it had in 2014.

Sticking to its electoral promises, the National Conference government passed a resolution for restoration of statehood in the first Cabinet meeting and followed it with a momentous assembly

■Turn to page 9



#### **Security Forces recover** drone in Akhnoor, Probe launched



JAMMU, Jan 1 (Agencies): Security forces seized a suspicious drone in the village Gadkhal, located near the Pargwal sector of Akhnoor Jammu.

Quoting official, that the drone was intercepted during routine surveillance operations, prompting immediate action by security forces and intelligence agen-

"An investigation has been launched to determine the origin, purpose, and potential payload of the drone."

"We are thoroughly examining the drone to ascertain its specifications and any possible threat it might pose," said a security official.

#### 18 protesters detained in stir against Katra ropeway released

JAMMU. Dec 31 (Agencies): Eighteen people detained by the police during protests against the ropeway project in Katra, the base camp of the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine, were released, sparking overnight celebrations in the holy town.

The Jammu and Kashmir administration announced the release of the detainees on Tuesday night and constituted a four-member committee to hold talks with the protesters. Work on the ropeway would be suspended till the committee holds talks with the protesters.

"Eighteen detained individuals, including some leaders, were released around 1 am

from Reasi and Udhampur jails. They arrived in Katra to jubilant celebrations, where hundreds of people welcomed them," said a spokesperson for the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sangharsh Samiti.

He added that the reopening of shops and businesses was underway, and the government-formed committee would hold discussions over the ropeway proj-

"The government has succumbed to our hunger strike. They have released our leaders, marking the first step towards our victory. We will continue our fight to shelve the ropeway project," said a youth participating in the hunger

Former minister and BJP MP Jugal Kishore Sharma welcomed the government's decision and said, "It is a positive step that all 18 detainees have been released."

Amid chants of "Jai Mata Di", hundreds of residents in Katra danced to the beat of drums as they welcomed the released protesters.

"This is a victory for

the people of Katra, who stood united with us," said Bhupinder Singh, a Samiti leader who was among those released. Jammu Divisional Commissioner Ramesh Kumar said detailed discussions were held with civil society members.

detainees would be

"It was decided that all

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#### Western disturbance set to bring fresh snowfall in Kashmir

SRINAGAR, Jan 1 (Agencies): Cold conditions have tightened their grip on Kashmir, with the valley bracing for fresh spells of snowfall as two back-to-back western disturbances are likely to affect the region starting Wednesday, officials said.

According to the Meteorological Department, a feeble western disturbance is expected to affect Jammu and Kashmir from January 1-2, with light snow at scattered places from Wednesday evening to Thursday morning.

From January 3-6, a moderate western disturbance is expected to bring light to moderate snow to most places in the state, with peak activity from January 4-6. The MeT Office added that there is a possibility of heavy snow at a few places in the higher reaches during the second spell.

Meanwhile, the night temperature dropped at most places in Kashmir as cold conditions tightened their grip on the

valley.

Gulmarg, a tourist resort town known for

skiing activities in north Kashmir, recorded a low of minus 8.8 degrees Celsius, up from the previous night's minus 11.5 degrees Celsius, the Met Department said. Gulmarg was the was the coldest recorded place in the valley. Pahalgam, one of the

base camps for the annual Amarnath Yatra in south Kashmir, registered a minimum of minus 7.6 degrees Celsius, slightly up from minus 8.4 degrees Celsius, it said. In Srinagar, the

Turn to page 9

#### **OBITUARY**

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved mother SMT. MOHINI KAKROO W/o Late Sh. Girdhari Lal Kakroo R/o H.No. 6, Lane No -24 Tawi Vihar, Sidhra, who left for heavenly abode on 30/12/2024. (Monday)

**GRIEF STICKEN-**

Sons and Daughter-in-Law

Kuldeep Kakroo and Rajni Kakroo - 9796605658 Sunil Kakroo and Asha Kakroo

9419136400, 9149562487

Daughters and Sons-in-law

Sarla Safaya w/o Lt. Sh. A.K Safaya - 9888729857 Subashni Koul W/o R.C. Koul - 9419109243



SMT. MOHINI KAKROO

#### 10TH DAY/KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform you about the sad demise of our beloved Sh. Rajesh Sharma S/o Sh. Sham Lal Sharma.

TENTH DAY will be performed on 02-01-2025 Thursday) at our residence, Ward No. 60, Mohallah Pandita Paloura at 11:00 AM.

KRIYA will be performed on 03-01-2025 (Friday) at our residence at 12:30 PM.

GRIEF STRICKEN Nirmala Sharma - Mother Smt. Ramni Sharma- Wife

Brother & Bhabhi Smt. Kamlesh & Sh. Rajinder Sharma Sisters & Brother-in-law

Smt. Veena Devi & Sh Bua Ditta Bali Smt. Suman Devi & Sh. Suresh Sapolia Smt. Rekha Devi & Sh. Sukhdev Datt Smt. Rewa Sadotra & Girdhari Lal Sadotra

Smt. Rajni Devi & Sh. Mohan Lal SANMOTRA & MAGOTRA FAMILY



Sh. Rajesh Sharma

Sh. Roshan Lal

Raina

MOBILE: 7006436476,

9469258507

#### **OBITUARY**

With profound grief and anguish we regret to inform that our beloved Sh. Roshan Lal Raina S/o Late Gopi Nath Raina resident of Bungalow No-19, Sai Shradha Pisoli Pune-60 (originally Gogjibagh Srinagar) left for his heavenly abode on 25-12-24 at 07:30 pm.

Shradanjali Prayers will be performed on Friday 3rd January 3pm, at his residence in Pune

In Grief:

Lalita Raina (Wife) Rohit & Anjul (Son & Daughter in Law) Rakesh & Fabienne (Son & Daughter in law) Luca, Ariv, Noah & Arsh (Grandchildren)

Raina's, Ambardar's, Badam's & Lago's

#### **10TH DAY KRIYA**

TENTH DAY KRIYA of our beloved & revered Karamyogini Late Smt. Pyari Koul W/o Sh. Moti Lal Koul of Cheyan Devsar, presently at H.No Lane 7C, Manorama Vihar, Bohri, Jammu wil be performed on Thursday, 02/01/2025 at Muth Ghat at 9:30 A.M.

**GRIEVING FAMILY MEMBERS:** 

Sh. Moti Lal Koul (Husband)

sh. Niranjan Nath Koul (Brother-in- Law)

Sons & Daughters-in-law Sh. Harish & Pushpa Koul

Sh. Deepak Koul

Daughters & Sons-in-law

Smt. Deepa & Dileep Handoo Smt. Muni & Ravinder Raina

Smt. Kitty & Hari Krishen Koul

Smt. Basanti & Rajesh Mattoo

Smt. Anjali & Rakesh Raina

Smt. Pyari Koul Grandchildren:

Attideep, Himanshu, Neil, Jeena, Kashyap, Himani, Karan, Yashasvi, Aneesh, Khushi, Mahesh & Vedanshi

Karamyogini Late

Samast Koul, Handoo, Raina, Mattoo & Tikoo Parivar.

#### **BHOG AND ANTIM ARDAAS**

With profound grief and sorrow we regret to inform you the sad demise of our beloved Sdn Manjit Kour (Retd Account Officer) D/o Late S Sardar Singh R/o Bakshi Nagar Jammu who left us for heavenly abode on 27.12.2024.

Arambh Sri Akhand Path Sahib on 31 Dec 2024 at 9.30AM at our residence H.No.96 Near Geeta Bhawan Bakshi Nagar Jammu

Bhog Sri Akhand Path Sahib on 2.01.2025 at 9.30AM at our residence.

Antim Ardas will be performed at Gurudwara Singh Sabha Bakshi Nagar on 2.01.2025 from 10.00AM to

12.00 Noon GRIEF STRICKEN:-

Sister and Brother in law Sdn Gurcharan Kour (Retd Lect.) and Late S Gurcharan Singh

Sdn Gurmeet Kour (SAI coach) and S D Singh - Sister and Brother in law Sister and Brother in law

Sdn Rajinder Kour (DSP) and S Swaran Singh Jangi (Retd SP) Sdn Kuldip Kour and S Gurmeet Singh -Sister and Brother in law

Sdn Nishchint Kour (Teacher) and S Amolak Singh Sister and Brother in law

Param Jeet Singh - Brother Ravinder Jeet Singh (AE PDD) - Brother

#### TENTH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved father Shri Surinder Nath Bhan S/o Late Shri Raj Nath Bhan, originally resident of Raghunath Mandir Habbakadal Srinagar on 24-12-2024, presently residing at H. No. 153, Upper Laxmi Nagar, Sarwal Jammu.

Tenth Day Kriya will be performed on 02-01-2025 (Thursday) at Akhnoor Ghat & Mourning Assembly will be held at Muthi Ghat near Directorate of School Education at 11.30 AM. Grieving loved ones

Smt. Krishna Bhan (Wife)

(Sons and Daughters in law)

Sh. Bharat Bhushan Bhan and Smt. Neeru Bhan Sh. Rohit Bhan and Smt. Bharti Bhan

Sh. Ashish Wazir and Smt. Ruby Wazir (Son in law and Daughter)

Vaishnavi, Sharika, Ridhi, Mudit (Grand Children)

Sh. Chander Mohan Bhan (Brother)

Sh. Shanti Saroop Bhan and Smt. Sunta Bhan (Brother and Bhabi)

Sh. Kuldeep Chaku (Brother in law) Samast Bhan and Koul Pariva Mob. 9419280046, 9682672599



Sdn Manjit Kour

(Retd Account Officer)

Late Shri Surinder Nath Bhan

Sachin & Sakshi, Amit and Karuna,

Manvi & Rohit. Relatives and Friends 8329593635, 9622077358

#### TENTH DAY / UTHALA / KRIYA

Sharma (Former President, Sanatan Dharam Sabha, and Chairperson, Dharmik Yuvak Mandal) on 24th December 2024. His departure has left an irreplaceable void in our hearts and the

Tenth Day: 1st January 2025 (Wednesday), 10:00 AM at Rani Park,

Uthalia: 1st January 2025 (Wednesday), 2:30 PM to 3:30 PM at Brahman Sabha, Parade, Jammu Kriya: 2nd January 2025 (Thursday), 12:00 PM at H. No. 23, Sec-JDA Colony, Upper Roopragar, Jammu

Smt. Sulekha Sharma - Wife Shreed har Sharma & Shifali Sharma - Son & Daughter-in-law

Vasudhar Sharma & Riya Sharma - Son & Daughter-in-law Devdhar Sharma - Son Late Sh. Shakti Prakash & Late Smt. Krishan Kanta - Brother & Sister-in-law

Late Sh. Ram Krishan Sharma & Late Smt. Kama - Brother & Sister-in-la Late Sh. Narayan Sharma & Smt. Susheela - Brother & Sister-in-law Late Smt. Vimla & Late Sh. Hira Lal - Sister & Brother-in-law

Late Smt. Shanti Devi & Late Sh. Swami Devial - Sister & Brother-in-law Smt. Pawan Bala & Sh. Kulbhushan Sharma - Sister & Brother-in-law Smt. Dev Bala & Late Sh. Ashok Sharma - Sister & Brother-in-law Smt. Jagriti & Sh. Ved Bhushan Seth - Sister & Brother-in-law Grand Children: Ved ant Sharma

Contact Numbers: 9149639597, 9419200222, 9622100222 We humbly invite you to join us in these ceremonies to honor his memory and pray for the peace of his noble

With profound grief & sorrow, we regret to inform about the sad demise of Smt. Lalita Sharma W/o Lt. Sh. Ghan Shyam Raina R/o 35 Choughan Fattu Jammu on 22nd Dec. 2024.

Tenth Day will be performed on 31st Dec. (Tuesday) from 11 AM to 12 NOON at Rani Park Jammu.

Rasam Pagri/Uthala will be performed on 10th Jan. 2025 (Wednesday) from 4 PM to 5 PM at Mahajan Hall, Shalamar Road, Jammu. **GRIEF STRICKEN** 

Sister-in-law & Brother-in-law Smt. Sudarshan Sharma W/o R.P. Sharma Sons & Daughters-in-law

Smt. Lovely Raina W/o Sh. Anil Raina Sh. Sunil Raina & Vandana Raina

Sarthak, Adhvan

Sh. Ashwani Kr. Raina & Vishali Raina Sh. Deepak Raina & Asha Raina

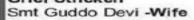
Sh. Subash Raina & Arti Raina - Nephew & Niece in law Grand Daughter & Grand Son-in-law

Paridhi & Suyash Grand Children: Sudhanshu, Deuvun, Tejasvi, Danish, Akshit, Utkarsh, Arya,

#### **10TH DAY**

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform you the sad demise of our beloved Thakur Natha Singh Charak R/o Jallo Chak, Jammu.

10th Day will be performed at our residence Jallo Chak, Jammu on Thakur Natha Sing 2/01/2025, at 11:00 am (Thursday). Grief Stricken



Sons & Daughters-in-law

Shamsher Singh Charak & Bhavana Charak Naresh Singh Charak & Anuradha Charak

Daughter & Son-in-law Neelam Manhas & Ranjit Singh Manhas

Contact Number:7780917224, 9682350844, 9419129777

#### 10TH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of Sh. Anchal Singh S/o Late Sh. Dhamul Singh (R/o H.No. 153 Narwal Pain Ward no 1 Jammu Cantt., Satwari) on 24th Dec. 2024.

10th Day will be performed on 2-1-2025 (Thursday) at our residence (H.No. 153 Narwal Pain Ward No 1 Jammu Cantt., Satwari) at 10 am.

Kriya will be performed on 5-1-2025 (Sunday) at our residence.

Grief Stricken

Smt. Rattno Devi - Wife Sons and Daughters in law

Sh. Inderjit Singh and Smt. Chandan

Sh. Prem Singh and Smt. Naresh Sh. Kamal Singh and Smt. Anita

Sh. Rameshwar Singh and Smt. Jyoti Daughter and son-in-law

Smt. Sushma and Sh. Kuldeep Singh

Contact: 9906327104

### TENTH DAY/KRIYA/RASAM PAGRI

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved Smt Pushpa Bagal W/o Sh Gulshan Bagal R/o 4/61 Indira Colony, Timber Road, Janipur, Jammu, who left for heavenly abode on 23/12/2024.

Details of rituals to be performed at our resi-

dence. Tenth Day Kriya on 1/1/2025 at 11 am.

Kriya/Sej on 2/1/2025 at 12 Noon.

Rasam Pagri on 3/1/2025 at 9:30 AM sharp (in view of Panchak) **GRIEF STRICKEN** Hus band

Sh Gulshan Bagal (Rtd Bank Manager, J&K Grameen Bank) Son & Daughter in law Mob No. 9906905474. Sh Vijander Singh & Heena Bagal

Sh Vikramjeet Singh & Indu Pawar/Bagal Daughter & Son in law Sh Balwinder Singh Manhas & Vijayata Manhas

#### TENTH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved mother Karamyogni Smt. Kamalawati Tikoo (Babi) W/o Lt Sh. Shamooo Nath Tikoo R/o Rohama, Baramulla Kashmir on 26-12-2024 at present: Block 168, Flat 14, Lane no 26, Jagti Township.

Tenth Day Kriya will be performed at Muthi Ghat on 04-01-2025 at 9.AM.

Assembly will be held at Jagti Township in Lanel 26 near Block 168, Flat 14. GRIEF STRICKEN:

Sh. Brij Nath Tikoo & Smt Desha Tikoo (Son & Daughter in law)

Master Amay,

Master Riyan

Sh. Ashok Kumar Tikoo & Smt. Titli Tikoo (Son & Daughter in Law) Sh. Makhan Lal Nehru and Smt Babi Nehru (Son-in-law & Daughter) Sh Chatter Ji Bhat & Smt Sarojini Bhat (Son-In-law & Daughter) Grand Children: Great Grand Children: Master Nakshatta, Sandeep & Kiran,



Sh. Dharni Dhar Sharma

Smt. Lalita Sharma

Sh. Anchal Singh

Smt. Pushpa Bagal

9697079886

Karamyogni Smt.

Kamalawati Tikoo (Babi)

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform that our beloved Shri Jagdish Mitter Ghai Son of Shri Ram Ghai passed away on 20th December 2024.

The Uthala will be held as follows: Date: Thursday, 2nd January 2025 Time: 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm Venue: Hari Mandir, Surankote

Deeply Mourned by: Smt. Prem Lata- Wife Sons and Daughters-in-law: Sushil Kumar Ghai and Nimmi Ghai Parveen Kumar Ghai and Jyoti Ghai

Sunil Ghai and Kavita Ghai

Sanjay Ghai and Renu Ghai For further information, please contact: 8716823484, 7006483567, 8553163573



With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved Smt. Reeta Bhat W/o Sh. Kanya Lal Bhat R/o Wadwan Budgam, Present Address Neel Sheel Vihar Paloura Near Sacred Heart College Paloura Jammu who left for heavenly abode on 30 Dec

The Tenth Day Kriya will be performed on 8th of January (Wednesday) 2025 at Muthi Ghat near Director office at 10.30

GRIEF STRICKEN:-Sh. Kanya Lal Bhat (Husband) Smt. Rama Bhat (Bhabi) w/o of Lt. Roshan Lal Bhat Mr. Ajay Bhat and Anu Bhat (Son & Daughter-in-law) Rahul Bhat (Son)

Mr. Rohit Bhat & Rakhi Bhat (Son & Daughter-in-law)

you the sad demise of our beloved Sdn Manjit Kour (Retd Account Officer) D/o Late S Sarda Singh R/o Bakshi Nagar Jammu who left us fo neavenly abode on 27.12.2024.

Dec2024 at 9.30AM at our residence H.No.96 Near Geeta Bhawan Bakshi Nagar Jammu

Singh Sabha Bakshi Nagar on 2.01.2025 from 10.00AM to 12.00 Noon. GRIEF STRICKEN:-

Sdn Gurmeet Kour (SAI coach) and S.D. Singh

BROTHERS: Param Jeet Singh

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved mother Smt. Umawati (Yaya Moj) wife of well-known renowned personality Late Sh. Ram Jee Pandita from Villagam (Kupwara) Kashmir A/P Sharda Colony, Poni Chak Jammu on 28-12-2024. The Tenth Day Kriya will be performed at Deviangan Mata Bhaderkali Asthapan Thalwal Phallian Mandal Jammu (gps: 32.709417, 74.778667) on 6th January 2025 (Monday) at 9:30 AM followed by ASSEMBLY at 11 AM at our Jammu residence near Sharda Mandir Poni Chak Jammu.

Mandir Poni Chak Jammu. GRIEF STRICKEN:-

Sons & Daughters-in-Law Sh. Vinod Ji Pandita & Smt Kiran Pandita (7006879359)

Sh. Ashwani Pandita & Smt. Pinky Pandita (9818840312) Sh. Rajesh Pandita & Smt Veena Pandita (9796086523) Daughters & Sons-in-Law Smt. Phoola Ji Bhat W/o Lt. Sh. Kanaya Lal Bhat

With profound grief and sorrow, we nform the sad demise of our beloved Sh. Triloki Nath Handoo S/o Lt. Sh. Vasu Dev Handoo originally resident of Bhag Jogilanker Rainawari (Kmr) at present H.No. 1/18, Pandoka Colony behind Mast Bab Ashram Patoli Mangotra / Near Sangam Institute Jammu who left abode on 24-12-2024.

Tenth Day Kriya will be performed at Akhnoor Ghat, Assembling at Muthi Sh. Triloki Nath Handoo

#### Mob:- 9697647960, 9419135486

Koul Parivar

TENTH DAY/KRIYA With profound grief and sorrow, it is to inform or all concerned that our beloved Smt. Geeta Devi W/o Late Sh. Hari Ram Sharma Sadotra) R/o Court road & Govind Nagar Sehind LIC office, Udhampur passed away beacefully for heavenly abode on 25th December, 2024.

peaceturily for neavenily abode on 25th December, 2024.

TENTH DAY will be performed on 2nd of January 2025 at our residence 35/11 Govind Nagar, Behind L I C Office, M H Morh Uchampur from 11.30 am onward.

KRIYA will be performed on 3rd of January 2025 at Devika Ghat at 10 am onward.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Sons & Daughter-in-laws
Sh. Yeah Paul Sharma & Smt. Aurney Sharma.
Sh. Ved Parkash Sharma & Smt. Anjana Devi.
Entire Sadotra & Goswami family including all nears & dears.

Daughters & Sons-in-law
Sh. Chuni Lal Sharma (Son in Law)
Smt. Shashi Kuman & Sh. Bansi Lal Sharma.
Smt. Reva Kuman & Sh. Gopal Baru.

Mob : 9419160636, 7051976504.

#### Mob: 9419160636, 7051976504

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to from the sed demise of our belowed father Shri urinder Nath Bhan S/o Late Shri Raj Nath han, originally resident of Raj hunath Mandir labbakadal Srinagar on 24-12-2024, presently estiling at H. No. 153, Upper Laxmi Nagar, access to see the second services.

Sons and Daughters in law) Sh. Bharat Bhushan Bhan and Smt. Neoru Bhan Sh. Rohit Bhan and Smt. Bharti Bhan

Valishnavi, Sharika, Ridhi, Mudt (Grand Children)
Sh. Charder Mohan Bhan (Brother)
Sh. Shanti Saroop Bhan and Smt. Sunita Bhan (Brother and Bhabi)
Sh. Kuldeep Chaku (Brother in law)

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Mitter Ghai 10-05-1934 to 20-12-2024



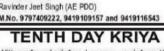
Grand Children: Vansh, Aashi, Riyansi Mob.+91 99069 42971, 9419688620

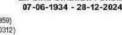


SDN MANJIT KOUR



Sdn Kuldip Kour and S Gunneet Singh Sdn Nishchint Kour (Teacher) and S Amolak Singh





Smt. Menakshi Reshi & Sh. Vijay Kumar Reshi (7006372576) Grandi**Great-Grand Childre**n: Arti & Sandeep Koul, Vikram & Neha, Dushant Bhat & Neha, Amit Reshi, Arun Reshi, Ashish, Ankush, Ruchika, Samiksha, Aayansh

#### TENTH DAY



Office by 9.30 am on 2-01-2025. **GRIEF STRICKEN** Handoo Parivar / Bhat's Parivar / Munshi Parivar / Raina Parivar / Kachroo Parivar / Dhar's Parivar / Gurkhoo Parivar





Sarwal Jammu.

Tenth Day Kriya will be performed on 02-012024 (Thrusday) at Akhnoor Ghat & Mourning 
Assembly will be held at Muthi Ghat near 
Directorate of School Education at 11.30 AM. 
Grieving loved ones.

Smt. Krishna Bhan (Wife) (Sons and Daughters in law).

Sh. Ashish Wazir and Smt. Ruby Wazir (Son in law and Daughter)

#### amast Bhan and Koul Parivar lob. 9419280046, 9682672599

**DISCLAIMER** 

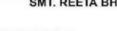
Late Shri Surinder

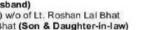
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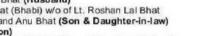




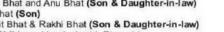






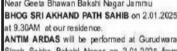


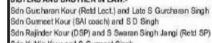
















Ghat Near Directorate Education









Lt. Smt. Umawati Pandita

#### **JKHARA** delegation meets Chief Secretary

Tourism is backbone of J&K's Economy'; calls for immediate reforms to revolutionize tourism sector: Babar Chowdharu

#### **Top News Report**

SRINAGAR, Jan 1: A high-level delegation of the Jammu and Kashmir Hotels and Restaurants Association (JKHARA), led by its President Babar Chowdhary, held a pivotal meeting with Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo at the Civil Secretariat in Srinagar.

The discussion centered on urgent issues and reforms needed to rejuvenate the hotel and restaurant industry in Jammu and Kashmir

The delegation, comprising Senior Vice President Dr. Lateef Ahmad Lone, Junior Vice President Sheikh Imran, Secretary General Ayesha Saleem and Joint Secretary Mohammad Shafi Beigh, presented a comprehensive agenda for the tourism sector's revival.

President Babar Chowdhary stressed the importance of reinstating the industrial status for the tourism sector to allow hotels and restaurants to benefit from subsidized power tariffs. He also advocated for the revival of financial benefits under the 2018-19 scheme, which would strengthen the sector and drive its growth

Chowdhary called for streamlined procedures to ease operations for existing businesses, attract new investments. and create employment opportunities for J&K's



The delegation welcomed the J&K Bank's One-Time Settlement (OTS) scheme for NPA account holders but requested an extension of the repayment tenure from three months to two years. Additionally, it was suggested that the current OTS scheme, which is presently capped at □5 crore, should be expanded to include accounts up to □15 crore

A proposal to extend leases for hotels, restaurants, and guest houses was also made, along with a suggestion to set up modern tent accommodations to cater to the anticipated growth in tourism due to new train services.

Babar Chowdhary urged the J&K government to construct additional public washrooms at tourist destination sites.

Senior Vice President Dr. Lateef Ahmad Lone

highlighted challenges

faced by older hotels, restaurants and guest house establishments, urging easier registration renewals based on previous rules. He also emphasized the need for clarity in obtaining No Objection Certificates (NOCs) from departments like LCMA and Tourism department.

Dr. Lone stressed the importance of streamlining these processes to promote hassle-free operations and support the hospitality sector's growth. He called for a collaborative approach between stakeholders and authorities to address these long-standing issues effectively.

Junior Vice President Sheikh Imran has called for significant reforms in the registration and renewal processes for the J&K tourism industry, highlighting the pressing challenges faced by hoteliers and restaurants. He

proposed extending the

validity of registration certificates to a minimum of 10 years, similar like to passports and driving licenses.. This will reduce the burden and ensure a more efficient operational environment for the hospitality sector. Imran further empha-

sized the need to streamline the renewal process by eliminating redundant requirements, such as obtaining No Objection Certificates (NOCs) and undertaking affidavits from judicial magistrates annually. These repetitive and often cumbersome procedures, he noted, add unnecessary delays and financial strain on hotel and restaurant owners, many of whom are already grappling with the economic impact and natural calamities in the region

He also pointed out that these reforms are essential to boost investor confidence and create a conducive environment for the growth of tourism in Jammu and Kashmir. Simplifying regulatory frameworks

Imran called upon policymakers to engage in meaningful dialogue with stakeholders and introduce reforms that reflect the ground realities of the industry.

Secretary General Ayesha Saleem advocated for renovating old budget hotels and guest houses in Srinagar's Civil Lines and Downtown areas. She emphasized the need to permit tent facilities at tourist spots to cater to budget travelers in the region.

Joint Secretary Mohammad Shafi Beigh raised concerns about the steep hike in sanitation fees imposed by the Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC). He called for a rationalized and affordable fee structure.

Chief Secretary Atal Dulloo assured the delegation that their concerns and suggestions would be addressed. He expressed his commitment to resolving grievances and promised to evaluate the proposed reforms for the tourism and hospitality

The JKHARA delegation extended their gratitude to the Chief Secretary for his time and attention, particularly during the challenging winter season.



Devotees Throng Bawe Wali Mata (KALIKA) Temple To Seek New Year Blessings in Jammu on Wednesday. **PicByAmanSharma** 

#### 2010 batch IAS officer to face CBI trial in Gun license case

JAMMU, Jan 1 (Agencies): The Government of India has accorded sanction for prosecution of Jammu and Kashmir Revenue Secretary Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, for involvement in the infamous arms licence scam.

In a communique, The Department of Personnel & Training, Ministry of Personnel & Training, Government has conveyed to Vishal Sharma, Deputy Solicitor General of India, that it has accorded sanction for prosecution of Kumar Rajeev Ranjan in the case reqistered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in 2018.

"I am directed to refer to your email dated 23.12. 2024 on the subject mentioned above and to say that an order, conveying grant of sanction against Kumar Rajeev Ranjan, IAS, in CBI RCCHGO51201850007, under section 6 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 2006(1949 A.D)for alleged offences

under section 5(2) PC Act, 2006(1949 A.D.) has already been issued on 28. 11. 2004 with the approval of the competent authority," reads the communi-

It is worthwhile to mention that a huge arms licence scam involving deputy magistrates of Jammu & Kashmir was unearthed by the Rajasthan ATS in

The case was being probed by the J&K Police before then Governor NN Vohra handed over it to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The investigation revealed that arms licences in bulk were issued by the then deputy magistrates in J&K to non-residents on forged documents.

Between 2012 and 2016, deputy commissioners of various districts in J&K had fraudulently and illegally issued bulk arms licences in lieu of monetary consideration, the probe found.

### Tourists enjoy New Year in snowy Gulmarg

#### **Top News Report**

SRINAGAR. 1: Renowned tourist destination Gulmarg in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district attracted many visitors for New Year celebrations, offering them a memorable experience with its snow-covered scenery and winter charm

Famous for its breathtaking views and adventure activities like skiing, snowboarding, and snowshoeing, Gulmarg was bustling with visitors despite no official events being organized.

gathering News agency KINS reported that the Jammu and Kashmir Tourism Department had opted

for a low-key New Year due to the seven-day national mourning following the passing of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.

Deepika, a first-time visitor from Mumbai, described her joy at celebrating New Year in Gulmarg, calling it a dream come true.

"It is truly a paradise.

This is my first time seeing snow, and I can't describe how magical it feels to be here. Celebrating the New Year in Gulmarg has been the best experience of my life," she said.

Manika, another tourist, echoed similar sentiments, marveling at the natural beauty of the region.

"Kashmir is indeed a paradise on earth. Gulmarg has been an incredible destination to start the New Year. We had so much fun," she told KINS.

The Gulmarg Gondola, one of the highest cable cars in the world, was a major draw for visitors, offering spectacular views of the snow-clad

mountains. Many tourists enjoyed the gondola ride, making it a highlight of their trip.

The influx of tourists has been a boon for locals involved in the tourism sector. Mustafa Gulam, a sledge and slide operator, expressed happiness over the turnout.

"Many tourists came

for Christmas and New Year, and it has been great for our livelihood. Tourism here is thriving, and we hope it continues

to grow," he said. Local accommodations, including hotels, resorts, and guesthouses, were fully booked, and visitors indulged in the region's warm

hospitality and unique

cuisine, adding to their experience Despite the absence of

official celebrations, Gulmarg's natural beauty and winter activities made it a perfect destination for welcoming the New Year.

The joyful experiences of tourists and the support to local livelihoods have set a positive tone for the year ahead.

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR

OFFICE THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION GANDHI NAGAR JAMMU e-mail:xenpwddivgandhinagar@gmail.com

#### SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER Short e-NIT No. DGN/93 of 2024-25 Dated 30-12-2024

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	Advertised Cost (* in Lacs)	Cost of document (in `)	Earnest Money (in `)	Time Allowed for complete -on	Time and date of opening of tender	Class of Contractor
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	Up-gradation of Conference Hall at Additional Commissioner (A&E) 2nd Floor at Excise & Taxation Complex Rail Head Jammu (Under Capex Budget 2024-25)	PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar	42.63	600	85300 (2% of the Advertised Cost)	02 Months	(1200 Hrs) on or after 11-01-2025	"A" & "B' Class

Position of AAA

Accorded by Commissioner State Taxes J&K vide order No. 103/Capex of 2024 dated 10-12-2024.

Position of TS

2.

DIP/J-8782/24

Sanctioned by Superintending Engineer PWD (R&B) Circle South Jammu's order No. 179 of December 2024 dated 19-12-2024.

**Project Authority** Major Head

:- Commissioner State Taxes J&K. :- Under Capex Budget 2024-25.

The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, 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://iktenders.gov.in as per below schedule

1	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	30-12-2024				
2	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 30-12-2024 to 10-01-2025, 1800 Hrs				
3	Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting	04-01-2025 at 1300 Hrs. in the Office of Executive				
		Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar				
		Jammu				
4	Bid submission Start Date	30-12-2024				
5	Bid Submission End Date	10-01-2025 upto 1800 Hrs				
6	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	11-01-2025 on or after 1200 Hrs in the Office of				
		Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi				
		Nagar Jammu				
7	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is				
		completed				

Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of e-challan through Treasury indicating Treasury Voucher No. & date, e-NIT No. and name of work duly crediting to 0059 (Revenue) favoring Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar Jammu and upload the same i.e treasury challan/receipt, Earnest money/Bid security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG pledged to Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar Jammu. The CDR/FDR/BG shall be valid for 45 Days beyond the bid validity period. The original instruments in respect of cost of documents, EMD and relevant documents of L1 be submitted to the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar Jammu at the time of allotment.

> .. Sd .. (Er. Rahat Gupta) Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Gandhi Nagar



Alvida 2024 & Khushamadeed 2025

### **EDITORIAL**

#### New Year 2025: Time for New Beginnings

s we step into 2025, we are pre-sented with the perfect opportunity to reflect on the year gone by and embrace the endless possibilities that lie ahead. New Year's Day has always been a moment for personal reflection, collective hope, and setting goals. It marks the end of one chapter and the beginning of another, offering a sense of renewal and a fresh start. Around the world, millions of people from different cultures, religions, and backgrounds celebrate the arrival of the new year in their own special way, but the common thread is always the same—a sense of optimism and excitement for what the future holds.

The arrival of the New Year brings with it a sense of renewal and hope. It is a blank canvas, waiting to be filled with new experiences, challenges, and accomplishments. The tradition of setting New Year's resolutions is a way for people to chart a course for the year ahead. These resolutions often revolve around selfimprovement—be it adopting healthier habits, achieving career goals, traveling to new places, or simply being kinder to oneself and others.

The idea of starting fresh is deeply ingrained in human culture, and it can be a powerful motivator. Whether one believes in the concept of resolutions or not, the arrival of a new year often sparks a sense of possibility. It reminds us that we have the power to make changes, set new goals, and take proactive steps to create the life we desire.

For some, 2025 might symbolize the beginning of a new chapter in their personal or professional lives. It could be the year they start a new job, launch a business, or go back to school. For others, it might be a year focused on personal growth—learning new skills, developing healthier habits, or nurturing relationships. Whatever the goals, New Year's Day is a reminder that we are in control of our destiny and have the power to shape the year ahead.

While the past year may have had its share of difficulties, the New Year is a time to look ahead with hope and optimism. The world has faced numerous challenges in recent years, from political turmoil and economic instability to health crises and climate change. However, New Year's Day serves as a reminder that no matter the hardships, humanity continues to endure, adapt, and strive for a better future.

For many, 2025 holds the promise of recovery and healing. The global pandemic has reshaped the world in profound ways, but with the advent of new technologies, vaccines, and public health measures, there is hope for a brighter future. Communities are coming together to rebuild, economies are recovering, and individuals are finding strength in the face of adversity. The hope for peace, prosperity, and unity is ever-present as we step into the new year, knowing that we have the power to create a better world.

Moreover, New Year's Day brings with it a renewed sense of togetherness. It is a time when families and friends come together to celebrate, share their experiences, and support one another. It's a reminder that no matter how challenging the past year may have been, we are never alone. The sense of connection and solidarity that comes with the arrival of the new year is a powerful force that can help us overcome obstacles and find joy in the little things.

One of the most beautiful aspects of the New Year is the opportunity it provides to embrace change and growth. As we grow older, we evolve—our perspectives change, our priorities shift, and our values become clearer. The New Year is a time to embrace these changes, to welcome new opportunities, and to step out of our comfort zones. It's a time to be open to new experiences and to take risks that will lead to personal and profes-

sional growth.

For many, the New Year is also a time to focus on mental health and well-being. The pressures of modern life can often take a toll on our emotional and psychological state, but the start of a new year encourages us to prioritize self-care, mindfulness, and inner peace. Whether it's through meditation, therapy, or simply taking time for oneself, the New Year is a chance to commit to better mental health and well-being.

#### By:- Omkar Dattatray

t the 12Pm of December 31st, 2024, the universe steps into 2025 and we accord good bye to eventful and bountiful year 2024 and at the same time welcome 2025 with open arms and embrace it with happiness and pleasure with the resolve to be good and do good and continue our march to peace, development and progress. As the year 2024 comes to close and the sun shines on the New Year 2025, let us bade a good bye to the bygone year 2024 and welcome and embrace new year 2025 with hopes and expectations. India had a lot to be proud of in 2024. Every year the list of milestone achievements by Indian's grow longer but this time ,it is really felt like an India was in the news for breaking a record almost every fortnight .It is in the fitness of things to throw light on the India's achievements in 2024 and list these in an unbiased manner and show the challenges of the new year 2025 as the new year is full of challenges and opportunities.2024 was a breakthrough year ,where promises began to take shape, and sustainability became the cornerstone of corporate strategies and global agendas .This was not merely about trends or social pressure .In fact 2024 saw a convergence of forces driving governments ,businesses ,and citizens towards tangible actions to tackle challenges in biodiversity, climate change ,and social justice .And as we leave behind a year of achievements ,2025 promises to be the year of truth—the moment we will see whether the future we are envisioning can truly become a reality.2024 marked two critical moments for our planet.COP16 on biodiversity held in Cali ,and COP29 on climate change ,hosted in Baku .Both events represented historic steps forward.COP 16 emphasized the urgency of preserving biodiversity ,with an ambitious goal., protecting 30% of land and oceans by 2030.At COP29,the world addressed climate change with an unprecedented sense of responsibility .In the Indian context ,it can be said ,while 2024 has certainly been a year marked by moments of pain ,it has also been one of remarkable achievements and hope .From space exploration to sporting triumphs, and domestic victories to environmental successes ,India's resilience has been on full display. India's 2024 was not without its shadows ,but the year was defined by extraordinary achievements -both on the global stage and within its horders. As 2024 draws to close, the world reflects on a

conflicts, assassination attempts, and even the elusive search for extraterrestrial life .For India ,it was a year of intense contrasts -one where grief and joy coexisted, and where triumphs were tempered by deep sorrows .From the ongoing crisis in Manipur to the passing of national icons such as Dr Manmohan Singh ,Ratan Tata and Ustad Zakir Hussain, the country bore witness to moments that left indelible marks on the national consciousness . Yet, amid these turbulent times, there were achievements that stood as beacons of hope and perseverance, offering a glimpse of a brighter future. Following is a reflection on the moments that gave the nation pride, hope, and a sense of collective strength .The ISRO opened the year with a bold stride into the unknown .On January 1,ISRO successfully launched the X-ray Polarimeter Satellite { XPoSat ],a mission dedicated to understanding cosmic phenomena through the polarization of X-rays .Developed in collaboration with Bengaluru's Ram Research Institute, the satellites goal is to study pulsars ,black holes ,and active galactic nuclei, unraveling the mysteries

year marked by revolutions ,protracted

of the universe . This launch symbolized India's continued ambitions in space exploration and research. The country's space program also soared throughout the year, as ISRO's Chandrayaan 3 mission -launched a year earlier -unveiled critical discoveries regarding the Moon's surface .New findings suggested that a liquid magma ocean once existed on the lunar surface ,reinforcing India's position as a leader in space science. Furthermore ,ISRO's Aditya -L1 ,India's first space -based solar observatory , completed its first successful orbit in July .Stationed at a distance of 1.5 million Km from Earth ,Aditya-Ll aims to study the sun's radiation, heat and magnetic fields -a monumental step in India's scientific pursuits.75th Republic Day exhibited a celebration of women's power .India's Republic Day celebrations in 2024 was significant not just for its scale but also for the historic participation of a 144-person tri-service women's contingent .For the first time

,women soldiers ,sailors ,and airwomen

from all branches of the Indian army

marched together and in a display of

strength ,resilience ,and unity .Their

participation reflected India's growing

recognition of women's vital role in

nations defense and society .In a diplo-

matic win, India celebrated the return

of eight Indian Navy veterans in Febru-

ary, who had been detained in Qatar on

charges of espionage. Their release after

years of imprisonment marked a major

victory for Indian diplomacy. The year gone by was a sporting year of glory.2024 was a banner year for Indian sport, with victories that echoed far beyond the stadiums .One of the most memorable moments was India's performance at T20 World Cup ,where the national cricket team ,led by Rohit Sharma ,claimed its second title .The year also saw India's athletes excel at the Paralympics .In a moment of pride ,Avani Lekhara became the first Indian women to win two medals at the Paralympic Games. One of the milestone achievement of India was the successful conduct of the general election to the 14th Lok Sabha and it was the biggest triumph of Indian democracy .In a significant development the state assembly elections were conducted after a gap of 10 long years and J&K got its democratic government and it added a feather in the cap of Indian democracy. The consecration of Lord Ram temple in Ajodhya on January 22,2024 was a spectacular achievement of the country. December 2024 marked the 100th anniversary of the birth of Raj Kapoor, one of the most influential figures in the history of Indian cinema .The centenary celebration of the birth anniversary of the former PM Vajpayee on 25th December was also a significant development .India is the world's largest and the oldest civilization .It has the second largest population of scientists and engineers in the world .It is the world's largest democracy with rich culture and tradition having huge visions for the future .Eradication of Polio is the outstanding achievement of India .The last case of Polio was reported in January 2012 in West Bengal when a young girl got paralyzed by the disease .In March 2014 WHO certified India as the Poliofree region .The health and family welfare minister of India collected the certificate of the Polio -free status from WHO .All the achievements of year 2024 cannot be penned down here for paucity of space. We look with hope and expectation to year 2025 and it is hoped that the journey of peace, development and progress will continue in the new year 2025. New year will be dotted with prosperity and wellbeing for all .The year 2025 offers a window to look beyond elections unlike year 2024. In 2024, politics took a surprise turn in India ,its immediate neighborhood, and in many countries around the world .The BJP bounced back to power in a spectacular fashion in the assembly elections in Haryana and Maharashtra .2025 will perhaps be a year in which governance will take a centre stage .There are press-

growth has slowed more than expected in the second quarter .Here is a look at five broad issues ,trends, and developments that could shape the political discourse in India in 2025 and beyond-Deepening political bitterness .One message from 2024 Lok Sabha election was the people's preference for continuity with moderation .But both BJP and Congress seem to have consciously chosen to misread the mandate .Their political positions have hardened and they have taken their bitter rivalry into everyday politics .As ,the year ended ,ties between the ruling party and the opposition hit the nadir during parliament's winter session .The Supreme Court has called a halt ,for now ,to the rush of civil suits challenging the ownership and title of Muslim places of worship allegedly built over the ruins of existing Hindu temples.RSS Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat has said that after the construction of the Ram Temple in Ajodhya ,raking up similar issues in new places was unacceptable .But it is unlikely that politics over mandir and masjid will cease in 2025. To maintain statuesque of all religious places and maintaining communal amity will be the biggest challenge for India .The major Assembly elections in 2025 will be a test for three major political brands—Nitish Kumar ,Arvind Kejriwal and Narendra Modi .At least two contentious and polarizing Bills will be taken up by the Parliament in 2025 -the constitution Amendment Bill to synchronize Lok sabha and Assembly elections, and the Bill to regulate wakf properties .In 2025 the central government will intend to begin the delayed decadal Census exercise, the rhetoric over caste will get shriller.2025 will be another year of massive change .AI Robotics ,space travel ,and healthcare breakthroughs suggest that the possibilities of this new year are limitless..In brief the year ahead will also be turbulent in many ways and let us hope that the sanity will prevail on the P5 and Putin as well as Zelensky and there will be peace in the world and it will be a better place for the mankind .Similarly global warming and climate change will be checkmated by the positive response of the international community and the nature will be saved for the future generations.

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

### Winter Makeup Tips for Dry Skin

By: Shahnaz Husain

s the winter chill sets in, women often find themselves grappling with the challenges of dry and flaky

Dry skin is a major concern throughout the year, and the winters make matters more challeng-

Low humidity during winters, strips moisture from the skin, leaving it feeling parched and vulnerable. Indoor heating and hot water baths can further dry out your skin, while harsh winds cause irritation and sensitivity. It leads to dry patches or a rough texture, often accompanied by redness and irritation and your skin may start to show signs of dullness.

Winter skincare is all about hydration. Invest in nourishing products that keep your skin moisturised and shield it from the harsh elements.

The right makeup products, techniques and tools for dry skin in winter can enhance your skin's natural texture and give you a fresh, radiant finish.

1--Cleanse gently

Cleansing your face is a crucial step in your winter makeup routine. The cold air makes your skin delicate, yearning for a gentle touch.

You can begin by using creambased skincare cleanser to remove impurities from the skin, without stripping your skin off natural oils. It will help to slough off all kinds of dirt and dead skin cells that may have built upon the surface of your

Poorly cleansed skin doesn't allow makeup products to settle and blend in properly. Hence, you should prioritise cleansing in your winter makeup routine.

Start with a nourishing face wash because it suits all skin types. This will help remove impurities without stripping your skin of essential moisture. Follow up with a hydrating serum, It will provide your skin with an extra layer of moisture, making it a perfect base for makeup. Use a hydrating cleanser twice a day to wipe off all dirt, oil, or makeup. For best results, use a mild scrub twice a week to slough off dead skin cells and unclog pores.

2--Hydrate your skin:

Winter air tends to be dry, leading to dehydration of the skin. Before applying any makeup, ensure that your skin is well-hydrated by using a nourishing cleansing balm and hydrating moisturiser suitable for your skin type. Incorporate serums, moisturizers, and face mists into your routine with hydrating ingredients like hyaluronic acid or glycerin. A moisturising serum containing hyaluronic acid may be used after using a mild cleanser. To get a smooth surface for makeup, seal in moisture with a thick moisturiser that is high in ceramides. Apply moisturizer right after you cleanse to lock in the moisture left on your skin.

Cleansing balms contain hydrating ingredients such as peptides and shea butter. These ingredients work to lock in moisture as they cleanse, preventing your skin from feeling stripped or tight. Drink plenty of water, soup, and juice, to maintain internal hydration, supporting your

ing challenges in economic front as

skin from within. Using a hydrating primer is essential for dry skin in winter. It creates a barrier between your skin and makeup, preventing moisture loss. But make sure you apply it before your foundation. When you have dry skin, avoid ingredients such as salicylic acid, parabens, and alcohol. These ingredients can tend to dry out the skin.

3--- Exfoliate Your Skin-----

If you want healthy, smooth skin, exfoliation needs to be a part of your skincare routine to slough off dull skin.Increasing your exfoliation routine during the winter months will help your skincare products absorb deeper and work even harder-making them way more effective.Exfoliation also boosts blood circulation, facilitates collagen production and speeds up cell turnover, leaving your skin feeling fresher, clearer and brighter. However over-exfoliation can strip away your skin's natural oils and cause irritation. You really shouldn't be exceeding exfoliation twice per week using a gentle product like lactic acid to avoid over-drying or irritation.Regular exfoliation can help smooth the skin, though you'll

want to take care to choose the right exfoliation method. If you have sensitive or dry skin, use a gentle chemical exfoliator to avoid irritation or redness. For people with acne-prone or oily skin, it is best to opt for physical exfoliators that unclog your pores and cut through oil on your skin. However, avoid abrasive physical exfoliators.

Opt to exfoliate in the evenings because you are removing the top layer of skin, you are leaving your face immediately more vulnerable. 4--Lip Care----

Your lips seek attention: chapped lips are a common winter problem. Even the most perfect appearance might be ruined by cracked lips.

Use creamy lipsticks with hydrating formulas that helps keep your lips moisturized all day long . Be sure to apply a lip primer before adding colours to your pout.

Use lipstick that has natural ingredients and a nourishing formula for the lips. A natural lipstick will keep your lips moist and prevent chapping. Stay away from long-wearing matte finish lipsticks that very likely will dry your lips out and settle in the cracks of your lips. Instead, opt for a nutritious lip mask and leave it on all night. Apply a moisturising lip balm underneath your lipstick during the day. Select lipsticks with a satiny, creamy texture to maintain the suppleness and softness of your pout. Also, start exfoliating your lips gently using a lip scrub at least once a week.

## 2025 will witness India assuming critical role in Global Biotechnology revolution: Dr. Jitendra

#### **Top News Report**

JAMMU /NEW DELHI, Jan 1: On the first day of the New Year on Wednesday, Union Minister Dr. Jitendra Singh, gave an exclusive interview to Doordarshan News, in which he exuded confidence that the year 2025 will witness India assuming critical role in Global Biotechnology revolution and that India's 1st Biotechnology policy-BIO-E3 brought by Modi Govt 3.0 has already paved the way for it.

The Minister highlighted India's significant strides in biotechnology and the nation's growing global leadership in Biotechnology.

Reflecting on the past decade of progress under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Dr. Jitendra emphasized the pivotal role of biotechnology in India's future, particularly as the country continues to embrace innovation, technology-based interventions, and startups.

"Prime Minister Modi's vision has consistently prioritized innovation and technological advancement, driving India's evolution into a global biotechnology powerhouse," said Dr. Singh. He added that biotechnology is poised to be at the forefront of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, with India playing a central role.

Dr. Jitendra highlighted the newly launched BIO-E3 (Biotechnology



for Economy, Employment, and Environment) Policy, which was recently approved by the Union Cabinet under Prime Minister Modi's leadership. This forward-thinking policy marks a significant milestone for India's biotechnology sector, reinforcing its potential to shape the country's economy, employment landscape, and environmental sustainability in the years to come.

India's biotechnology sector has experienced extraordinary growth, skyrocketing from a \$10 billion industry in 2014 to over \$130 billion in 2024, with projections to reach \$300 billion by 2030

As Dr. Singh pointed out, "India is not only a leader in biotechnology but is now at the center of a global biotech boom, which will foster innovation, create jobs, and strengthen environmental commitments."

The Minister also underscored the fact that India currently accounts for 60% of

a U-turn on his promises.

been a tradition of Abdul-

lah and the NC govern-

ments. When out of

power, they used to say

we will throw (electric-

ity) meters in Tawi (river)

in Jammu and Jhelum

(river) in Kashmir. But

now that they are in

power, they are saying

round-the-clock elec-

tricity will be provided

only when 100 per cent

metering is completed,"

The BJP spokesperson

asked Abdullah to come

up to the expectations of

people, saying they have

"You had made huge

promises, but have failed

in fulfilling them. We con-

demn that people had to

face difficulties even due

to little snowfall," he said.

formance in Kashmir,

Thakur said the assembly

elections were conducted

in a peaceful atmosphere

without any violence or

"The BJP government

has put the last nail in

the coffin of terrorism

in Kashmir and today

Thakur said Prime

Minister Narendra Modi

would connect Kash-

mir with the rest of the

country through a Vande

Bharat train on January

The BJP's J&K unit also

said the party has added

1.75 lakh new members

in the valley in its mem-

The BJP had 3.5 lakh

members after the last

membership drive in

bership drive.

Kashmir is terror-free,

he added.

On the BJP's per-

high hopes with him.

he added.

"Making U-turns has

global vaccine production and is home to the second-largest number of USFDA-approved manufacturing plants outside the United States. With growing investment opportunities across sectors such as Bio-Pharma, Bio-Agri, Bio-Industrial, Bio-Energy, Bio-Services, and Med-Tech, India is emerging as a global leader in biotechnology.

Dr. Jitendra further compared the ongoing "Bio-revolution" in India to the IT revolution driven by the West, highlighting that the country's rich natural and biodiversity resources are key to its biotechnology success. He also praised the efforts of Indian startups leveraging biotechnology to create innovative solutions such as nonhuman milk and other sustainable products.

The Union Minister recalled the launch of the Mission Suraksha initiative, which led to the development of indigenous DNA-based vaccines and the world's largest vaccination drive

set to foster innovation with a 60% contribution from the private sector. In 2024, the Indian government has already sanctioned 1000 crores to further accelerate innovation in biotechnology.

Additionally, Dr. Jitendra noted that India's leadership extends beyond biotechnology to other cutting-edge fields, such as quantum technology, where India has emerged as a global leader. He also celebrated the significant progress made in space exploration, revealing that an Indian-origin individual will soon be sent to the US Space Station, as part of a broader effort to position India at the forefront of space technology.

As Dr. Jitendra concluded, "In the past, India would often take cues from other countries in terms of technology and innovation. Today, times have changed. Other countries are now looking to India for guidance and inspiration. India is proud to be leading the way, particularly in areas such as quantum technology, where the country is making significant strides with the Quantum Mission."

India's remarkable advancements in biotechnology and other emerging technologies position it as a key player on the global stage, driving the future of innovation, sustainability, and economic growth.

#### Sadguru Madhuparamhans extends New Year wishes to all countrymen



#### **Top News Report**

JAMMU, Jan 1: Sadguru Madhuparamhans Ji Maharaj of Sahib Bandagi extended heartfelt New Year wishes to all the countrymen for 2025.

On this occasion, a grand Satsang was held in Ranjri, where artists from across the country showcased their talents. The event was marked by divine moments as Sahib Ji showered the congregation with the Amrit of Satsang, emphasizing the profound impact of meeting a Sadguru.

Sahib Ji shared an enlightening perspective, stating that while visiting countless pilgrimages may bring one a certain benefit, meeting a Sadguru bestows

unparalleled rewards. He illustrated this by saying that a pilgrimage grants one fruit, meeting a saint brings four fruits, but meeting a Sadguru offers infinite fruits in an

instant.

This message stems from the idea that both positive and negative experiences can affect a person in an instant. For example, a person's emotions can be instantly influenced by what they see—whether it be an unpleasant sight that causes discomfort or a beautiful scene that brings joy. Similarly, the moment one encounters a true Sadguru, they are imbued with transformative power. It doesn't require time for the influence of a Sadguru to take effect; the change occurs in that

very moment.

Sahib Ji further emphasized that just as certain painful deeds may lead to immediate consequences (such as the symbolic thorn of punishment), meeting a Sadguru serves as a remedy for the soul. Through the Guru's name, one's inner being is purified, and one's connection to divine

wisdom deepens. He urged everyone to visit the Guru as frequently as possible, comparing it to the beneficial impact of the rain of tears. Just as the rain nourishes, visiting the Guru and receiving his guidance brings spiritual nourishment and purification. Sahib Ji's words remind us that the blessings of a Sadguru are immediate, profound, and transformative.

## KCPS bids farewell to Class XII students



#### **Top News Report**

JAMMU, Jan 1: KC Public School, Jammu organized a farewell ceremony 'KCPS-Khwaahish- E- Safar' for the outgoing batch of class XII at Hotel Taj Vivanta. Class XI students organized a glistening farewell party for their seniors and left no stone unturned to make the day most memorable and special for them. The event commenced with an instrumental bash and a melodious Farewell song.

Devoting the day to the years spent together with friends, teachers, and reminiscences of joyous moments, students of Class XI presented a rich array of cultural programs which included mesmerizing solo, group and duet songs and a variety of foot-tapping hip-hop dances.

This was followed by a presentation of goodbye speeches where a few students from the outgoing batch took the stage to share their loving & cherished memories of their school days. However, the most awaited moment was the Title Ceremony in which students were presented with Mementos and their respective titles.

The icing on the top was the Talent Hunt which was judged by the faculty members on the following criteria which were Imagination, Creativity, Confidence, Presentation, Voice projection, and Crowd appeal.

The shortlisted 22 nominees competed to

win the coveted titles of Mr. & Ms. KC Juweel. The girls and boys came in their best attire to rock the event. Eddha Manhas was crowned as Ms. KC Juweel and Medhaj Pathania was crowned as Mr. KC Juweel.

Principal, KCPS, Amarendra Kumar Mishra appreciated the talent and creativity displayed by the students. He urged the children to carry the school's spirit high and wished them luck for their future endeavors

Student Council managed the event under the guidance of Shobhna Sethi. The program ended with high tea. The students reminisced about their funfilled days and it was an emotional moment as they said farewell to their alma mater.

#### Omar Abdullah Govt has failed on every front: BJP

**Top News Report** 

SRINAGAR, Jan 1 (Agencies): The BJP on Wednesday alleged Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah-led government has "failed on every front" and existed only on paper.

"İt has almost been three months that the NC government has been in power, but they have failed on every front. They have failed to keep their guarantees which they had mentioned in their manifesto like providing 12 free gas cylinders, 200 units of free electricity, 10 kgs rice, one lakh jobs and regularising daily wagers," BJP's J&K spokesman Altaf Thakur said at a press conference here.Jammu local businessesJammu and Kashmir tourism

Referring to the snowfall in the plains of the valley, including Srinagar last week, Thakur said there was "light snowfall, but even on the fourth day today, link roads are still closed".

"NC (government) made huge claims, but they were only statements. They cleared the snow from the roads only on papers, provided electricity only on papers. Abdullah has run the government through statements only and they have failed on ground zero. There are viral videos in which people are saying snow be cleared from the roads, and electricity be provided," he added.

Thakur accused the chief minister of making

#### Govt SPMR College NCC cadet completes Youth Exchange Programme at Bhutan

during the COVID-

19 pandemic. In 2024,

India's biotechnology

sector has also seen

notable achievements,

such as the develop-

ment of the world's first

HPV vaccine and the

breakthrough creation of

the indigenous antibiotic

'Nafithromycin,' which

has proven effective in

treating respiratory dis-

eases. Furthermore, the

Department of Biotech-

nology has success-

fully developed a gene

therapy experiment for

Dr. Singh also com-

mended the collabo-

ration between 14

institutes that had pre-

viously operated in

silos, emphasizing the

importance of a "whole

of Science, whole of

Government, and whole

of Nation" approach.

He highlighted ongo-

ing initiatives such as

the Deep Sea Mission,

which Prime Minister

Modi has referenced on

multiple occasions, and

the Anusandhan Nation-

al Research Founda-

tion (NRF), which was

passed in 2024 and is

Haemophilia.



#### **Top News Report**

JAMMU, Jan 1: NCC cadet SUO Dhruv Sharma of NCC Directorate, JK&L has successfully completed the Youth Exchange Programme (YEP) held at Bhutan from December 12 to 18, 2024.

The main aim of the program was to encourage understanding international relations and build leadership qualities and promote participants a unique opportunity to interact with cadets from various countries.

The cadet belonging to 2 J&K Bn NCC and is a student of Govt. SPMR College of Commerce, Jammu.

The Youth Exchange Programme, one of NCC's most esteemed initiatives, provides selected cadets with the chance to travel abroad, engage in cultural exchanges, and participate in a range of activities designed to promote global friendship, diplomacy, and teamwork.

Before attending the programme in Bhutan, Dhruv had represented

the JK&L directorate in the Republic Day camp 2024 in New Delhi.

He passed multiple selection phases at Jammu as well as in Delhi, which include an examination, drill test, and group discussion that are conducted at all India level.

Dhruv was the only cadet from Jammu in the 12-member group, led by Major Anand and Major Hricha that represented India in Bhutan.

The programme was so exciting, and the Bhutanese people were so warm and welcoming. It was a proud moment for the cadet to represent India at international level.

Principal of the college, Dr. Rajinder Singh congratulated the cadet and encouraged the endeavors of the cadets. He also boosted another students to actively participate and to foster upon new horizons of life and career via NCC.

## Mehbooba urges CM Omar Abdullah to look into advertisement, accreditation renewal issue of media outlets

SRINAGAR, Jan 1 (Agencies): Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti today urged chief minister Omar Abdullah to look into the issues facing by media outlets

in Jammu and Kashmir. Jammu and Kashmir tourism

She claimed that Information Department continues to withhold advertisements to most news outlets, while



senior journalists are still waiting for accreditation renewals.

Taking to micro-blogging site X (formerly Twitter), Mehbooba wrote: "It's been over three months since the

popular government took office, yet the information department continues to withhold advertisements to most news outlets .Furthermore, senior journalists await accreditation renewals". "I urge Omer Sb to intervene and address these pressing issues so that the press can operate freely and without undue influence," She added on X.

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### From personal growth to career milestones, celebs reveal their 2025 resolutions



New Year resolutions are a wonderful convention, offering us a chance to reset and refocus. While most resolutions revolve around being good and doing good, the bridge between taking a pledge and making it real is action. The focus on actionable steps is what make a resolution come

Celebs tell us about their resolutions for 2025 and how to intend to pursue it. Gratitude!

I am putting it all to prep for my next role in the New Year. I am going to grow a beard. My New Year resolution for 2024 was to give my best in everything and be content with what came my way. This served me very well, and I will carry on with it in 2025 too, trying to do better in every walk of life, while remaining grateful for every success. - Kartar Cheema, actor

A shot at fusion My New Year resolution for 2025 is to

expand my creative boundaries. Experiment with new dance styles or fusion choreography to challenge myself. I am looking forward to partner with musicians, filmmakers, or other dancers to create unique and impactful performances. - Gagan Kaur, choreog-

On a song My New Year resolu-

rapher

tion for 2024 was to get back in shape. Though I'm binging now during the holiday season, for most of the year I have eaten healthy and been consistent with workouts and happy to have met my goal. In 2025, my resolution is to release more songs! Though I perform live frequently, I have been doing one or two song releases per year. I received lots of love for my latest release Sajna Badal Gaya and that's motivated me to put more of my music out there. Given that I sing different genres of music, I want to bring out the best of each genre and hence am aiming for 8-10 good releases in 2025. - Jashan Bhumkar, singer, entrepreneur Positive impact

My focus for 2025 is to continue evolving, not just as an actor, but as an individual while staying committed to self-improvement every single day. In 2025, my goal is to expand my horizons and achieve even greater milestones. Reflecting on 2024, I accomplished a variety of things and aim to carry the same positivity into the New Year. - Simaran Kaur, actress Bring on the chal-

lenges I visit the temple in my hometown with family on January 1 every year, seeking blessings for the New Year. My resolution for 2025 is to take on more challenging roles as an actor and explore different genres. I plan to celebrate New Year's Eve with close friends and family, reflecting on the past year and looking forward to the new one. - Aadesh Chaud-

hary, actor Balancing it out

For 2025. I want to take out more time for travel while balancing it out with work. Life is too short to keep postponing things you love to do. -

Rinku Ghosh, actress Healthy body, happy

I believe in keeping resolutions but I need somebody to motivate me to achieve them. For the coming year, my resolution will be to stay fit and healthy and take care of my mental health and stay optimistic. I'm hoping that I meet the goal. - Shivangi Verma, actress

In focus

A healthy body is the foundation of a good life. This year, I am committing to eating wholesome, nourishing foods and incorporating regular exercise into my routine. My goal is consistency, not perfection.

Our minds often bear the brunt of stress, overwork, and negativity. This year, I resolve to be mindful of what I feed my mind. I will read more books, engage in stimulating conversations, and spend less time scrolling through social media.

This year, I want to do things that truly satisfy my soul. Whether it's spending time with loved ones, helping someone in need, immersing myself in nature, or pursuing a creative hobby, I aim to nourish my spirit.

To make all of this actionable, I will break my resolutions into small, manageable goals. I'll start by setting weekly or monthly targets, tracking my progress, and celebrating small victories along the way. Most importantly, I will allow myself grace when I falter—because self-compassion is essential for sustained

My New Year resolutions are not just about being good or doing good — they are about being intentional, consistent, and kind to myself. Here's to a New Year filled with action, growth, and purpose! -Bhaavna Arora, author

#### After Diljit, Aujla and AP, Honey Singh to kick off 'Millionaire **India Tour'**

The Punjabi music industry has reached not just national but even international levels with singers like Diliit Dosanjh, Karan Aujla and AP Dhillon making everyone dance to their

The most recent example of this was seen during Diljit's concert which remained in the news for quite some

Now there seems to be an exciting update for all the music lovers out there. Beside Diljit and Aujla, Punjabi singer and rapper Yo Yo Honey Singh will be seen performing live in 2025.

Here is a detailed list of all the exciting concerts this New Year:

Honey Singh

Honey Singh left everyone in shock with his massive comeback after staying away from the limelight for years. It seems like the star is stronger than ever and is all ready to take over the music world once again. His latest album titled 'Glory' received a lot of love from the fans and even dominated the music charts.

Making the most of his recent success, Honey

Singh has announced one of his biggest tours, the 'Millionaire India Tour'. The musician will be covering 10 cities across India as part of this tour. Taking place between February and March 2025, the tickets for the 'Millionaire India Tour' will be available on Zomato and Insider.in.

Diljit Dosanjh

Diljit Dosanjh has been riding high on the success of his recent concerts. While many got a chance to enjoy his music, there were a few who missed the opportunity. Now, those who wish to hear the singer live can book their tickets for Diljit Dil-Luminati concert 2025.

Scheduled to take place between October and November 2025, the passes for the tour are expected to be available in two phases on September 10 and 12 respectively. The prices of the tickets range from Rs 1,499 to Rs 12,999 as per the seats.

Karan Auila Karan Aujla is currently on his -- 'It Was

All A Dream' tour. The fans love to move to his upbeat tunes while enjoying his charis-



matic stage presence. His tour covers multiple cities including Delhi, Mumbai, and Kolkata. Karan concluded 2024 with his performance in Ahmedabad on December 31. His last concert will be on January 5 in Hyderabad. The tickets are available on Book-MyShow priced from Rs 5,999 onwards.

Sonu Nigam

One of the most celebrated singers in Bollywood, Sonu Nigam will be performing live in the national capital soon. Known for his melodious voice in the tracks 'Saathiya', 'Abhi Mujh Mein Kahin', 'Papa Meri Jaan', 'Yeh Dil Deewana', the vocalist is slated to spread his magic in Delhi on March 8, 2025.

While the location of the concert is not known till now, the tickets can be booked through BookMyShow. The prices range from Rs 499 and Rs 7,999 depending on the seats. AR Rahman

For all the AR Rahman fans out there, the music maestro will be seen performing live on January 17, 2025. The performance will be taking place in Mumbai's Jio World Garden, BKC. BookMyShow is selling tickets for the show between the price range of Rs 3,000 and Rs 60,000.

Ed Sheeran

Famous Hollywood singer Ed Sheeran will also be visiting India during his 2025 tour. He will be performing in multiple cities between January 30 to February 15, 2025. However, the venues and the ticket prices for the tour have not been revealed till

#### Triptii Dimri craves for clear sky this New Year

This New Year, actress Triptii Dimri is yearning for a clear sky, symbolizing a fresh start and boundless possibilities.

As 2025 unfolds, she embraces the hope for peace, clarity, and new beginnings. Taking to her Instagram stories, the 'Animal' actress. who is holidaying in Finland, posted a picture of herself posing against the beautiful backdrop of snow-capped moun-

Alongside the photo, Dimri wrote, "Drove from Finland, 3 hours into Sweden to get clear skies." She looked stunning in a black outfit. The actress had earlier shared glimpses of her winter getaway, capturing the serene beauty of the snowy surroundings and her peaceful moments with the animals.

Triptii posted a couple of photos and videos from Lapland, Finland, featuring charming snow-covered huts and reindeer peacefully grazing outside her window.

Alongside one of the videos, the actress wrote, "Snowflakes and Smiles... Today feels like one of the happiest chapters of my life." In the video, Dimri was seen delighting in the snowfall, spinning with pure joy as the flakes fell around her. Her Lapland getaway also showcased serene, snow-covered cabins and reindeer grazing



outside her window, creating a breathtaking winter paradise.

The 'Qala' actress embarked on a snowy adventure, sharing glimpses of her scenic holiday on Instagram. Fans have started speculating that she's spending time with her rumoured boyfriend, Sam Merchant, as both have posted similar photos from the trip.

In one video, Triptii was seen walking through the snow, offering a glimpse of her winter getaway in Rovaniemi. She also posted a series of selfies and photos,

along with videos captured by Sam.

On the professional front, Triptii Dimri was recently seen in the horror comedy "Bhool Bhulaiyaa 3," alongside Kartik Aaryan, Vidya Balan, and Madhuri Dixit.

Next, Triptii is preparing for an exciting new project with renowned filmmaker Vishal Bhardwaj and actor Shahid Kapoor

The film, produced by Sajid Nadiadwala, has officially been announced and is set to hit theatres on December 5, 2025.

#### Sonakshi Sinha calls hubby Zaheer Iqbal an 'irritating person'

Bollywood actress Sonakshi Sinha, who was last seen in the streaming movie 'Kakuda', is annoyed by her husband Zaheer Iqbal's shenanigans.

On Wednesday, the actress took to the stories section of her Instagram, and re-shared a video from her husband in which he could be seen talking to the camera about his wife's penchant for taking long shots in the camera.

The actress wrote on the video, "You are a VVIP, very very irritating person".

Earlier, the actress saw the Boxing Day test between India and Australia in Melbourne. The actress was seen among the humongous crowd of fans at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. Sonakshi took to the stories section of her Instagram and shared several videos of herself in which she could be seen cheering for team India. One of the videos posted by the actress also shows her hus-



band Zaheer Iqbal playing cricket with the kids on the ground during the break.

Sonakshi and Zaheer tied the knot on June 23 in Mumbai after 7 years of dating. They first met at a party hosted by Bollywood superstar Salman Khan. Interestingly, both Sonakshi and Zaheer started their careers with Salman.

While Sonakshi made her debut opposite Salman in the box-office phenomenon 'Dabangg', Zaheer made his debut with Salman Khan's home production 'Notebook'. The couple reportedly dated for 7 years, and lived together for a year before tying the knot. Their wedding ceremony was followed by a grand reception ceremony that was attended by several Bollywood celebrities including Salman Khan, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Kajol, Tabu, Yo Yo Honey Singh and more.

Meanwhile, on the work front, the actress is set to share the screen with her husband in 'Tu Hai Meri Kiran'. The two have previously worked together in the film 'Double XL', which also starred Huma Qureshi, and a music video titled, 'Blockbuster'.

#### Speech in movies growing violent with time, even in non-crime ones: Analysis

Dialogues in English-language movies have become more "murderous", with characters using more of 'murder' and 'kill' words—and not just in crime movies, a new analysis of lines spoken in more than 1.5 lakh movies has found.

Female characters too make more references to killing and murder, even though they did not have as many violent dialogues as men, the study published in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Psychiatry found.

Researchers, including those at The Ohio State University, US, analysed subtitles from the open platform 'opensubtitles.org', extracting dialogues involving actions committed by characters in 1,66,534 English-language movies produced from 1970 to 2000.

Using machine learning, a type of artificial intelligence, the team calculated the number of dialogues using variations of the words 'murder' or 'kill' in each of the films.

The results suggested that "speech about committing murder in movies is increasing over time, even in non-crime movies, regardless of character gender." "This is more evidence that violence is a bigger part of the movies we watch than ever before," lead author Babak Fotouhi, an adjunct assistant research professor in the College of Information at the University of Maryland, US, said.

While the use of "murderous verbs" varied widely on a yearly basis, there was a clear increasing trend over the five-decade period, said corresponding author Brad Bushman, a professor of communication at The Ohio State University. And not just in crime movies, where violence might be expected, the researchers said.

"Characters in non-crime movies are also talking more about killing and murdering today than they did 50 years ago," Bushman said.

"Not as much as characters in crime movies, and the increase hasn't been as steep. But it is still happening. We found increases in violence cross all genres," Bushman said.

For the analysis, the researchers defined murderous verbs as verbs derived from the roots 'kill' and 'murder'. The number of such

words used was divided by total number of verbs used in a dialogue to compute the percentage of murderous verbs.

Overall, about seven per cent of the movies were found to have murderous verbs in dialogues over the period studied.

Further, the estimate is a conservative one, owing to the "narrow focus of the study", coauthor Amir Tohidi, a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Pennsylvania, said.

"We focused exclusively on murderous verbs in our analysis to establish a lower bound in our reporting. Including less extreme forms of violence would result in a

higher overall count of violence," Tohidi said. Fotouhi said, "We designed this to be a conservative estimate. It is likely there was more violence in the movies than what we calculated in terms of the dialogue." Given that movies are competing for the audience's attention, with research showing violence being an effective means for doing so, the authors called for promoting a "mindful consumption and media literacy to protect vul-

nerable populations, especially children".

#### Work together for more inclusive, sustainable future for India, world: **President Murmu greets people** on New Year



NEW DELHI, Jan 1 (Agencies): President Droupadi Murmu on Wednesday greeted

people on the New Year and asked them to renew commitment to work together for cre-

ating a brighter, more inclusive and sustainable future for India and the world.

"Wishing everyone a very Happy New Year! May the year 2025 bring joy, harmony and prosperity to all! On this occasion, let us renew our commitment to work together for creating a brighter, more inclusive and sustainable future for India and the world," she said in a post on X.

#### **PM Modi greets** nation on New Year



NEW DELHI, Jan 1 (Agencies): Extending his greetings to the nation on the New Year, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday hoped it brings "new opportunities, success and endless joy".

"Happy 2025! May this year bring everyone new opportunities, success and endless joy. May everybody be blessed with wonderful health and prosperity," he said on X.

#### Rajnath Singh calls 2025 a year of reform, says "a step in modernisation of Armed Forces"

NEW DELHI, Jan 1 (Agencies): The Ministry of Defence (MoD) has declared 2025 as the 'Year of Reforms.' With this declaration, the MoD aims to transform the Armed Forces into a technologically advanced, combatready force capable of integrated multi-domain operations.

"Defence Minister Rajnath Singh chaired a meeting with all the Secretaries of the Ministry of Defence (MoD) on the eve of the New Year to review the progress on various schemes, projects, reforms and the way ahead. In order to give impetus to the ongoing and future reforms, it was unanimously decided to observe 2025 as the 'Year of Reforms' in the MoD. This would aim at transforming the Armed Forces into a technologically advanced combat-ready force capable of multi-domain integrated operations," as per a Ministry of Defence release.

During the meeting, it was decided that the MoD would focus that reforms should further bolster Jointness & Integration initiatives, facilitating the establishment of Integrated Theatre Commands.



also emphasised that reforms should focus on new domains such as Cyber and Space, and emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Hypersonics and Robotics. Associated Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures necessary to win future wars should also be developed.

In the meeting, it was also decided that the MoD would focus on developing a shared understanding of operational requirements and joint operational capabilities through interservice cooperation & training. It was noted that procedures need to be made simpler and time-sensitive to facilitate swifter and robust capability development.

It was also decided that MoD would focus on collaboration across various stakeholders in the defence ecosystem. Breaking silos. Effective civil-military coordination should aim to eliminate inefficiencies and optimise resources. Position India as a credible exporter of defence products, fostering R&D and partnerships between Indian industries and foreign Original Equipment Manufacturers for knowledge sharing & resource integration, as per the release.

Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh expressed confidence that the 'Year of Reforms' would be a momentous step in the modernisation journey of the Armed Forces. He stated, "It will lay the foundation for unprecedented advancements in the country's defence preparedness, thus preparing to ensure the security and sovereignty of the nation amidst the challenges of the 21st century."

#### Air Marshal Mishra takes charge as Chief of **IAF's Western Command**

NEW DELHI, Jan 1 (Agencies): Air Marshal Jeetendra Mishra on Wednesday took charge as the chief of Indian Air Force's Western Air Command that looks after the security of the air space in the sensitive Ladakh sector as well as some other parts of north India.

Air Marshal Mishra, a fighter combat leader and an experimental test pilot, has more than 3000 hours of flying experience, according to the IAF.

He succeeds Air Marshal Pankaj Mohan Sinha, who superannuated after putting in more than 39 years of distinguished service.

Air Marshal Mishra was commissioned into the Indian Air Force (IAF) as a fighter pilot on December 6, 1986.

He is an alumnus of the National Defence Academy, Air Force Test Pilots School, Bangalore, Air Command and Staff College, the US,



and Royal College of Defence Studies in the UK. In his service career spanning over 38 years, the Air Marshal has tenanted important command and staff appointments. These include Commanding Officer of a fighter squadron, chief test pilot at Aircraft and Systems Testing

ing of two frontline air bases, Director (Operational Planning and Assessment Group), Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Projects) at the air headquarters. He was Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff (Operations) prior to taking over his new appointment.

Establishment (ASTE)

Air Officer Command-

The Air Officer is a recipient of 'Ati Vishisht Seva Medal' and 'Vishisht Seva Medal'.

#### Learn spirit of service from RSS, instead of writing to its chief for media attention: BJP to Kejriwal

NEW DELHI, Jan 1 (Agencies): The BJP on Wednesday asked AAP supremo Arvind Kejriwal to learn "spirit of service" from the RSS leaving behind his "political moves" instead of writing to the organisation's chief Mohan Bhagwat to draw "media

The BJP's reaction came after Kejriwal wrote a letter to the Rashtriva Swavamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief and alleged deletion of voter's names from the electoral rolls and distribution of money by the BJP to "buy votes" in Delhi ahead of the Assembly polls.

He also asked Bhagwat if he supports such "wrong activities" of the BJP.

Reacting sharply, BJP



national spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi alleged that Kejriwal's letter to the RSS chief is nothing but a bid to grab "media attention".

"Don't write to the Sangh (RSS), learn from it," he asked Kejri-

He said the Seva Bharati, which is affiliated to the RSS, is the "biggest organization" in India which works for the welfare of people, including the Dalits living in slums.

"Learn the spirit of service (from the RSS and its affiliates). Leave behind your political moves," Trivedi, also a Rajya Sabha MP, asked the AAP chief.

The BJP leader was replying to media queries at a press conference at the party headquarters here.

#### Gaurav Gogoi asks govt to roll back decision to withdraw India Post's book packet service

NEW DELHI, Jan 1 (Agencies): Congress leader Gaurav Gogoi has sought roll back of the government's decision to withdraw the India Post's book packet service saying it will bring hardship to the literary community and directly impact millions of Indians in accessing books that contribute to their education, personal growth and connection to the world.

In a letter to Union Minister for Communications Jyotiraditya Scindia, Gogoi expressed deep concern over the decision to discontinue the India Post's book packet service and said it will affect readers in smaller towns and villages across India since the service was often the most accessible and cost-effective way



to receive books.

"On December 18, India Post decided to withdraw this service in favour of alternatives like Speed Post and Registered Post, which cost nearly 50 per cent more. This price increase poses a significant challenge for publishers, particularly those catering to niche audiences, regional languages, and specialised genres, and could make books less affordable for

many readers," he said. The Congress deputy leader in Lok Sabha said with the new, higher postal rates, access to literature will likely become more limited, especially for those already facing barriers to obtaining reading

materials. He said the removal of a service that made books more accessible to people across regions, without imposing a financial strain on either publishers or readers, runs counter to the broader goals of fostering a literate. informed, and equitable society. "I request you to

reverse this decision immediately to prevent further hardship for the literary community and ensure that books remain accessible to all. I would be grateful if this matter is treated with the urgency and attention it deserves, as it directly impacts the ability of millions of Indians to access books that contribute to their education, personal growth, and connection to the world around them," he said.

Gogoi said the book packet service of the postal department, which allowed publishers to send books weighing up to 200 pages for as little as Rs 20-25 anywhere across India, has been a cornerstone for small and independent publishers.

Even when books weighed more, the cost of sending them remained very affordable, with prices rarely exceeding Rs 30.

This affordable rate made books accessible to readers, particularly in rural and remote areas, where alternatives like private courier services were either too expensive or unavailable.

"While I understand that the changes in postal services were necessitated by the new Post Office Act, I urge you to consider the significant impact on small publishers and readers across India," he said.

#### CBI probes ED officers in bribery and scholarship scam

SHIMLA, Jan 1 (Agencies): The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has registered two First Information Reports (FIRs) against officials of the Enforcement Directorate (ED), including an Assistant Director and senior officers posted in Shimla, for allegedly demanding and accepting bribes.

The bribery allegations are linked to the ongoing investigation of the 181 crore scholarship scam in Himachal Pradesh.

According to CBI sources, the first FIR pertains to a bribe demand of 85 lakh, while the second involves 80 lakh. Both cases reportedly involve ED officers demanding money from educational institution promoters who are under investigation for financial irregularities

under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

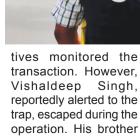
The primary accused,

ED Assistant Direc-

tor Vishaldeep Singh, allegedly summoned the complainants to his Shimla office, tortured them, and coerced them into paying hefty bribes. The accused officers also involved middlemen, including Vishaldeep's brother, a senior manager at Punjab National Bank in Delhi, who allegedly helped facilitate the transactions.

The CBI, based on complaints from the educational institution promoters, planned a trap operation near Chandigarh.

The complainants were instructed to pay 55 lakh in cash to the accused officer while CBI opera-



and a middleman were arrested, and 55 lakh in marked currency notes were recovered.

The bribery allegations have a direct connection to the 181 crore postmatriculation scholarship scam. Between 2013 and 2017, funds intended for SC, ST, and OBC students were allegedly misappropriated by private educational institutions.

The CBI, which began investigating the scam in 2019, found evidence linking ED officials to attempts to cover up the scam in exchange for bribes. The scope of the inves-

tigation has now widened, with the second FIR reportedly addressing the alleged quid pro quo arrangement involving ED officers to shield the accused institutions. Following the scandal,

the ED has transferred

the accused Assistant Director and two supervisory officers-a Deputy Director and a Joint Director-to Delhi. However, the CBI has yet to apprehend Vishaldeep Singh, who remains absconding. Attempts to locate him are ongoing. During a press confer-

ence in Shimla, the complainants accused the ED officers of harassment, mental torture, and coercion. They revealed how they were summoned repeatedly. threatened with arrests, and forced to arrange large sums of money. One of the complainants even considered suicide, underscoring the extent of the alleged abuse.

The CBI has recovered substantial evidence, including 55 lakh in graft money and other documents implicating the accused.

The agency is also probing the involvement of additional ED officials and their associates.

The allegations of corruption within the ED's Shimla office have raised serious concerns about the integrity of enforcement agencies tasked with combating financial crimes.

With the CBI expanding its investigation, the scandal is likely to have far-reaching implications, not only for the accused but also for the credibility of institutions meant to uphold justice. As the search for Vishaldeep Singh continues, all eyes are on the CBI to ensure that the perpetrators are brought to justice and the victims receive the redress they deserve.

#### Four workers killed in fire at Surat steel plant



SURAT, Jan 1 (Agencies): Four workers were killed and another one was injured in a fire at a steel plant in Hazira industrial area in Gujarat's Surat on Tuesday evening, officials said today.

The incident occurred at ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India's, Surat Commissioner of Police Anupam Singh Gehlot said.

"We have learnt that the fire spread in one section of the plant after burning coal suddenly spilled over. The resultant blaze killed four labourers, who were on a lift at that time in the plant," he said.

### Israeli strikes kill nine in Gaza as war grinds into new year with no end in sight

Israel's air and ground offensive has killed over 45,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry.

DEIR AL-BALAH, Jan 1 (Agencies): Israeli strikes killed at least nine Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, mostly women and children, officials said Wednesday, as the nearly 15-month war ground on into the new year with no end in sight.

One strike hit a home in the Jabaliya area of northern Gaza, the most isolated and heavily destroyed part of the territory, where Israel has been waging a major operation since early October.

Gaza's Health Ministry says seven people were killed, including a woman and four children, and that at least a dozen other people were wounded.

Another strike overnight into Wednesday in the built-up Bureij refugee camp in central Gaza killed a woman and



a child, according to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, which received the bodies.

The war began when Hamasled militants attacked southern Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people and abducting around 250. About 100 hostages are still held in Gaza, at least a third of whom are believed to be dead.

Israel's air and ground offen-

sive has killed over 45,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry. It says women and children make up more than half the fatalities but does not say how many

of those killed were militants. The Israeli military says it only targets militants and blames Hamas for civilian deaths because its fighters operate in dense residential areas. It says it has killed 17,000 militants, without providing evidence.

The war has caused widespread destruction and displaced some 90% of Gaza's population of 2.3 million, many of them multiple times.

Hundreds of thousands are living in tents on the coast as winter brings frequent rainstorms and temperatures drop below 10 degrees Celsius (50 F) at night. At least four infants have died of hypothermia.

American and Arab mediators have spent nearly a year trying to broker a ceasefire and hostage release, but those efforts have repeatedly stalled as Hamas demands a lasting ceasefire and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanayhu vows to keep fighting until "total victory" over the militants.

#### **Teenagers stabbed during New Year's Eve celebrations** in Sydney, Melbourne

SYDNEY, Jan 1 (Agencies): Two teenagers have been hospitalised after being stabbed during New Year's Eve celebrations in Sydney and Melbourne.

Police in Sydney said on Wednesday that officers were called to a park in the suburb of Guildford, 20 km west of central Sydney, at 10:40 pm local time on Tuesday night following reports of a stabbing, Xinhua news agency reported.

Officers attending the scene were told that a group of males were allegedly illegally setting off fireworks in the park before a 17-year-old was stabbed in the back.

The boy was treated by ambulance crews at the scene before being taken to a nearby hospital in a serious but stable condition, police said. His alleged attacker fled the scene.

Police made 36 arrests across Sydney's central business district as more than one million people flocked to the city for New Year's Eve celebrations.

The arrests were made for various offences, including assault, robbery, and possession of weapons.

More than 200,000 people rushed to vantage points on the Sydney Harbor

on Tuesday to watch the city's iconic fireworks display.

"Police were kept busy by a handful of revellers doing the wrong thing, but those people were dealt with quickly," Assistant Police Commissioner Peter McKenna said in a statement.

In Melbourne, police responded to 52 reported assaults and arrested 14 people for possessing weapons.

A teenager was stabbed in the seaside suburb of Blairgowrie at about 5:45 pm and was transported to hospital with non-life-threatening injuries. Two teenagers were arrested by police over the

Illegal fireworks ignited several small fires across the city but police said that there had been no injuries reported.

"The safety of the NSW community is of the utmost importance to us, so for those continuing to celebrate until the morning, we will have police in the air, on the roads and water to ensure it is a night to remember for all the right reasons."

General duties officers remained out on the streets into the early hours with specialist police from the riot squad, mounted and dog command, PolAir, water police and other divisions.

#### Russia hikes tourist tax, lifts export duties on coal

MOSCOW, Jan 1 (Agencies): A new tourist tax has come into effect across Russia on Wednesday, replacing the previous resort fee, local media on Wednesday.

From January 1, 2025, travellers staying in hotels and other accommodations will contribute an additional 1 per cent of their lodging costs, marking the start of a phased plan to bolster regional tourism infrastructure, reports Xinhua, quoting RIA Novosti news agency.

The tax was introduced as part of amendments to the Russian Tax Code in July 2024, which added a new chapter titled "Tourist Tax," granting regional authorities discretion to implement the tax as a local levy. Many regions, particularly those with established or emerging tourism industries, have already embraced the initiative. Under the current



framework, the tourist tax will begin at a rate of 1 per cent in 2025 and gradually rise to 3 per cent by 2027. To ensure a baseline contribution, a minimum daily charge of 100 rubles (0.9 US dollars) has been established.

While hotels and other lodging providers are technically taxpayers, the cost will be incorporated into the price of accommodations, thus being passed on to tour-

Additionally, Russia has also officially dropped export duties on anthracite, coking coal, and thermal coal starting January 1, 2025, local media reported on Wednesday.

Introduced on October 1, 2023, flexible export duties were in place until the end of 2024.

However, duties on anthracite and thermal coal were temporarilv suspended between May 1 and November 30, 2024.

In November 2024, the Russian government decided to lift the export duty on coking coal ahead of schedule and extended the suspension of duties on anthracite and thermal coal to support the coal industry.

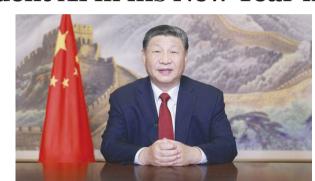
#### No one can ever stop Taiwan's reunification with China, says President Xi in his New Year message

BEIJING. Jan 1 (Agencies): President Xi Jinping has said that no one can ever stop Taiwan's reunification with China as he signed off 2024 amid growing anxieties in the country over the continued slowdown of the economy and the return of Donald Trump, who has threatened to impose punitive tariffs and trade measures against Beijing in his second term.

"We Chinese on both sides of the Taiwan Strait belong to one and the same family. No one can ever sever the bond of kinship between us," Xi said while delivering his 2025 New Year Address televised on

the state broadcaster. China claims the selfruled island Taiwan as part of its mainland and makes 'One-China', recognising Taiwan as part of it, as a mandatory diplomatic policy.

In recent years, Xi, who is in his third fiveyear term, made it a major military and diplomatic initiative to step



up efforts to reintegrate Taiwan with China.

On the foreign policy front, Xi reiterated China's commitment to promoting global governance reform and contributing to the maintenance of world peace and stability

"In a world of both transformation and turbulence, China, as a responsible major country, is actively promoting global governance reform and deepening solidarity and cooperation among the Global South," he added.

The other main focus of Xi's New Year message was to reassure the Chinese public about the economy,

which has slowed considerably after COVID-19, resulting in the collapse of the lucrative real estate sector and job losses due to the closure of businesses

across the country. China's economy has rebounded and is on an upward trajectory, with GDP expected to cross the 130-trillion-yuan (about USD 18.08 trillion) mark in 2024.

The grain output has surpassed 700 million tonnes, he said.

The country has proactively responded to the impacts of the changing environment at home and abroad, and has adopted a full range of policies to make solid gains in pursuing highquality development in the past year, he said.

Highlighting China's success in the new productive forces like E-Vehicles, he said the country has fostered new quality productive forces in light of actual conditions and has seen new business sectors, forms and models emerging.

China's annual production of new energy vehicles has topped 10 million for the first time in 2024, and the country has made breakthroughs in integrated circuits, artificial intelligence, quantum communications and many other fields, Xi said.

China, however, is struggling to enhance its exports of e-vehicles as the US and EU have imposed heavy tariffs on their imports.

The main challenge for Xi, however, is to deal with Trump 2-0.

Trump, who has threatened to pursue tough policies against China, will assume the US presidency on January

In his first term, Trump launched a trade war against China by imposing tariffs on over USD 380 billion on Chinese imports in 2018-19, saying that China is ripping off America. His successor, Joe Biden, has continued the tariffs, denting China's profits.

During his campaign, Trump threatened to impose over 60 per cent tariffs on Chinese imports, which last year accounted for USD 427.2 billion.

The China-US relations became tense over a host of policies pursued by Trump, including blocking Chinese tech.

He also blamed China for the COVID-19 pandemic, saying that the virus emanated from a bio-lab in Wuhan.

The military relations between the two countries also remained tense under Trump's previous presidency.

#### Grieving families of victims of South Korean plane crash visit site for memorial service

SEOUL, Jan 1 (Agencies): Grieving relatives of people killed in a plane crash in South Korea visited the site to pay respects to their loved ones on New Year's Day on Wednesday, as officials said they have identified all 179 bodies

Only two of the 181 people aboard the Boeing 737-800 operated by Jeju Air survived when it crashed in Muan International Airport in southern South Korea on Sunday. Video showed the aircraft, without its landing gear deployed, landing on its belly at high speed, skidding off the end of the runaway into a concrete fence and then bursting into flames.

All of the victims were South Koreans except for two Thais, with many returning from Bangkok after Christmas holidays there.

The bereaved families visited the site on Wednesday for the first time since the crash for a traditional memorial service. They were bused to the site, where they took turns laying white flowers, knelt down and bowed deeply before a memorial table where food was placed. The food included "ddeokguk," a Korean rice cake soup

eaten on New Year's Day. Some wailed and dropped to the



around.

The Transport Ministry said authorities have completed the identification of the dead, which was complicated by the severe damage some bodies received. It said the government has so far handed over 11 bodies to relatives.

The exact cause of the crash is under investigation. Video showed the plane was experiencing an apparent engine problem in addition to the landing gear malfunction. Investigators say the pilot received a warning from air traffic controllers of possible bird strikes and the plane issued a distress

signal before the crash.

Officials have said they will also look into whether the airport's localizer — a set of antennas at the end of the runway designed to guide aircraft during landings that was housed in a concrete fence should have been constructed with lighter materials that would break more easily upon impact.

The South Korean government has begun safety inspections of all 101 Boeing 737-800s in the country. On Tuesday, a team of U.S. investigators including representatives from Boeing also examined the crash site.

#### Russia launches more than 100 drones at Ukraine in New Year's attack, Kyiv says

A pregnant woman was among the 6 injured, the Kyiv city administrators said.

KYIV, Jan 1 (Agencies): At least six people, including a pregnant woman, were injured in Kyiv as Russia launched more than 100 drones in an overnight strike into New Year's Day, Ukrainian military and civil officials said. Ukraine's air force

said at least 111 attack drones were launched toward at least 10 regions throughout Ukraine, including the capital. Ukraine shot down 63 of the drones and another 46 failed to strike a target, the military said.

"The air attack was repelled by aviation, anti-aircraft missile troops, electronic warfare units, mobile fire groups of the Air Force and the Defense Forces of Ukraine," the air force



Ukraine began the new year under "another massive air attack," said Ruslan Stefanchuk, the chair of Ukraine's parlia-

"These inhumans decided to give us a hot start to the year and, like real weaklings and cowards, continued to hit civilians," Stefanchuk said on social media. "I wish the victims a

Air raid sirens began blaring before sunrise

speedy recovery."

in Kyiv, urging people to make their way to shelters, the Kyiv City State Administration said. Most of the injured

were in the city's central Pecherskyi neighborhood, where the strike started a fire in an apartment building, Vitali Klitschko, Kyiv's mayor, said in a post in Ukrainian on the Telegram messaging app.

"Two of them were hospitalized. Two were treated on the spot by doctors," Klitschko said. A pregnant woman was among the injured, the city administration said in a statement.

Falling debris also broke windows, started a fire in a garage and damaged trams in the western Sviatoshynskyi neighborhood, Klitschko added.

### Shah to release a book, titled 'Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh: Through the Ages' tomorrow

**Top News Report** 

JAMMU / NEW DELHI. Jan 1: Union Minister for Home Affairs and Cooperation, Amit Shah, will preside over a book release function on January 2, 2025 in New Delhi as the Chief Guest.

Union Minister for Education, Dharmendra Pradhan will be the Guest of Honour. Eminent authors, academicians, officials of the Ministry and other dignitaries will also be present at the event

The book, titled 'Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh: Through the Ages' seeks to present the story of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh. The title attempts to document the story of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh from a perspective and format that enables an overview for both the subject special-

ist and those less conversant. It is presented in seven sections that cover over three thousand years of the region's history.

Each illustration selected for inclusion has been done with care, being representative of

an age, its importance and contribution to the larger historical canvas of Indian history.

Published in Hindi and English, this book is the result of collaborative efforts of the National Book Trust, India, and the Indian Council of Historical Research.

#### **ABVP's 60th State Conference concludes**

Resolution passed on improving current Education situation in J&K



#### **Top News Report**

JAMMU, Jan 1: The 60th State Conference of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) was held at Mahaveer International School. 575 students and 25 teachers participated. Not only the youth from Jammu but also the youth of Kashmir and Ladakh participated in the 60th Provincial Convention of ABVP.

The exhibition was inaugurated by Chairman CEVA Educational Trust Anil Upadhyay and Director Mahaveer International School Gaurav Abrol. The exhibition showcased the work done by ABVP in the past.

In the 60th Provincial Convention of ABVP, the newly elected State President Dr. Ajay Sharma and the newly elected State Secretay Sannak Shrivats were given the charge by the Election Officer Dr. Rakesh.

The inaugural session was held in the presence of Chief Guest Romalo Ram, Special Guests Devvani Singh and National Secre-

tary Aditya Tikyar. Speech of Student Leaders from Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh was held on the Yuva Manch Vision @2047, which highlighted how India could be developed before the completion of 100 years of indepen

#### dence and what the contribution of the youth would

be in this. There was an extensive discussion on the current Educational scenario of Jammu and Kashmir and on Viksit Jammu and Kashmir Viksit India. The Yuva Munch gave importance to the ideas of the youth and their proposals were also included in the conference. While discussing the

Pancha Parivartan, the youth were motivated to adopt them and to promote the Pancha Parivartan. On the last day of the conference, the new executives of the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad Jammu Kashmir for 2024-2025 was announced.

In this 60th State Convention of ABVP, the posters of SERU and Nagar Khel Kumbh were launched.

The outline of the upcoming programs and movements was prepared, in which Youth Pakhwada will be celebrated from January 12 to 23, a Tiranga Yatra will be taken out on January 26, and widespread movements will be carried out on education, social issues, and other issues.

In this press conference Akshi Billowria (CWC Member), Sourav Manhas (State Joint Secretary), Vikrant Singh (Vibhag Convenor), Harish Sharma (Jammu Mahangar Secretary) were also present.

#### **Massive forest fire in Kishtwar** destroys over 19,000 timber scants, huge loss to contractor

**Top News Report** 

KISHTWAR, Jan 1: A devastating forest fire broke out in Compartment No. 29 of Kishtwar district, causing severe damage to the Forest Development Corporation Limited (FDCL) and its contractor. The fire ravaged 13,404 extracted and hauled timber stocks, including Pathroo (ORT) timber scants, which had been stored at Mahan Head, Banger Nallah. The timber, under the supervision of FDCL and contractor Irshada Begum (represented by attorney Fareed Ahmed Wani), was awaiting departmental approval for further processing when the fire struck on December 21

The cause of the fire is believed to be linked to a dry spell, which led to a fire spreading from surrounding compartments. Despite the tireless efforts of the contractor's laborers to control the blaze, the fire quickly spread across the forest, engulfing the timber stocks and leaving workers in a perilous situation. The laborers narrowly escaped with their lives as the fire consumed everything in its path, including some unpassed timber scants that are yet to be accounted for.

The loss is reported to be staggering, with over 19,000 timber scants destroyed, leaving the contractor and associated workers in a dire financial situation. The impact on the FDCL is also significant, as the destruction of these resources is a severe blow to the corporation's operations in the region. Authorities are currently assessing the full extent of the damage and investigating the cause of the fire.

In the aftermath of the fire, there is growing demand for adequate compensation for contractor Irshada Begum and other affected stakeholders. There are calls for the FDCL to expedite the loss assessment and provide immediate financial relief to those impacted by the tragedy. The incident has also highlighted the need for better insurance coverage and risk mitigation strategies for contractors and businesses operating in high-risk forest areas, which could help shield them from such devastating events.

The fire has also raised broader concerns about the safety and management of timber stocks in vulnerable forest areas. The disaster underscores the urgent need for improved fire prevention and control measures in sensitive compartments. such as Compartment No. 29, to prevent future occurrences. As the investigation continues, there is an increasing call for better strategies to safeguard both the

#### environment and the livelihoods of those dependent on forest resources

#### **Restoration of Old Pension Scheme Top News Report**

JAMMU, Jan 1: The Jammu and Kashmir Unit of the National Movement for Old Pension Scheme (NMOPS) organized a one-day Twitter Abhiyan today, demanding the restoration of the old pension scheme for government employees.

The Twitter Abhiyan, which was held under

hashtag #Restore-OldPensionScheme, saw widespread participation from government employees, trade unions from across the State.

NMOPS J&K holds Twitter Abhiyan for

"The NMOPS J&K Unit is committed to fighting for the rights of government employees, who have been unfairly denied the benefits of the old pension scheme," said Mohd Ashraf Sheikh, President NMOPS J&K Unit. "We demand that the government immediately restore the old pension scheme and provide relief to lakhs of employees who have

been suffering due to the

new pension scheme.' The NMOPS has been

at the forefront of the movement demanding the restoration of the old pension scheme, which was withdrawn by the government on January 1, 2010, in Jammu & Kashmir.

"We are grateful for the overwhelming support we received during today's Twitter Abhiyan," said Ashraf. "We will continue to fight for the rights of government employees and will not rest until the old pension scheme is restored."

#### **High-level delegation of JKFTA** submits memorandum to **School Education Minister**



#### **Top News Report**

RAMBAN, Dec 1: A delegation of the Jammu and Kashmir Federation of Teachers Association (JKFTA) in presence of Chairperson DDC Ramban Dr. Shamshad Shan, and MLA Banihal Sajad Shaheen, submitted a memorandum to the Minister for Health & Medical Education, School Education, Higher Education and Social Welfare Department, Sakeena Masood Itoo, at the Civil Secretariat, Jammu, comprising Chairperson

The memorandum submitted by Gulzubair Daing, President

JKFTA, highlighted pressing issues affecting teacher welfare and

educational development in Jammu and Kashmir. Key demands included implementing a gender-sensitive transfer policy for Rehbare-Taleem (ReT) teachers, filling vacant Zonal Education Officer (ZEO) positions, rationalizing staff based on the pupilteacher ratio (PTR), and exempting teachers from non-teaching assignments. The delegation also emphasized the need for time-bound promotions, regularization of in-charge lecturers, implementation of the Assured Career Progression (ACP) scheme, and creating master posts in upper primary and middle schools to enhance teaching quality.

The delegation thanked the Minister for the recent adjustment of newly promoted Masters and urged further action to address the remaining challenges faced by educators.

Prominent members of JKFTA included Saleem Choudary, Sarjeet Singh Katoch (District President Ramban), Ikram ul Haq, Nayeem Rathore, Mohd Javeed, Jamal Din, Jagdish Chander, Farooq Choudary, and Amit Sharma. Female representatives such as Indu Sharma, Sunayna Bhagat, Mamta Rani, Renu Bandral, Poonam Chib, and Neelam Rakhwal were also part of the delegation.

The minister assured the delegation of her commitment to addressing these issues and comprehensive action.

JKFTA extended its gratitude to the Minister for her proactive approach. The Federation also thanked Chairperson DDC Ramban, and MLA Banihal, for their significant contributions and consistent support for advancing educational standards in the region.

#### **Inaugural Ceremony of NSS Winter Special** Camp 2025 held at GDC Billawar



#### **Top News Report**

BILLAWAR, Jan 1: The NSS Unit of Government Degree College (GDC) Billawar inaugurated its Winter Special Camp 2025, themed "Empowerina Communities through **Engagement and Aware**ness", on Wednesday.

The seven-day camp, running from January 1 to January 8, 2025, is being organized under the esteemed patronage of Dr. Alka Sharma, Principal, GDC Billawar.

The inaugural program commenced with the traditional lamp lighting cere

mony, followed by the NSS song, creating a solemn and inspiring atmosphere

Prof. Bansi Lal, NSS Program Officer, welcomed the gathering and provided an insightful introduction to the camp's objectives and a detailed schedule of activities planned for the week.

The chief guest, Dr. Alka Sharma in her address emphasized the signifi-

cance of the camp in fostering social responsibility, leadership, and community engagement among students. She applauded the NSS Unit for their consistent efforts in making a

positive impact on society

and encouraged volunteers to participate wholeheartedly in the camp activities.

The program, conducted by Dr. Manu Sharma, included an engaging lineup of speeches and discussions, setting the tone for a productive and meaningful week ahead.

The camp will feature a variety of activities including cleanliness drives yoga sessions, wall painting, plantation, awareness rallies and social outreach programs. The inaugural event concluded with a vote of thanks, marking the beginning of a week dedicated to community empowerment and personal growth

#### **J&K holds first Assem**bly Polls since Article 370 repeal, gets elected **Govt after six years in** 2024

resolution for restoration of special status. Expectedly, the BJP created ruckus in the assembly over the resolution's passage.

Speaker Abdul Rahim Rather had to order more than a dozen BJP MLAs to be marshalled out to complete the businesses listed for the five-day session.

It was also the first time since 1987 that assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir were held in just three phases.

Earlier in the year, the Lok Sabha polls threw up a few surprises in the valley but the two seats in Jammu went according

to script. Union minister Jitendra Singh and his BJP colleague Jugal Kishore Sharma both won third consecutive terms in the Lok Sabha.

The biggest shock, however, was the loss of Omar Abdullah from Baramulla to jailed leader Sheikh Abdul Rashid. Local strongman Sajad Gani Lone was also swept by the wayside as Rashid's sons ran an emotional campaign to "save our father from

the gallows". PDP president Mehbooba Mufti also suffered a setback, losing her second consecutive Lok Sabha election — this time to Main Altaf Ahmad Larvi, a prominent Gujjar leader, who was a reluctant candidate but gave in to the wishes of the National Con-

ference brass. Aga Ruhullah of the National Conference was also elected to the Lok Sabha, defeating terror-accused PDP leader Waheed Para from Srinagar. Ruhullah has since emerged as the ruling

National Conference's moral beacon, issuing statements from time to time to remind his party of its pre-election promises. The Srinagar MP even participated in a

sit-in outside the chief minister's residence in support of the demand for rationalisation of quotas in the reservation policy. While new players are emerging in the

political landscape, some of the past masters might have played their last electoral innings.

National Conference president and former chief minister Faroog Abdullah did not contest either election.

Although former Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad is now leading his own outfit, the party already seems to be disintegrating.

The Democratic Progressive Azad Party had announced that Azad, a former chief minister, would contest the Lok Sabha elections from Anantnag-Rajouri.

However, he pulled out within days Azad rarely campaigned during the assembly polls due to ill health and his party failed to win a single seat.

On the governance front, Omar Abdullah and his Cabinet colleagues are coming to terms with their curtailed powers as Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha — a central government appointee — holds most key decision-making powers.

The elected government does not have any say in the functioning of the home department, which is controlled by the lieutenant governor.

The popular government also cannot transfer or take any action against Indian

Administrative Service (IAS) officers. The security situation was by and large peaceful in Jammu and Kashmir despite terrorists managing to carry out some daring attacks, especially in the Jammu region.

FROM PAGE 3

The ultras carried out attacks in the Udhampur, Kathua, Poonch and the Rajouri districts of Jammu, besides attacking security forces and vital infrastructure projects in Kashmir.

The deadliest attack was carried out at a tunnel construction site in Gagangir of Kashmir's Ganderbal district in which seven people — six migrant labourers and one local doctor — were killed.

#### **18 protesters detained** in stir against Katra ropeway released

released and the market reopened," Kumar told reporters late Tuesday night. He added, "Furthermore, work on the ropeway will remain suspended until the committee concludes its discussions."

The Jammu and Kashmir lieutenant governor formed a four-member committee, which includes the divisional commissioner, CEO of the Shrine Board Dr. Ashok Bhan, and board member Suresh Sharma. to resolve the issue.

The divisional commissioner, flanked by samiti leaders and the additional director general of police, assured that all concerns would be addressed during the committee's scheduled meetings.

A samiti representative confirmed the administration's decision to release all detainees. "Shops will reopen, and we hope no one disrupts this process. This decision is in everyone's best interest," he

Katra the basecamp of Mata Vaishnodevi remained shut for one week due to the shutdown against against the proposed ropeway project in the Trikuta hills of Jammu and Kashmir's Reasi district. The Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Sang-

harsh Samiti called for the shutdown last Wednesday, declaring that all activities in Katra would remain suspended during the bandh. Several protesters, including two samiti

leaders—Bhupinder Singh and Sohan Chand—were detained by the police during a march last Wednesday. Last month, the Shri Mata Vaishno Devi

Shrine Board announced plans to install a ropeway to improve access to the temple for senior citizens, children, and others who struggle to climb the 13-km-long track to the cave shrine.

The proposed Rs 250-crore ropeway project aims to connect Tarakote Marg to Sanjichhat, leading to the cave shrine in Reasi district.

#### **Western disturbance** set to bring fresh snowfall in Kashmir

mercury dipped to minus 4.4 degrees Celsius on Tuesday night, down from the previous night's minus 3.5 degrees Celsius, it added.

Qazigund, the gateway town to Kashmir, logged a minimum temperature of minus 6 degrees Celsius, while Konibal in Pampore town also recorded a low of minus 7.5 degrees Celsius, the weather office said.

Kupwara in north Kashmir registered minus 0.3 degrees Celsius, while in south Kashmir, Kokernag recorded minus 5.8 degrees Celsius, it said.

Kashmir is currently under the grip of 'Chillai-Kalan' — the harshest period of winter — which began on December 21. During the 40 days of Chillai-Kalan, the chances of snowfall are highest, and the temperature drops considerably.

Chillai-Kalan ends on January 30 next year, but the cold wave continues even after that. Chillai-Kalan is followed by a 20-day 'Chillai-Khurd' (small cold) and a 10-day 'Chillai-Bachha' (baby cold).

#### ATF price cut by 1.5 pc. commercial LPG rates down Rs 14.5 per cylinder

hikes in commercial LPG price. Rates were hiked by Rs 16.5 per 19-kg cylinder at the last revision on December 1, 2024. In five price increases, commercial LPG rates had been hiked by Rs 172.5 per

Commercial LPG now costs Rs 1,756 per 19-kg cylinder in Mumbai, Rs 1,911 in Kolkata and Rs 1,966 in Chennai.

Prices of ATF and LPG differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes including VAT.

The rate of cooking gas used in domestic households, however, remained unchanged at Rs 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder. State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) revise prices of ATF and cooking gas on the first of every month based on the average price of benchmark international fuel and foreign exchange rate.

Prices of petrol and diesel continue to remain frozen. Rates had been cut by Rs 2 per litre in mid-March ahead of the general elections. Petrol costs Rs 94.72 a litre in Delhi, while diesel is priced at Rs 87.62.

## Cabinet approves continuation of PM Fasal Bima Yojana, restructured weather-based crop insurance scheme

NEW DELHI, Jan 1 (Agencies): The Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Wednesday approved the continuation of the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana and Restructured Weather Based Crop Insurance Scheme till 2025-26 with an overall outlay of Rs 69,515.71 crore from 2021-22 to 2025-26.

The decision will help in risk coverage of crops from non-preventable natural calamities for farmers across the country till 2025-26.

In addition, for large-scale technology infusion in the implementation of the scheme leading to increasing transparency and claim calculation and settlement, the Union Cabinet has also approved the creation of the Fund for Innovation and Technology (FIAT) with a corpus of Rs 824.77 crore.

The fund will be utilised towards funding technological initiatives under the scheme namely, YES-TECH, WINDS, as well as research and development studies.

Yield Estimation System using



Technology (YES-TECH) uses Remote Sensing Technology for yield estimation with minimum 30 per cent weightage to Technology based yield estimates. Nine major states are currently implementing (namely AP, Assam, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, MP, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka).

Other states are also being on-boarded expeditiously. With wider implementation of YESTECH, Crop Cutting Experiments and related issues will be gradually phased out.

Under YES-TECH Claim calculation and settlement has

been done for 2023-24. Madhya Pradesh has adopted 100 per cent technology based yield estimation.

Weather Information and Network Data Systems (WINDS) envisages setting up Automatic Weather Stations (AWS) at block level and Automatic Rain Gauges (ARGs) at panchayat level. Under WINDS, 5 times increase in current network density is envisaged to develop hyper local weather data. Under the initiative, only data rental costs are payable by Central and State Governments. Nine major states are

in the process of implementing WINDS (Kerala, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh Puducherry, Assam, Odisha, Karnataka, Uttarakhand & Rajasthan are in progress), while other states have also expressed willingness to implement.

WINDS could not be implemented by states during 2023-24 (1st year as per EFC) due to various background preparatory and planning work required before tendering. Accordingly, the Union Cabinet has approved 2024-25 as the first year of implementation of WINDS as compared to 2023-24 earlier to give benefit to state governments with higher central fund sharing in 90:10 ratio.

The government said all efforts are made and will continue to be made to saturate all farmers of northeastern states on priority. However, due to the scheme being voluntary and low gross cropped area in the northeastern states, flexibility has been given to avoid surrender of funds and for reallocation in other development projects and schemes with fund requirements.

## Stock markets rebound in first session of 2025 on buying in blue-chips



MUMBAI, Jan 1 (Agencies): Benchmark Sensex and Nifty started the New Year on a high note with the key indices closing higher in a see-saw trade on Wednesday on buying in blue-chip stocks.

Snapping its two-day falling streak, the 30-share BSE Sensex rose by 368.40 points or 0.47 per cent to settle at 78,507.41 on the first trading session of 2025. During the day, it surged 617.48 points or 0.79 per cent to

78,756.49.

The NSE Nifty climbed 98.10 points or 0.41 per cent to 23,742.90.

Among Sensex shares, Maruti, Mahindra & Mahindra, Larsen & Toubro, Bajaj Finance, Tata Motors, IndusInd Bank, Asian Paints, Power Grid, HDFC Bank and Axis Bank advanced.

Tata Steel, Adani Ports, Zomato, HCL Tech, State Bank of India, Hindustan Unilever and Tech Mahindra were among the laggards.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 4,645.22 crore on Tuesday, according to exchange data.

Most of the Asian and European markets were closed for New Year holidays.

US markets ended lower on Tuesday.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude climbed 0.88 per cent to USD 74.64 a barrel.

The BSE benchmark Sensex declined 109.12 points or 0.14 per cent to settle at 78,139.01 on Tuesday. The Nifty dipped marginally by 0.10 points to settle at 23,644.80.

In the entire 2024, the Sensex jumped 5,898.75 points or 8.16 per cent, and the Nifty surged 1,913.4 points or 8.80 per cent.

### GST collections in December increase 7.1% to Rs 1.76 lakh crore

NEW DELHI, Jan 1 (Agencies): Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections in December, in gross terms, were at Rs 1.76 lakh crore, with a yearly jump of 7.3 per cent, according to data from the finance ministry released on Wednesday.

In December 2023, the total collection was to the tune of Rs 1.64 lakh crore.

CGST, SGST, IGST, and cess all increased year-on-year in December 2024, official data made available showed today.

So far in 2024-25, the total GST collection has been 9.1 per cent higher at Rs 16.33 lakh crore, as against Rs 14.97 lakh crore mopped up in the corresponding period of

In April of 2024, the total GST mop-up surged to a record high of Rs 2.10 lakh crore.

During the financial year 2023-24, the total gross GST collection was recorded at Rs 20.18 lakh crore, with an 11.7 per cent increase compared to the previ-



ous fiscal year.

The recent GST collections reflects a positive trajectory for India's economy, underscoring robust domestic consumption and buoyant import activity. The figures bode well for the country's fiscal health and economic recovery efforts, signalling resilience amidst global uncertainties.

The Goods and Services Tax was introduced in the country with effect from July 1, 2017, and states were assured compensation for loss of any revenue arising on account of the implementation of GST as per the provisions of the GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017 for five years.

Hair oil, toothpaste, soap; detergents and washing powder; wheat; rice; curd, lassi, buttermilk; wristwatches; TV up to 32 inches; refrigerators; washing machines, mobile phones, are among key items on which GST rates have been slashed substantially, or for some kept at zero, benefiting people of this country.

The GST Council, a federal body comprising the Union Finance Minister as its Chairman and Finance Ministers of all States as members, has played its part in the forum.

The latest meeting of the GST Council was held on December 21 at Jaisalmer, Rajasthan.

## Study in US teens reveals brain differences between those using substances and those not

## Findings are published in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network Open

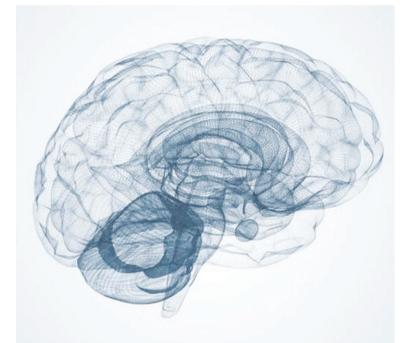
NEW DELHI, Jan 1 (Agencies): A study of teenagers in the US has revealed distinct differences in brain structures between those resorting to substance use, including alcohol and cannabis, before turning 15 and those not.

The researchers, including those from Washington University in St. Louis, US, also found that many of these differences such as a bigger brain and a thinner prefrontal cortex were possibly present before the teenagers started substance use.

This suggested that these aspects may be involved in the risk of initiating substance use later in life, along with other factors, including genetic and environmental ones, the researchers said.

The prefrontal cortex is part of the cortex—the outermost layer of the brain and known to help one perform higher-level functions such as planning, decision-making and achieving goals.

Some of the brain differences observed between the two groups of teenagers also appeared unique to the type of substance used, the team said.



The findings are published in The Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA) Network Open.

However, the researchers said that more work is needed to discern how these structural differences translate into brain function or behaviours.

"This (study) adds to some emerging evidence that an individual's brain structure, alongside their unique genet-

ics, environmental exposures and interactions among these factors, may impact their level of risk and resilience for substance use and addiction," said US' National Institute on Drug Abuse Director Nora Volkow.

"Understanding the complex interplay between the factors that contribute and that protect against drug use is crucial for informing effective prevention interventions and providing sup-

port for those who may be most vulnerable," Volkow said.

The team also said that the study's findings should not be used for diagnosing, as brain structure alone cannot predict substance use.

For the analysis, the researchers looked at MRI scans of 9,804 children across the US when they were 9-11 years of age. The participants were followed over a period of three years -- 3,460 reported substance initiation before age 15, while the others did not.

Between the two groups, five structural differences pertained to the brain in general, while an additional 39 pertained to specific regions -- 22 of which were related to the thickness of cortex.

"We identified neuroanatomical features associated with substance use initiation that were present before substance exposure," the authors wrote.

The participants were recruited from the ongoing Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) Study, examining brain development and mental health in nearly 12,000 youth in the US starting at age nine and following them into early adulthood.

## Artificial heart patients can regenerate heart muscles: Study

WASHINGTON, Jan 1 (Agencies): A research team at the University of Arizona College of Medicine--Tucson's Sarver Heart Center found that a subset of artificial heart patients can regenerate heart muscle, which opens the possibilities of new ways to treat and perhaps someday cure heart failure.

The results of the research which was co-led by a physician-scientist were published in the journal Circulation.

Circulation.
Comparing the repair of skeletal muscles to heart muscles, Hesham Sadek, MD, PhD, director of the Sarver Heart Center and chief of the Division of Cardiology at the University of Arizona College of Medicine -- Tucson's Depart-

ment of Medicine said that when a heart muscle doesn't grow back if it gets injured, "We have nothing to reverse heart muscle loss." Sadek led a collabo-

ration between international experts to investigate whether heart muscles can regenerate. The study was funded through a grant by the Leducq Foundation Transatlantic Networks of Excellence Program.

The project began with tissue from artificial heart patients provided by colleagues at the University of Utah Health and School of Medicine led by Stavros Drakos, MD, PhD, a pioneer in left ventricular assist device-mediated recov-

ery.
Jonas Frisen, MD,
PhD, and Olaf Berg-

mann, MD, PhD, of the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, led teams in Sweden and Germany and used their innovative method of carbon dating human heart tissue to track whether these samples contained newly generated cells.

The investigators found that patients with artificial hearts regenerated muscle cells at more than six times the rate of healthy hearts.

"This is the strongest evidence we have, so far, that human heart muscle cells can actually regenerate, which really is exciting, because it solidifies the notion that there is an intrinsic capacity of the human heart to regenerate," Sadek said.

Earlier, Sadek pub-

lished a paper in Science showing that while heart muscle cells actively divide in utero, they stop dividing shortly after birth to devote their energy to pumping blood through the body nonstop, with no time for breaks.

In 2014, he published

evidence of cell division in patients with artificial hearts, hinting that their heart muscle cells might have been regenerating.

"The pump pushes blood into the aorta, bypassing the heart," he said. "The heart is essentially resting."

Sadek's previous studies indicated that this rest might be beneficial for the heart muscle cells, but he needed to design an experiment to determine whether patients with artificial

hearts were actually regenerating muscles.

"Irrefutable evidence of heart muscle regeneration has never been shown before in humans," he said. "This study provided direct evidence."

However, Sadek wants to figure out why only 25 per cent of patients responded to the regeneration of the muscle.

"It's not clear why some patients respond and some don't, but it's very clear that the ones who respond have the ability to regenerate heart muscle," he wrote.

Sadek believes that in future a mechanical heart will not be a therapy on which people will rely and with this study, he hopes to deliver regenation of heart muscles in future.

### Surging oestrogen levels could drive women to 'binge-drink', mice study suggests

NEW DELHI, Jan 1 (Agencies): Drinking alcohol when oestrogen levels are surging could compel women to hit the bottle harder, thereby possibly driving them to 'binge-drink', researchers said after they found that female mice drank much more on days when the sex hormone's levels were high.

The study, published in the journal Nature Communications, is the first to find that a higher oestrogen level in the body promotes 'binge-drinking' behaviour in women by contributing to sex-specific differences, researchers said.

Binge-drinking is said to intensify alcohol's harmful effects, with women being more vulnerable to the negative health effects, compared to men.

Researchers, led by those at Weill Cornell Medicine, US, previously showed that neurons in a brain region called 'bed nucleus of the stria terminalis', or BNST, were more excitable in female mice, compared to male ones.

Sometimes referred to as 'extended amygdala', the BNST is a central hub for regulating stress-related brain activity, including mood, anxiety and depression.

The enhanced activity in BNST correlated with the female mice's binge drinking behaviour, the researchers said.

"Oestrogen has such powerful effects on so many behaviours, particularly in females. So, it makes sense that it would also modulate drinking," senior author Kristen Pleil, associate professor of pharmacology at Weill Cornell Medicine, said.

In the latest study, the researchers monitored 'oestrogen' hormone levels throughout the oestrous cycle of female mice — the equivalent of menstrual cycle in women — following which, the mice were served alcohol.

The team found that on days when a female mouse had high levels of oestrogen circulating in the body, it drank more, compared to days with low levels

"We found that female mice displayed greater binge alcohol drinking and reduced avoidance when oestrogen was high during the oestrous cycle than when it was low," the authors said.

The intensified binge-drinking behaviour was related to heightened activity in BNST, the researchers said.

"When a female takes her first sip from the bottle containing alcohol, those neurons go crazy. And if she's in a high-oestrogen state, they go even crazier," Pleil said.

#### India cricket 2025 schedule: Full fixtures, dates, venues and time for men's team matches

NEW DELHI, Jan 1 (Agencies): The year 2024 was a mixed bag for the Indian men's cricket team.

While it began with a home series win over England and then a T20 World Cup title triumph in the Caribbean, the team struggled to maintain momentum, ending the year with a crushing 184-run loss to Australia in the Boxing Day Test at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

India's major setbacks included an ODI series whitewash to Sri Lanka and a home Test series defeat to New Zealand. In 15 Tests, the team managed 8 wins, 6 losses, and 1 draw, while their lone ODI series ended in disappointment.

The Indian men's team will aim for redemption in 2025 as they kick off the year with the final Test of the Border-Gavaskar Trophy against Australia in Sydney, a must-win to keep their World Test Championship (WTC) final hopes alive. A loss or a draw would end their cam-

Following the Sydney Test, India will shift focus to a limitedovers series against England in mid-January, serving as prepa-



ration for the Champions Trophy in February

This marquee tournament will be played in a hybrid format across the UAE.

After the Champions Trophy and IPL 2025, India will travel to England for a five-Test series, marking the beginning of their fourth WTC cycle.

India's home season is set to begin in October with the Asia Cup (T20 format) and two Tests against the West Indies. They will also tour Australia in October-November for three ODIs and five T20Is before wrapping up the year with an all-format home series against South

In total, India is scheduled to

play 18 T20ls, 9 Tests, and 12 ODIs in bilateral series outside ICC and ACC tournaments in 2025.

India's Full 2025 Cricket Schedule:

India vs Australia, 5th Border-Gavaskar Trophy Test, January 3-7 (Sydney).

India vs England (5 T20Is, 3 ODIs) -- January-February 2025 1st T20I: January 22 (Chennai) 2nd T20I: January 25 (Kolkata) 3rd T20I: January 28 (Rajkot) 4th T20I: January 31 (Pune) 5th T20I: February 2 (Mumbai) 1st ODI: February 6 (Nagpur) 2nd ODI: February 9 (Cuttack) 3rd ODI: February 12 (Ahmed-

Champions Trophy -- Febru-

ary-March 2025: India vs Bangladesh: February

20 (Dubai) India vs Pakistan: February 23

(Dubai)

India vs New Zealand: March 2 (Dubai)

Semi-final (if qualified): March

4 (Dubai) Final (if qualified): March 9

(Dubai) World Test Championship final (if qualified): June 2025 (Lord's

Cricket Ground) India vs England (5 Tests) --June-August 2025 (Away) 1st Test: June 20-24 (Head-

ingley) 2nd Test: July 2-6 (Edgbaston) 3rd Test: June 10-14 (Lord's) 4th Test: June 23-27 (Manchester)

5th Test: July 31-August 4 (Oval)

India vs Bangladesh (3 ODIS, 3 T20Is) -- August 2025 (Away) India vs West Indies (2 Tests) -- October 2025 (Home)

Asia Cup T20s -- October-November 2025 (Home)

India vs Australia (3 ODIs, 5 T20Is) -- November 2025 (Away)

India vs South Africa (2 Tests, 3 ODIs, 5 T20Is) -- November-December 2025 (Home).

#### Konstas' audacious knock at MCG unlikely to become a blueprint: Carey

SYDNEY, Jan 1 (Agencies): Australian wicketkeeper-batter Alex Carey said on Wednesday that he was mesmerised by the way young opener Sam Konstas scored an audacious half-century in the Boxing Day Test against India but insisted that it was unlikely to become a "blueprint"

for future matches. Making his debut in front of a near sell-out crowd at the MCG on December 26, 19-yearold Konstas didn't show any nerves during his scintillating 60 off 65 balls, which was studded with two sixes off India's best bowler Jasprit Bumrah.

"I was a spectator that first session," Carey told reporters ahead of the fifth Test against India beginning at the SCG on Friday.

"I probably had the emotions of the 90,000 (spectators) that were there. At times I couldn't watch it, at times I was cheering," said Carey. Konstas, who was handed the Test cap after Nathan McSweeney's unimpressive performance in the first three games, brought an ultra-aggressive approach to Australia's batting but Carey said he didn't expect the teenage opener to go all guns blazing in every match he plays.

"Just the energy he brought, it was something different. Probably wasn't expecting that amount of difference, but he played a style of cricket that was probably new to India as well.

"We'll wait and see how he plays out here (SCG). I don't think that's his blueprint every Test match, but to be able to throw a few punches early and get a bit of momentum for us, the opening partnership was probably just lacking that intensity," he added.

He said that while the opening pair in the first three Tests, McSweeney and Usman Khawaja, had done a decent job in "tough situations",

Konstas brought something more to the table.

"I thought Nathan and Usman got us through tough situations as well by facing lots of balls. Sam was able to score a little bit, so hopefully another opportunity in front of his home fans."

Carey also rejected talk of any animosity between Konstas and Virat Kohli after their brief physical altercation on the opening day of the Boxing Day Test, which led to the Indian stalwart coping a 20 per cent fine on his match

Both players quickly turned around to glance at each other and engage in a heated exchange of words before Khawaja stepped in to separate them. The on-field umpires also had a word with the two.

"Not that I'm aware of... I think I saw a photo of them shaking hands and a little tap on the back. It's Test cricket. I'm not 100 per cent sure, but Sam didn't take it to heart," said Carey.

#### **Viswanathan Anand** congratulates R Vaishali for winning bronze in **Blitz Championship**

NEW YORK, Jan 1 (Agencies): Legendary India chess player Viswanathan Anand congratulated India's R Vaishali for winning a bronze in the women's section of the World Blitz Championship on Wednesday, January 1. Vaishali defeated China's Zhu Jiner 2.5-1.5 in the quarter-finals before losing to another Chinese opponent Ju Wenjun 0.5-2.5 in the semi-final.

Following her performance, she received a special congratulatory message from the fivetime world champion and International Chess Federation (FIDE) vice president, Viswanathan Anand, who praised her power-packed performance. He also extended his greetings to Koneru Humpy for his title-winning show in the rapid event.

"Congratulations to Vaishali for taking bronze. Her qualification was truly a power packed performance. Our Waca Chess



mentee (WestBridge Anand Chess Academy) has done us proud. We are so happy to be supporting her and her chess. What a way to wrap up 2024. In 2021, we thought we would get stronger chess players but here we have it a World Champion (Humpy) and a Bronze medallist (Vaishali)!," Anand wrote on his X account.

The event was completely dominated by the Chinese as Ju Wenjun went on to snare the world title defeating compatriot Lei Tingjie 3.5-2.5. In the 'Open' section, the Blitz title was shared between world number one Magnus Carlsen and Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi after three sudden-death games ended without a winner. This marked the first instance of the title being awarded to two players, following Carlsen's suggestion to share the title due to the deadlock.

"We reached a point where it had been a long day. We played many games, we had three draws and I felt that I could keep playing. But it was a nice solution to share the win, it was a good way to end it," said Carlsen.

#### With India's batting struggling, Shubman could return to side for do-or-die final Test

SYDNEY, Jan 1 (Agencies): Standing at the crossroads of his Test career, skipper Rohit Sharma has certain choices to make in the best interests of the Indian team heading into the fifth and final Test against Australia.

With the series on the line after his team's 184-run drubbing in the Boxing Day Test, the Indian captain might have to field his six best batters at the Sydney Cricket Ground, which will pave the way for Shubman Gill's inclusion in the playing XI after being dropped for the previous game in Melbourne.

With 866 runs in Test cricket in 2024, Gill is second only to Yashasvi Jaiswal in the list of highest scorers among Indian batters in last one year, and one can't blame the youngster if he is feeling hard done by at being asked to sit out at MCG.

Rohit, though, informed that the team management explained to Gill the reasons behind his omission in Melbourne. He was dropped to ensure better balance in the playing XI with Washington Sundar's bowling being an addi-



tional advantage.

The question that arises now is how Rohit accommodates Gill in the playing XI for the Sydney game, which India need to win to not only retain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy but also keep alive their slim chances of qualifying for next year's World Test Championship (WTC) Final.

Washington did himself no harm by scoring a 50 and was involved in a crucial hundred-plus stand with centurion Nitish Kumar Reddy. And if his bowling was penetrative enough, he would have certainly bowled more overs.

The SCG has traditionally been a track that assists spinners as the match progresses and hence either Washington or Tanush Kotian is certain to play alongside Ravindra Jadeja, unless the skipper develops sudden faith in Jaiswal's leg-breaks and decides to a play the specialist batter (Gill) and not the batting all-rounder (Washington).

The Adelaide Test, played under lights with the pink Kookaburra, presented the Indian team with the most challenging circumstances and Gill, with scores of 31 and 28, looked way more comfortable than both Rohit and Virat Kohli.

The second option could be more convenient and it involves dropping one among Mohammed Siraj and Akash Deep to include Gill as three specialist pacers could be a luxury at the SCG with Jadeja and Washington expected to bowl more overs than in Melbourne. Siraj

fine spell in Melbourne while Akash Deep was distinctly unlucky to get just one wicket across two innings.

redeemed himself with a

The third option is the most inconvenient one but perhaps the need of the hour too if Rohit wants to lead by example. With just 31 runs in five innings and 155 runs in the last 14 knocks, the skipper could himself volunteer to step aside and let Gill play, with KL Rahul regaining his opening slot, where he has looked the most assured.

Taking a back seat to allow the team to move forward is a call that can only be taken if the heart is in the right place.

McDonald optimistic Starc will play in Sydney

Australia head coach Andrew McDonald conceded that Mitchell Marsh has fallen short of expectations with the bat against India but remained optimistic about Mitchell Starc's availability for the pivotal fifth Test.

Starc's fitness remains the primary worry for the hosts after the pacer battled through sore ribs in the fourth Test but still managed to bowl effecing the prized wicket of Kohli on the final day. "Any time you get

tively, including claim-

through the game, it's always a good indicator that you've a chance at the next game," McDonald said. "It didn't stop him (Starc). Clearly there was a little bit of discomfort early on in spells, but once he got warm it seemed as though he was pretty free. We'll see how everyone recovers. Bowling last, it was a pretty attritional game, something that we're not used to in the last few vears.

Should Starc be unavailable for the decider, McDonald expressed confidence in Jhye Richardson or Sean Abbott stepping in to fill the void.

Starc's fitness issues, compounded by his heavy workload alongside skipper Pat Cummins, have also drawn attention to the limited role of Marsh as a fifth bowler.

Across four Tests, Marsh has bowled only 33 overs. His contributions with the bat have been similarly underwhelming, with just 73 runs at an average of 10.42.

#### "I've had enough": Furious Gautam Gambhir lashes out at India stars, issues stern warning

MELBOURNE, Jan 1 (Agencies): Not all is well in the Indian team's dressing room at the moment. With Australia leading 2-1 in the Border-Gavaskar Trophy, with just one Test in Sydney to go, there's an understandable discontent in the Indian team. Pressure has been increasing on India head coach Gautam Gambhir, under whom, the team produced some astonishing results against Sri Lanka (in ODIs), and New Zealand (in Tests at home) and is now on the brink of losing the Test assignment in Australia and with it, a chance to qualify for the World Test Championship final.

Gambhir is said to have lost his cool at a few top Indian stars who 'went their own way' in the 4th Test against Australia in Melbourne and ended up throwing their wicket away. As a result, India lost the match and the team now stands on the brink of elimination from the

WTC final race.

"Bahut ho gaya (I've had enough)," Gambhir told the Indian team soon after the players' return to the dressing room after a loss in Melbourne, as per agency.

The India head coach is reportedly annoyed with the way certain players conducted themselves on the ground. Gambhir is said to have told the players that he gave them 6 months to play 'their way' but it all stops now. From now onwards those who don't play according to the plans set by him for the team, will be shown the exit door.

There's a big conflict in the team at the moment, between what Gambhir decides as the 'strategy' for a given situation or match, and what the players go on to do on the pitch.

In the Melbourne Test, Rishabh Pant's reckless shot, leading to his dismissal, was cited as the turning point in the game. Even Virat Kohli



edged the ball into the hands of a fielder in slips while chasing an 8th stump delivery, yet again in this

Skipper Rohit Sharma, after a cautious start to the second innings, gave in to his instincts again and failed to convert his start into a big score. Such acts by Indian players have reportedly gotten on Gambhir's nerves and the head coach is now ready to take serious actions.

#### Djokovic has a plan, with new coach Andy Murray, to take on newcomers

BRISBANE. Jan 1 (Agencies): After winning just one tournament in 2024 — a Paris Olympics gold medal — former No. 1 Novak Djokovic says he, with new coach Andy Murray's input, has a plan to take tennis' newcomers.

Nothing radical, he says, but enough to give him a chance against the likes of 23-year-old World No.1 Jannik Sinner, who won the Australian Open and U.S. Open last year, and No. 3 Carlos Alcaraz, who is 21 and who won the other two Grand Slam tournaments, Wimbledon and the French Open.

The 37-year-old Djokovic said, after his first-round win at the Brisbane International, he will spend the days ahead of the Australian Open, which begins Jan. 12, with Murray viewing match videos of his vounger rivals.

The seventh-ranked Djokovic began his quest for a 100th ATP title with a 6-3, 6-3 defeat of Aus-

tralian wild-card entry Rinky Hijikata. A win in Brisbane would be an ideal set-up for a record 25th Grand Slam singles title in Melbourne for the already 10-time Australian Open champion.

Djokovic said he would use a second meeting with rival-turnedcoach Murray to make small tweaks in his game.

"I'm not looking to transform my game completely . . . I'm not going to be Giovanni (rising 21-year-old French star Giovanni Mpetshi Perricard) serving two first serves and coming in to the net," Djokovic told Australian Associated Press.

"But I definitely am looking to improve, even if it's the slightest percentage, every single shot that I have in my game, and maybe something that people don't necessarily see is this court position-

ing, the transition play, the tactics." "Physically, mentally, as well and ready to compete, whatever it takes, however many hours it

takes with the youngsters," he said. "The week before Australian Open (we will) do a lot of video analysis of my main opponents, top guys, trying to understand how my game matches up."

Djokovic, speaking after his win in Brisbane, poked fun at Murray's current family skiing trip. He said he hoped Murray, who sustained a number of hip and other injuries during his career, didn't suffer any skiing-related incidents.

He's actually skiing at the moment,' Djokovic said. 'He's on a family skiing trip. Sending my love to all the Murray family. I hope he doesn't get injured skiing before he comes to Melbourne."

Murray, in his often self-deprecating manner, couldn't resist responding with a video on X, saying: "I'm taking on some huge slopes as you can see but no injuries just yet." But the "huge slopes" looked more like a beginner's bunny run.

#### Police register 123 NDPS cases, arrest 185 drug peddlers in Anantnag in 2024

ANANTNAG, Jan 1 (Agencies): The Jammu and Kashmir Police in Anantnag recorded significant achievements in its anti-narcotics operations during 2024 registering 123 cases under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.Jammu and Kashmir tourism

The police arrested 185 accused and seized property worth Rs26.40 crore in connection with these cases.

According to data shared by the police, 102 of the arrested individuals were charge-sheet-

24 detentions under the Prevention of Illegal Trafficking (PIT) NDPS Act were reported in the district.

The contraband substances recovered- included- Brown-Sugar 1.64 Kg; cannabis (Bung powder, Bung Fuki); 510.648 Kg, Charas 2,641 Kg and Poppy Straw 510,648 Kg.

"Intoxicant tablets; 300 strips and intoxicant syrups; 1350 bottles were also seized", police

The police also destroyed cannabis and poppy spread over

292 and 250 Kanals respectively.

18 cases were registered under the Excise Act related to the alcohol related seizures.

"7500 bottles of 3458 liters were seized," the data said.

The bank accounts of repeated offenders were frozen and property confiscated. "255 Bank accounts with a total amount of 1.94 crore Rs was frozen".

The property worth Rs 26.40 crores of the accused was attached by the police. This included 17 houses, 9 shops, 10 vehicles and cash amounting to Rs 1071,755, police said. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Anantnag, G.V. Sundeep Chakravarthy told Greater Kashmir, "The police is committed to eradicating the drug menace from society".

Jammu and Kashmir tourism While extending New Year greetings to the public, he urged for their cooperation in tackling drug trade and substance abuse.

"The anti-narcotics drive in the district will persist in the coming year," SSP Chakravarthy assured.

uting has been a Growth

Engine spearheading gar-

gantuan socio-economic

development given its

reach, spread, and depth to

enhance grassroots com-

munication and incidental

Ribbon Development along

areas its roads course

With 50 Years of glorious

#### Jodhamal hosts Regalia '24 to bid farewell to Class XII of 2025



#### **Top News Report**

JAMMU, Jan 1: As the academic year 2024-25 draws to a close, Jodhamal Public School hosted the elegant Regalia'24 to bid an emotional adieu to its outgoing Class XII students.

The event celebrated the culmination of their transformative journey at the school, marking the end of a memorable chapter.

The grand event commenced with a ceremonial lamp-lighting and a cake-cutting, symbolizing new beginnings. This was followed by an electrifying ramp-walk where students dazzled the audience with their poise and style. Adding to the excitement, the school honoured selected students with special titles under the 'Masters of Many' category, recognizing their excellence across diverse fields

The host students of Class XI captivated the gathering with their engaging performances, showcasing creativ

ity and camaraderie. The graduating Class of 2025 was lauded for their resilience, dedication, and accomplishments, leaving an indelible legacy on the institution. The highlight of the

evening was the much-

anticipated title ceremony Mr. & Ms. Charming was bagged by Sarthak Jain and Mayara Aul respectively. Nirbhay Choudhary and Avikshita Sharma were adjudged Mr. & Ms. Consistent respectively. Rohan Langar and Adaliya Narang were declared Mr. & Ms. Perfect respectively while Sachdeep Singh and Czia Raina became Mr. & Ms. Elegant respectively. The most coveted title of Mr. & Ms. Jodhamal was given to Aryan Manhas and Vidhi Dhallam respectively.

The event was a poignant reminder of the remarkable contributions of the graduating students, who have exemplified Jodhamal's core values of excellence, integrity, and leadership.

STUDY KOSHI

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The ceremony concluded with heartfelt words of encouragement from the school's leadership. Trustee Nandan Kuthiala, Director Arati Kuthiala, Principal Girish Kumar, and Vice Principal Amita Arora expressed their gratitude to parents, teachers, and the school community for their unwavering support in nurturing these bright young minds.

Meticulously orchestrated by Aashima and her dedicated team, Regalia'24 was a splendid tribute to the Class of 2025, inspiring them to embark on the next phase of their journey with confidence and grace. Vote of thanks was proposed by Pooja Sharma, the CCA Coordinator, whose best wishes added a perfect closing touch to the event.

The formal ceremony was followed by a sumptuous lunch and a vibrant dance floor which was rocked by all students and teachers

#### Project Sampark celebrates Golden Jubilee with release of special cover

**Top News Report** 

JAMMU, Jan 1: Project Sampark was carved out of Project Beacon on January 1, 1975 for maintenance and construction of all roads South of Pir Panjal ranges in Northern Command with approximately 500 Kms of road network and Rs. 3.4 crores as initial outlay.

The Project was christened 'Sampark' which signified its commitment to reach out and maintain harmonious relations with stakeholders and diverse agencies associated with road development work in its area of responsibility.

In a nutshell the Golden Arc of Developmental Responsibility envelopes areas South of Pir Panjal range in J & K and contiguous areas of the states of Punjab and Himachal Pradesh for constructing, improving and maintaining strategic road networks in the border Districts of Jammu, Kathua, Doda, Udhampur, Rajouri, Reasi and Poonch. Presently Project Sampark commands the responsibility for maintaining approximately



Crores

Today Project Sampark is completing 50 glorious years of dedicated service to the nation. To commemorate the special event Maj Gen. MK Khan, VSM, ADG Army Postal Service (APS) personally presented the Special Cover in a solemn ceremony to DG Border Roads Lt Gen Raghu Srinivasan, VSM which was released by DGBR, in the presence of Brig Neeraj Madan, Chief **Engineer Project Sampark** and senior officers of HQ DGBR.

In addition to release of the Special Cover, a "Bridge Compendium" of Project Sampark was released by the DG. The Bridge Com

Dimple calls upon CEC to nominate

Urges to conduct of by-polls for Nagrota,

Budgam constituencies

Jammu Dogra representative for

upcoming Rajya Sabha seat

pendium showcases stellar Bridging Achievements of the Project spanning last 50 Years.

The Compendium will serve as a glowing beacon to the effort put in by all ranks and file of Project Sampark, past and present and future, in the role of BRO towards improving infrastructure in the UT of J&K. A Bridge by definition is a mechanical construct to span gaps/obstacles, across water bodies or ravines.

Project Sampark is bridging and connecting the hearts, minds, hopes and aspirations of the local populace as it tames the mountains and associated

It has achieved inroads by opening new trade routes and joining the remote and

the rest of the country due to its personnel working relentlessly under extreme climatic and hostile conditions with utmost enthusiasm, courage and dedica-

ect goal congruent to the ethos of BRO of Connecting, Caring and Contrib-

inhospitable areas with

Consequently, the Proj-

and stellar performance in the firmament of BRO with rich history behind, DGBR highly appreciated the work done by the rank and file encouraged them to trail blaze in the same fervour and Josh in the future too. At this poignant and

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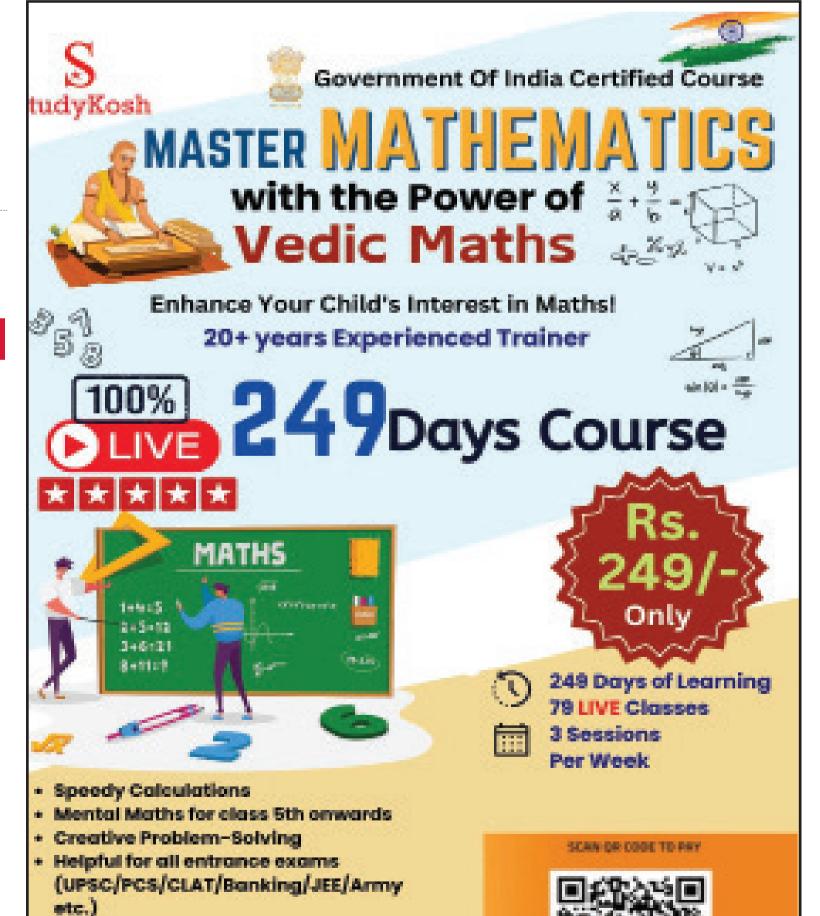
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through

historic occasion Project Sampark rededicates its strength, energy and vigour to the nation true to its motto of Sadaiv Agrasar 24x7x365.



**Top News Report** 

JAMMU, Jan 1: Sunil Dimple, the president of the Mission Statehood Jammu Kashmir, addressed a press conference, outlining several demands and concerns regarding the political situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Dimple called on the Chief Election Commission of India, the Lieutenant Governor (LG), and the alliance government to nominate a Jammu Dogra representative for the upcoming Rajya Sabha seat. He also urged the swift conduct of by-polls for the Nagrota and Budgam constituencies, along with the nomination of five MLAs for the assembly. According to Dimple, elections for the four Rajya Sabha seats and bypolls for the Nagrota and Budgam constituencies are expected to be held soon, with notifications anticipated by February before March.

In his statement, Dimple expressed deep concern over the delay in allotting constituency development funds to MLAs, highlighting that, despite

this, luxury cars and high-end vehicles like Scorpios have been provided to the representatives. He criticized the lack of allocation for constituency development, emphasizing that the alliance government should focus on fulfilling

the needs of the people

rather than indulging in

such luxuries. He further accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of being insincere about restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir. Dimple said that despite the two-month completion of the alliance government, the situation remains unclear for the youth and the people of Jammu and Kashmir, who are unsure where to address their issueswhether at the LG's Raj Bhawan or the Civil Secretariat.

Dimple demanded that alliance government leaders, Dr. Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah, take immediate action and nominate members for the four Rajya Sabha seats, including one Dogra candidate from Jammu. He pointed out that Jammu districts currently have no representation in the alliance government.

Furthermore, Dimple accused the government of not being committed to the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood and special status, a resolution submitted by the elected assembly that remains unaddressed.

In addition, Dimple raised concerns over conflicting business rules, questioning whether the business rules of the Ministry of Home Affairs or those of the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly Speaker would be applied. He stressed the need for clarity in this matter.

The Mission Statehood president also demanded that Chief Minister Omar Abdullah nominate five MLAs, including two women, two Kashmiri Pandits, and one from the West Pakistan refugee community, for the assembly. He emphasized that the government should immediately conduct local body elections (ULB and Panchayat) to restore full democracy and provide representation at the grassroots level.

Lastly, Dimple urged Dr. Farooq Abdullah and the alliance government leaders to nominate a Jammu Dogra representative for the Rajya Sabha seat, especially considering the efforts made by Jammu Dogras in uniting the people for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood after the revocation of Article 370 in August 2019.

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