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BRIEFLY

Massive Fire Breaks Out in Hazratbal, Srinagar; F&ES on Job

SRINAGAR, Jan 8 (Agencies): A massive fire broke out in the Hazratbal area of Central Kashmir's Srinagar district on Wednesday afternoon.

An official told the news agency JKNS that the blaze erupted in the residential structure in Hazratbal, Srinagar.

Fire and Emergency Services were immediately rushed to the spot to contain the flames and prevent further damage. The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained, he said.

Details regarding the extent of damage and further details are awaited.

FIR against social media page Admin for public mischief in Doda

JAMMU, Jan 8 (Agencies): An FIR was registered against the administrator of a social media page for allegedly defaming several individuals by sharing "fabricated and malicious" content about their lives in Jammu and Kashmir's Doda district, police said on Wednesday.

The action was initiated against the "Bhaderwah Confession Page" Instagram account administrator following several complaints from victims, who alleged that the page had used their names to spread false stories, causing significant damage to their personal lives, a police spokesperson said.

The FIR was registered at Bhaderwah police station under provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita and the Information Technology Act against the accused, he said.

Night temperature plummets in Kashmir, Gulmarg, at -9.8°C

SRINAGAR, Jan 8 (Agencies): The night temperature plummeted again across the Kashmir Valley, with tourist destinations of Gulmarg recorded at -9.8°C, Pahalgam -8.2°C, and Sonamarg -10.4°C on Wednesday, officials said.

The Meteorological Department Srinagar predicts the weather will

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PM Modi to inaugurate Z-Morh tunnel in Kashmir on January 13

SRINAGAR, Jan 8 (Agencies): Prime Minister Narendra Modi is scheduled to visit Jammu and Kashmir on January 13 to inaugurate the Z-Morh tunnel on the Srinagar-Sonamarg road to make Sonamarg an all-weather tourist destination.

Official sources said that the PM will arrive here on January 13 to physically inaugurate the Z-Morh tunnel that will bypass the road from Gagangir to Sonamarg allowing visitors and locals to visit the hill station throughout the year.

At present, the Gagangir-Sonamarg stretch of the road gets



blocked by heavy snowfall and avalanches that hit the area every year.

The Z-Morh Tunnel is a 6.5 km

long 2-lane road tunnel between Gagangir and Sonamarg in the Ganderbal district of Jammu and Kashmir. It is named after the Z-shaped stretch of road that the tunnel has replaced (Z-Morh translates to "Z-turn" in English).

The road used before was avalanche-prone and often got blocked for several months, but the Z-Morh tunnel provides all-weather connectivity to the Sonamarg tourist town. It takes only 15 minutes to travel the 6.5 km long tunnel compared to hours over the zig-zag road up and down the hills.

Together

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LG Flags Off Jammu Kashmir Contingent for National Youth Festival in Delhi

SRINAGAR, Jan 8 (Agencies): Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha flagged off the Jammu and Kashmir Union Territory's contingent for the National Youth Festival in Delhi on Wednesday.

The event, which provides a vibrant platform for the youth to show-



case their talents, will feature participants from Jammu and Kashmir in various categories such as folk dance, poetry, writing, painting, and music.

LG Sinha emphasised the importance of such festivals in nurturing

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Srinagar Police bust major drug racket: 8 Kg's heroin seized, 2 key traffickers arrested



SRINAGAR, Jan 8 (Agencies): In a significant crackdown on drug

trafficking, Srinagar Police successfully intercepted a major narcotics

consignment, arresting two drug peddlers and recovering 8 kilograms of heroin.

A police team of Police Post Qamarwari, during a routine checkpoint at Barthana Crossing, intercepted a vehicle (Tata Sumo, bearing registration No. JK05D-1837) with two individuals on board.

A thorough search of the vehicle led to the discovery of 6 kilograms of heroin concealed

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Railways unveils Vande Bharat, Specially designed for winters in J&K, for Katra-Srinagar Route

NEW DELHI, Jan 8 (Agencies): The Railway Board unveiled a Vande Bharat Express train, specially designed to operate seamlessly in Jammu & Kashmir's challenging winter conditions, for the upcoming Katra-Srinagar rail route.

The route is currently under inspection by the Commissioner of Railway Safety inspection, officials said.

Stationed at Shakurbasti coaching depot in New Delhi, the train has



special climate-related features, according to Railways.

Describing its features to mediapersons, Railway officials said that the train has several

additional features as compared to the other 136 Vande Bharat Express trains currently running in different parts of the country so that it can meet

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Aga Ruhullah's protest outside CM's residence a 'cheap publicity stunt': Sakina Itoo



SRINAGAR, Jan 8 (Agencies): Minister for Health & Medical Education, Social Welfare, and

Education, Sakina Itoo, criticized MP Srinagar and senior National Conference leader Aga

Ruhullah Mehdi over his participation in recent reservation protest outside chief minister Omar Abdullah's residence, calling it a "cheap publicity stunt".

Itoo, who is also a member of the cabinet sub-committee reviewing Jammu and Kashmir's Reservation Policy,

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Modified scheme to provide cashless treatment for road accident victims Nationwide: Gadkari



NEW DELHI, Jan 8 (Agencies): Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has announced the "Cashless Treatment" scheme, under which the government will cover expenses of up to Rs 1.5 lakh for seven days of treatment for road accident victims.

Gadkari stated that the government would bear the cost of treatment if the police are informed about the accident within 24 hours.

The Union Minister also announced an ex-gratia payment of Rs two lakh for the families of deceased victims in hit-and-run cases.

"We have started a

new scheme – Cashless Treatment. Immediately after an accident occurs, within 24 hours, when the information goes to the Police, we will provide expenses for seven-day treatment of the patient who gets admitted or a maximum of up to Rs 1.5 Lakhs for treatment. We will also provide Rs two lakh for the deceased in hit-and-run cases," said the Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways.

He also underlined that the government's top priority is road safety, citing the alarming statistic that nearly 1.80 lakh people lost their lives in road accidents in 2024. Of these, 30,000 fatalities were due to not wearing helmets, Gadkari added.

"In the meeting, the first priority is for road safety and in the year 2024, 1.80 lakh deaths

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Kashmir train service likely to be inaugurated on January 26: MP Mian Altaf

SRINAGAR, Jan 8 (Agencies): Senior National Conference leader and Member of Parliament Mian Altaf Ahmad expressed optimism on Wednesday about the much-awaited rail connectivity to Kashmir being inaugurated on January 26.

Speaking to news gathering agency KINS over the phone, Altaf said, "I believe the rail project will be thrown open on January 26. It will be a significant development for Jammu and Kashmir."

The railway project, once operational, is expected to enhance connectivity and provide a major boost to the region's economy by easing transportation for both residents and tourists.

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TENTH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief & sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved mother **Smt Usha Pandita** W/o Late Sh Ram Krishan Pandita originally resident of Habba Kadal Srinagar on 1-1-2025 presently residing at House No. 82, Lane No 1, Pitlam Nagar Paloura Dhok Jammu.

Tenth Day Kriya will be performed on 09-01-2025 (Thursday) at Akhnoor Ghat & Mourning Assembly will be held at Muthi Ghat near Directorate of School Education at 11.30 AM.

Grieving Loved Ones**Son & Daughter-in-law**

Rakesh Pandita & Rekha Pandita

Daughter & Son-in-law

Madhu Ganjoo & Rajinder Ganjoo

Grand Children: Aastha, Namita & Naman

Mob. 7889949658, 9596749279, 7006362475



Smt Usha Pandita

TENTH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh Sunny Choudhary** S/o Subash Chander R/o Purkhu Camp Domana Jammu.

TENTH DAY will be performed on 10 Jan 2025 Friday at our residence at Purkhoo Camp. 11.00 to 12.00 AM Satsang.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Sunita Devi & Subash Chander (Mother & Father)

Varsha Choudhary- Wife

Sarika- Daughter

Sisters & Brothers in law

Pooja & Vinod Kumar

Lakshmi Devi & Gurdas Singh

Arti Devi & Jaswant Singh

Satpaul Choudhary- **Mama**

Arun Choudhary- **Cousin**

Mob. 8082393343



Sh Sunny Choudhary

10TH DAY

With profound grief and sorrow we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved mother **Smt. Champa Rani** (W/o Lt. Shri Krishan Lal) Who left for heavenly abode on 31-12-2024, **Tenth Day** will be performed on Wednesday, 08-01-2025 at Ram Mandir, Sec-8, Nanak Nagar Jammu at 12:00 pm.

Rasam Pagri & Uthala will be performed on 11-01-2025, 4:00pm at Ram Mandir Sec- 8, Nanak Nagar Jammu

GRIEF STRICKEN**Son & Daughter-in-law**

Mr. Parvinder Kumar & Dr. Smriti Gupta

Mr. Rajinder P. Kumar & Mrs. Sonal Basotra

Mr. Ravinder Kumar & Mrs. Preeti

Daughter & Son-in-law

Mrs. Anita Kumari & Mr. Roop Lal

Grand Children - Arita, Atharav, Ayan, Pratham, Bimal, Tina, Divyansh, Himanshu

Mob:- 9419208769, 9419120517



Smt. Champa Rani

TENTH DAY

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

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,

Sarthak, Adhyan



Smt. Lalita Sharma

TENTH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow we inform the sad demise of our beloved mother **Smt Sona Davi Gurtoo** W/o Sh Jawahar Lal Gurtoo on 1-1-2025 originally from Chalpankocha, Zaina Kadal Srinagar presently at H No. 67 Colonels Colony Bohri Jammu.

10th Day Kriya will be performed on 10-1-2025 (Friday) at Akhnoor Ghat and Assembly will be held at our residence at 12.30 PM.

Grief Stricken**Sons & Daughters-in-law**

Raj Kumar & Kiran Jee Gurtoo

Ravi Jee and Purnima Gurtoo

Daughter & Son in law

Lovely and Ramesh Matas

SAMAST GURTOO, MAWA, MAKROO, MATOO, KAKROO, MATAS

LANGOO, BINDROO & RAYU PARIVAR



Smt Sona Davi Gurtoo

Tenth Day (Dashanak)

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved **Dr. Rajinder Parshad Chauhan** (Retd. Director Animal Husbandry) S/o Lt. Sh. Lehu Ram Chauhan R/o F-795, Lane No 20, Ward No 16, Prem Nagar, Tallimorh, Newplots, Jammu, originally resident of Gatha, Bhaderwah, who left for heavenly abode on 31/12/2024.

Tenth Day will be performed at Canal near Director School Education Office, Muthi on 09-01-2025 at 10 am.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Wife - Smt Madhu Kotwal

Daughter and Son-in-law

Dr Milan Chauhan and Sh. Rajeshwar Singh Charak (JKAS)

Son - Sh. Ian Dev Singh Chauhan

Sisters-in-Law and Brothers

Smt. Veena Chauhan, W/o Late Sh. Yog Raj Chauhan

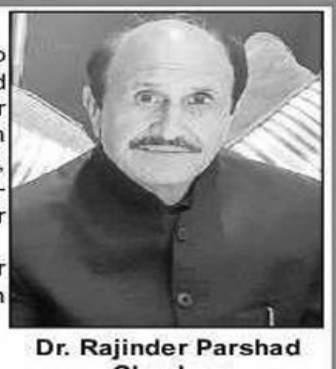
Smt Shakuntla Chauhan and Sh. Sham Parshad Chauhan.

Brother-in-Law and Sister-in-Law

Sh. Om Prakash Gowdan.

Sh. Suresh Kotwal and Smt. Chanda Rathore.

Contact: 9419182851, 7889303511, 9419272510



Dr. Rajinder Parshad Chauhan

TENTH DAY

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved Father **Sh. Pyaray Krishan** S/o Lt. Sh. Tara Chand R/o Chandrigam, Alimugam, Anantnag at present Vasuki Vihar, Near J&K Bank, Paloura, Jammu.

Tenth Day will be performed on Friday 10/1/2025 at Akhnoor Ghat and **Mourning Assembly** at our residence at 11.30 am.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Smt. Ratna Ji (Wife)

(Son & Daughter-in-law)

Sh. Sanjay Kumar Sidha and Smt. Baby

(Daughter & Son-in-law)

Smt. Sweetie Koul W/o Lt. Sh. Sunil Koul

Smt. Jolly Koul W/o Sh. Kuldeep Koul

Grand Children : Anu, Binny, Ritik, Madhu, Sonu, Sachin & Rohit

Mob.: 9797105749



Sh. Pyaray Krishan

TENTH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief and sorrow we inform that our beloved mother **Smt Kushilya Raina (Pyari)** W/o Late Sh. Amar Nath Raina of Nanil, Anantnag at present H.No 101, Phase -2nd Lower Muthi Akalpur Road, Near Vishwa Bharti School Jammu, who left for heavenly adobe on 1st of January 2025.

The **TENTH DAY KRIYA** will be held on 10th of January 2025. The **ASSEMBLY** will be held at Directorate Education Muthi at 12 Noon.

GRIEF STRICKEN:**SONS & DAUGHTERS IN LAW-**

Ranjini Raina w/o lt. Pradman Krishen Raina

Puma Raina & Kamal ji Raina

Reeta Raina & Bharat ji Raina

DAUGHTER & SON IN LAW-

Bimla Koul & Chand Krishan

GRAND CHILDREN-

Priya Raina W/o Nishant Tikku; Meenu W/o Rahul Raina;

Naveen, Neha, Arnay, Sudanshu, Sakshi, Aditya & Rudhur

GREAT GRAND CHILDREN: Tanishq & Ivana

Mob: 9419278635, 7006285236, 9906392641



Smt Kushilya Raina (Pyari)

KRIYA/UTHALA

With profound grief & sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved son **Shivam** S/o Romi Kumar Nijhon original resident of Pampash Colony Natipora Srinagar A/P H No. 563 Subash Nagar Jammu expired on 29/12/2024 Rehari Colony.

10th DAY will be held on 6/01/2025 Monday at opposite AG office Shakti Nagar Ghat at 9.00 AM.

KRIYA shall be performed on Thursday 9/01/2025 at our Residence at 12 PM.

Uthala shall be performed on Thursday on Jan 2025 at Hari Mandir, Rehari Colony Jammu.

Timing 3:00 to 4:00 PM.

Grief Stricken

Romi Kumar Nijhon (Father)

Smt. Sham Kumari (Mother)

Ankit Kumar (Brother)

Smt Vandana & Sh Sushil Nijhon (Chacha & Chachi)

Meenakshi & Amit Kumar (Chacha & Chachi)

SAMAST NIJHON PARIVAR

Mobile No. 9086001096, 9419195967, 9086411972



Shivam

TENTH DAY/KRIYA/UTHALA

With profound grief and sorrow, we regret to inform the sad and untimely demise of our beloved **Sh. Kapil Jamwal** S/o Sh. Inderpal Jamwal R/o Lane No. 7, H.No. 259, Talab Tillo, Jammu on 31.12.2024

TENTH DAY will be performed on 9th January, 2025 (Thursday) from 11:00 AM to 12:00 Noon at Mahajan Hall Lane No. 7, Talab Tillo Jammu.

KRIYA will be performed on 10th January, 2025 (Friday) at 1:00 PM at our residence.

UTHALA will be performed on 11th January, 2025 (Saturday) from 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM at Shiv Mandir Talab Tillo Chowk, Jammu.

GRIEF STRICKEN

Smt. Isha Sharma - **Wife** (7889673973, 8492984768)

Sh. Inderpal Jamwal - **Father**

Lt. Smt. Swarna Devi - **Mother**

Shivanaya Sharma - **Daughter**

Sh. Atul Jamwal - **Brother**



Sh. Kapil Jamwal

Rajinder Jamwal (Chacha)
Sanjay Jamwal (Chacha)

9797556923, 9419168429

TENTH DAY KRIYA

With profound grief & sorrow, we regret to inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Tej Krishan Zadoo (Bairaj)** S/o Late Sh Jia Lal Zadoo, originally resident of Nai Sarak, Gunde Ahlmaar, Srinagar at present H no 26, Lane No. 4, Sector B-2, Laxmipuram, Chinnore (Near Posh Babh Ashram) Jammu on 1st Jan 2025.

Tenth Day Kriya shall be performed on 9th January, 2025 (Thursday) at Akhnoor Ghat and Assembly shall be held at our residence at 10:30 AM.

GRIEF STRICKEN:-

Smt. Vijay (Nee Ganju) Zadoo - **Wife**

Son & Daughter-in-law

Sh. Chetan and Smt Rucheeta Zadoo

Brother: Sh. Ratan Lal and Smt. Kirti Zadoo

Sister: Smt. Usha Handoo (W/o Late P.N Handoo)

Sister: Smt. Lalita and Sh. Baiji Revoo

Sister: Smt. Meera and Sh. Maharaj Krishen

Brother-in-Law: Sh. Ramesh Ganjoo

Brother-in-Law: Sh. Satish and Smt. Sunita Ganjoo

And Samast Pariwar Zadoo's, Handoo's, Revoo's, Pandita's, Raina's, Ganjoo's.



SH. TEJ KRISHAN ZADOO (BAIRAJ)

10TH DAY/KRIYA/UTHALA

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Sh. Vinod Bakshi** S/o Late Sh. Sita Ram Bakshi of EP. 904 Jullaka Mohalla Jain Bazar Jammu, who left for heavenly abode on 31st of December 2024.

10TH DAY will be performed at our residence on Wednesday 8-1-2025 at 11:00 AM.

KRIYA will be held at our residence on Thursday 9-1-2025 at 12:00 PM.

GRIEFLY STRICKEN**Brother - Ashok Bakshi****Sons and Daughter-in-law**

Sh. Ajay Bakshi and Smt. Hirani Bakshi

Sh. Raizada Munish Vaid and Preetika Vaid

Daughters and Son-in-law

Dr. Mitu Kohli and Dr. Amrith Kohli

Miss Tanu Bakshi

Paras Bakshi

Grand Children:

Abiram, Aariv, Sarayra, Soumya



SH. VINOD BAKSHI

TENTH/KRIYA/RASAM PAGRI

With the profound grief & sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved **Smt. Sharda Devi Magotra** W/o Late Sh. Om Prakash Magotra (Sr. Teacher, Panhal Wale) R/o H. No. 5, Sec-18, East Extn. Trikuta Nagar.

TENTH DAY on Thursday 9th, January, 2025 at 11.30AM at our residence. **KRIYA** shall be performed on Friday 10th January, 2025 at 12.30 noon at our residence. **RASAM PAGRI** on Friday 10th January, 2025 at 4PM to 5PM at Pradim Kameshwar Mandir, Sec-1A, South Extn. Satyarn Rd. Trikuta Nagar, Jammu

GRIEF STRICKEN

Smt. S. Daughters-in-law

Am Kumar Magotra & Neeru Magotra

(Ex. Gen Mgr of IFCABotling Co. Ltd.) (9419142979)

Daughters-in-law & Son

Neha Magotra & Lt. Sh. Sarvesh Magotra (NRI)

Son-in-law & Daughter

Sh. Ashok Sharma & Late Smt. Suman Lata

Daughter & Son-in-law

Smt. Manu (Rink) & Bhurathushan Sharma

Devi & Devani

Sh. Kaval Krishan Magotra & Late Smt. Chanchi

Late D. Govind Ram Magotra & Late Smt. Suraj Kanta

Jetha, Jethani

Late Sh. Sura Parkash Magotra & Late Smt. Vijaya Devi

Sister & Brother-in-law

Smt. Suresh (Bhabhi) & Smt. Tikki Raj Magotra

Bhabhi & Brother

Smt. Kiran & Late Sh. Naresh Paul Khajuria

Bhabhi & Bhabhi

Sh. Ramesh Paul Khajuria & Madhu Bala



LATE SMT. SHARDA DEVI MAGOTRA

EXP. ON 31-12-2024

GRANDSON'S & GRAND DAUGHTERS

Ms. Shwari, Mr. Ayush, Ms. Shivakshi, Mr. Nimish,

Ms. Rishika & Mr. Anush, Mrs. Manisha & Mr. Vivan,

Mr. Shivam, Ms. Radika

Mob- 982077101, 9419218918, 9148089878

Director Agriculture Jammu inaugurates automated pulse jet bag filter at Seed Processing Plant

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 8: Director Agriculture Jammu, Arvinder Singh Reen, today inaugurated and commissioned the newly installed fully automated pulse jet bag filter with a filtration capacity of 64 bags, powered by a 15HP CG motor and blower at the Plant no. 2, Seed Processing Plant, Government Agriculture Engineering Workshop, Jammu.

The programme was attended by Agriculture Research Engineer Er. Vinay Kumar Bhardwaj, Er. Arshad Hussain AAE, Er. Rajeev Magotra SMS-II (Engg.), and the staff of the Agriculture Engineering Workshop.

Director Agriculture, S. Arvinder Singh Reen, highlighted the significant benefits of the pulse



jet bag filter in enhancing the air quality and operational efficiency of the seed processing plant. He also emphasized that this marks the first successful commissioning of such environmental control equipment in Jammu & Kashmir UT, which is fully controlled through an elec-

tronic panel. This system automatically opens rotary valves at regular intervals to collect dust particles and other particulate matter in the collection bag and release clean air into the atmosphere through an exhaust opening.

Agriculture Research Engi-

neer, Er. Vinay Kumar Bhardwaj explained that the pulse jet bag filter, which has a processing capacity of 5.0 TPH was specially designed and fabricated to meet the requirements of the Jammu seed processing plant and procured under the CAPEX Budget, following all necessary formalities.

The installation of this equipment is a crucial step in mitigating the environmental hazards caused by dust pollution in and around the Seed Processing Complex, Department of Agriculture, Jammu.

The advanced filtration system is expected to significantly reduce dust pollution, improve the working environment, and ensure compliance with environmental standards.

Balbir gets 'active membership' of BJP



Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 8: Jammu and Kashmir BJP spokesperson & former vice chairperson, Balbir Ram Rattan, got active membership of the party after fulfilling the laid down criteria in this regard.

He presented the copies of the fully filled official application form, along with the list of referred members and the receipt of the fixed contribution, to Sat Sharma, president, J&K BJP, in presence of Priya Sethi, Headquarter Incharge and Rakesh Mahajan, Returning Officer, BJP "Sangathan Parv". According to the eligibility criteria for

active membership, first of all, one has to get registered as a primary member, be an Indian citizen with minimum age of 18 years, and must believe in and adhere to the BJP's principles and policies. He or she must have registered at least fifty new primary members through own efforts, and having his or her track record of association with the party and worked actively in the past.

The district president of the respective district reviews the application and tracks the past contributions of the applicant and gives assent or rejects the request for active membership. The active membership is held after six years gap.

The BJP has a healthy tradition of holding organizational elections across the country after three years, at booth, Mandal, district and state levels. This exercise commences after completion of primary membership of the party. The party celebrates the entire exercise of its organizational elections as "Sangathan Parv".

SBI RSETI Ramban holds entrepreneurship awareness camp at Batote

Top News Report

RAMBAN, Jan 8: Rural Self Employment Training Institute (RSETI) Ramban of State Bank of India under the guidance of Deputy Commissioner Ramban, Baseer-UI-Haq Chaudhary organized an Entrepreneurship Awareness Program Camp at Thopal, Batote.

The camp, spearheaded by Director RSETI Harvinder Singh, witnessed the enthusiastic participation of 40 aspiring entrepreneurs from the region.

The event focused on fostering entrepreneurial skills and enhancing awareness about self-employment opportunities.

Participants were introduced to various government schemes such as PMEGP, Mudra Yojana, and JKREGP, which are designed to support individuals in starting and growing their businesses.

Speaking at the event, the Director RSETI emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship in ensuring economic development and creating sustainable livelihoods.

He encouraged participants to explore opportunities in sectors such



as agriculture, handicrafts, and small-scale industries, which hold immense potential in the region.

Participants also gained insights into the support and training, including financial literacy, business planning, and entrepreneurial competencies.

The session included interactive discussions, case studies, and testimonials from successful entrepreneurs trained by the institute.

The camp concluded with an open interaction session where participants raised queries about funding options, skill development programs, and market linkages.

The Director assured the attendees of continued support and encouraged them to enroll in upcoming training programs offered by the institute.

Dogri Sanstha Jammu releases Dogri Calendar for 2025

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 8: Dogri Sanstha, Jammu released Dogri calendar for 2025 in a simple but an impressive function organized at Dogri Bhawan, Karan Nagar, Jammu.

This year's calendar carries impressive pictures of eminent literary personalities of Dogri Language like Kunwar Vijoyi, Pt. Kedar Nath Shastri, Romal Singh Bhadwal, Jitender Sharma, Shiv Ram Deep and Santosh Khajuria.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Lalit Magotra President Dogri Sanstha said that Sanstha has been publishing Dogri calendar for the last four years now and it's the fifth time that New Year Calendar is published.

The motive behind same is not only paying rich tributes to our late litterateurs who have contributed a lot in enriching mother tongue



by making colossal contributions in different genres but also promote our mother tongue Dogri through this ancient old medium.

He further added that the special feature of Dogri Calendar is that it carries the exclusive information about festivals of Duggar Pradesh and helps us, the Dogras to remain connected to our traditions.

On this occasion, he thanked all those who have contributed wholeheartedly in getting the calendar published and hoped that the same warm response will remain a continuity in future also.

Rajeshwar Singh 'Raju', General Secretary Dogri Sanstha Jammu while sharing his views on publishing calendars as a continuous process said that such the creative efforts help in addressing core issues of promoting own mother tongue also.

He said that our elders, who have enriched our written literature should be remembered by all of us and the calendars act as significant platform in this case.

The young generation should know about them. He further added that for preserving and promotion of our mother tongue, we have to

make innovative efforts and publishing calendar is one of them.

He said that we all love our language which is evident in this case as Dogri Calendar is always published as a collective effort by all Dogri lovers.

He assured that Sanstha will go on working for

the mother tongue and regional traditions with the active participation of all of them, who love their belongings and are ready to innovate for the common cause of language and cultural heritage. The calendar is designed by well known theatre activist and dogri poet Pawan Verma.

All Office bearers, working committee members of Dogri Sanstha including Prof. Veena Gupta, Inderjeet Kesar, Susheel Begana, Abdul Quddir Kundria and a number of litterateurs, literature and Dogri lovers participated in the calendar release ceremony.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-Auction Notice
The Senior Divisional Commercial Manager/FS, Northern Railway, Firozpur for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Auction from eligible and registered bidders for the following works over Firozpur Division.

Catalogue No.	Auction Start	Name of Work
EAZR-SLR25-09	28/01/2025 at 11:00 Hrs.	Allotment of contract for leasing of parcel space in Train No./SLR compartment: 12474-F1, 14614-F1, 14601-R1, 12032-F1, 14606-F1, 14601-F1, 14601-F2, 14614-R1, 12588-F1 & 18102-F1.

For other details and registration, please visit Railway website www.ireps.gov.in

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 78/25

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir
Office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Mech. Division North Jammu
e-mail: xennorth@gmail.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
e-NIT No. 187 of 2024-25

For and on behalf of Commissioner, Municipal Corporation, Jammu, Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Mech. Division North Jammu, invites tenders by e-tendering mode from the reputed/registered firms/Sole Prop. for the below mentioned work:-

S. No.	Name of work	Estimated cost (in ₹)	Cost of document/tender fee (in ₹)	Earnest money (in ₹)	Validity of Rates	Bid validity
1.	Impregnation/ Providing and fitting of bearings to 500KW/670 HP HT Motors unit no. 01 & 02 and allied works installed at HT Pump house Sitlee under JMC Capex Budget.	10,00,000/-	500/-	30,000/- in the shape of CDR / FDR	180 days	180 days

Position of AAA: Accorded
Position of TS: Sanctioned

Date of Publishing : 04-01-2025 (02.00 pm).

- Bid documents can be seen at and downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 04-01-2025 (02.00 pm).
- The Bids shall be deposited in electronic format on the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 10-01-2025 (02.00 pm) to 17-01-2025 (02.00 pm).
- The complete bidding process will be online <http://jktenders.gov.in>. A pre-bid meeting shall be held in the office of Executive Engineer, Jal Shakti Mech. Division North Jammu on **07-01-2025 (02:00 pm)** for any clarification and other information required by the bidders who intend to participate in the tender.
- The Technical bids received shall be opened online on 18-01-2025 (02.00 pm) or any other subsequent date in the office of Executive Engineer Jal Shakti PHE Mech. Division North Jammu.
- The Financial bid of the bidders shall be opened online after scrutinizing the technical bid in the office of the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Mech. Division North Jammu in presence of the bidders who wish to attend. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.
- .

JSMJ/4232-34
Dated: 03-01-2024

DIP/J-8971/24

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EDITORIAL

TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY

Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) has witnessed significant strides in development across various sectors, aiming to uplift the region economically, socially, and infra-structurally. Following the reorganization of the state into two Union Territories in 2019, focused efforts have been made to integrate J&K into the national development narrative while addressing its unique challenges.

Massive investments in infrastructure have transformed the connectivity landscape in J&K. Key projects include the completion of the Chenab Railway Bridge, the world's highest rail bridge, and the ongoing work on the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link, which aims to connect Kashmir Valley to the national rail network. The government has also expedited the construction of high-ways and tunnels, such as the Zojila Tunnel, to ensure year-round connectivity between Ladakh and the rest of the country.

In the power sector, hydroelectric projects like Kiru, Pakal Dul, and Ratle are under development, leveraging the region's natural resources to address energy demands and promote self-reliance. Rural electrification under the Saubhagya Scheme has brought electricity to the remotest villages, improving the quality of life and economic productivity.

J&K has seen remarkable progress in healthcare, with the establishment of new medical colleges, AIIMS-like institutions, and upgraded district hospitals. The Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PM-JAY) has provided free healthcare coverage to lakhs of residents, reducing the financial burden on families. Mobile health units and telemedicine services have further expanded healthcare access in remote areas.

Education has been another focus area. The establishment of institutions like IIM Jammu, IIT Jammu, and NIT Srinagar, alongside the promotion of skill development programs, has enhanced opportunities for youth. Initiatives like the Super 50 Coaching Scheme for competitive exams and digital classrooms in government schools have ensured equitable access to quality education.

J&K's economy has been bolstered by government initiatives to attract investments and promote industrialization. The New Industrial Development Scheme (2021) offers incentives to industries setting up operations in the region, leading to significant investment commitments in sectors like IT, manufacturing, and tourism. The establishment of industrial estates and IT parks is creating job opportunities and fostering innovation.

Tourism, a cornerstone of J&K's economy, has received a boost with improved infrastructure, enhanced security, and targeted promotion. The introduction of night flights at Srinagar Airport, development of adventure tourism, and heritage site restoration have attracted domestic and international tourists, leading to record-breaking footfall.

Agriculture and horticulture, the backbone of J&K's economy, have seen modernization through schemes like PM-Kisan, Krishi Vikas Yojana, and the Mission for Integrated Development of Horticulture (MIDH). High-density apple orchards, saffron production under the National Saffron Mission, and cold storage facilities have increased productivity and reduced post-harvest losses. Additionally, GI tagging of products like Kashmiri saffron and Pashmina has enhanced marketability and earnings for farmers.

Urban development in J&K has accelerated with the implementation of the Smart Cities Mission in Jammu and Srinagar. Projects under this mission include intelligent traffic management systems, waste management, smart street lighting, and urban beautification. The focus on creating sustainable urban spaces has improved the quality of life in these cities.

The introduction of grassroots governance through Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) has empowered local bodies to take charge of development. PRIs now have a say in the planning and implementation of schemes, ensuring that benefits reach the last mile. The Back to Village (B2V) initiative has further strengthened the government-citizen interface, enabling residents to voice their needs and participate in developmental activities.

Social welfare programs like the Jal Jeevan Mission, which aims to provide piped water to every household, and the Ujjwala Yojana, offering free LPG connections, have improved living standards in rural areas. Women-centric initiatives like Mission Shakti and self-help groups under the National Rural Livelihoods Mission have empowered women economically and socially.

JRD - Modi Sarkar's New Year Bonanza to Jammu

By: Omkar Dattatray

They say first deserve ,then desire and it has universal application and this phrase aptly fits so for as the granting and creation of Railway Division Jammu is concerned .The creation of the Railway Division in Jammu was the long and genuine demand of the Jammuties and Modi government has now fulfilled this demand ,need and necessity of having a Railway Division in Jammu and there is a rationale behind having a Railway Division .Under the minister-ship of Ashwani Vaishnav the government of India through railway ministry has granted approval to Jammu railway division .It is in fact the new year gift/ bonanza and boon to Jammuties and it will lead to much needed job creation and it will cater to the needs and rush of the people and pilgrim tourists to Mata Vaishno Devi shrine as well as boost to economic ,social and cultural development of J &K and there is no exaggeration in this observation .It will also result in national and societal integration. .Jammu Railway station is one of the oldest railway stations of northern railway and now with the creation of Jammu railway division ,the people of Jammu and Kashmir are jubilant and they are welcoming this boon of Modi sarkar to Jammu and in the days to come it will prove its usefulness and utility to Jammu and Kashmir .The newly carved out Railway Division will include five sections – Bhogpur Sriwal-Pathankot ,Batala-Pathankot,Pathankot –Joginder – Martyr Capitan Tushar Mahajan Udhampur Railway Station and Srinagar –Baramulla.J&K gets ready for Railway Boost as PM Modi to inaugurate New Railway Division on January 6.This will end the dependence of Jammu and Kashmir ,Himachal Pradesh ,and Pathankot area of Punjab on the Firozpur division .As the direct train from Delhi to Kashmir becomes a reality ,the government of India is preparing to grant Jammu a new railway division when PM Narendra Modi virtually inaugurated the office of Divisional Railway Manager –DRM on January 6.In this connection a function was held outside the platform area of

Jammu railway station in which Minister of State MoS in prime minister's office-- PMO Dr Jitendra Singh ,Member Parliament Jammu Jugal Kishore Sharma ,and others attended the event .Around 4000 to 5000 people participated the path-breaking function .”All the decisions are taken at a divisional level regarding railways ,and earlier people of J &K ,HP,and Panthankot had to go to Firozpur for that purpose. But now all work of the division will be taken from here ,”said ADRM .Jammu will be the sixth railway division of the northern railways zone after Delhi ,Ambala ,Lucknow ,Moradabad ,and Firozpur. The Railway division works under railway zone ,and there are 19 zones across India .The divisions are the subcategories of Zones ,and each division is run by a Divisional Manager –DRM .The DRM is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the division band has to report to general manager of his zone. Now after the inauguration ,Jammu railway station will also get a new look ,and already work is underway to extend the platform capacities of Jammu Railway Station from three to seven .For under-going overhaul and extension ,Jammu railway station is being closed for seven days from 8th of January .”All the existing buildings will be dismantled and new infrastructure will come up here .”Rajiv Kumar Singh said .Railway minister Ashwani Vaishnu inaugurated Jammu railway division physically on 6th January 2025.Meanwhile ,northern railways have issued a train operation plan for the Kashmir valley for the winter periods in which they have included three new trains from Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra –SMVDK to Srinagar ,which will include a Vande Bharat train and two Mail Express trains that will be running daily .As per the chart issued by the northern railways ,the Vande Bharat train will be leaving from Katra at 8.10 am and will be reaching Srinagar at 11.20 am ,the Mail Express train will be leaving Katra at 9.50 am and will reach Srinagar at 1.10 pm ,and another Mail Express train will leave Katra at 3pm and will be reaching Srinagar at6.20 pm .The newly carved out Railway Division will includes five sections ,was inau-

gurated virtually by PM Modi on January 6,2025.Ahead of it ,railway authorities ran a special inspection train between Jammu and Srinagar on Sunday ,marking a historic milestone for Jammu and Kashmir .The section will span to a combined distance of 742.1kms .Presently ,Jammu falls under the Ferozpur division of Northern Railways zone .In 2014 ,the Railway Ministry had decided to establish three additional divisions. Along with Jammu ,the other two were Gulberga in Karnataka and Silchar in Assam. It however ,took railways authorities a good five years to form a committee to assess its feasibility and financial implications .Union Minister railways Ashwani Vaishnaw did inspection of the Udhampur-Srinagar-Baramulla Rail Link—USBRL section .”Special inspection train between Jammu and Kashmir was put out from Udhampur on January 5,”The Commissioner of Railway Safety –CRS also carried out the safety inspection of the Katra-Reasi section on January 7 and 8.The 272-kilometre long USBRL was sanctioned in 1994-1995 decades ago with an anticipated cost of Rs 37,012 crore. .However ,the region's uncertainty and topographical conditions hindered the expected progress of the project .The USBRL Project includes 38 tunnels with T-39 tunnel ,emerging as longest tunnel in India ,stretching 12.75 kms .Prithvi Raj Gupta ,former general secretary of CCI Jammu said that business community wholeheartedly welcomed the setting up of a Jammu railway division .”It had been a long –standing demand of Jammu .It will benefit the region, ”he said .Gupta ,however said that the government must develop the region in a way “that encourage tourists to stay longer in Jammu .The inauguration of the newly –created Jammu Railway division, meeting a long-pending demand ,comes ahead of the lunch of the much-awaited and publicized direct train service to Kashmir by or before January 26 this year.PM Modi virtually inaugurated the new Jammu Railway Division from the national capital.PM inaugurated Jammu Railway Division through video-conferencing besides laying the foundation of the Rayagada Rail-

way Division in Odisha and inaugurated Charlapalli New Terminal Station in Telangana by remote from New Delhi during same function at around 12.30 pm on 6th January .In Jammu the function was attended and graced by LG Manoj Sinha, CM Omar Abdullah and member parliament ,Jammu ,Jugal Kishore Sharma, MoS in PMO Dr Jitendra Singh ,besides the General Manager ,Northern Railways and other senior officers .Ahead of the virtual inauguration of the Jammu Railway Division by the PM ,the Union Minister Railways came to Srinagar by air .On January 5,2024 ,the minister for Railways inspected USBRL section and Srinagar Railway Station .On the same date a special inspection train ran from Srinagar to Jammu. Meanwhile CRS visited on January 7 and 8 ,2025 for safety inspection of the Katra –Reasi section of the USBRL ,Project. Jammu Railway Division ,with its headquarters at Jammu has been created by restructuring Firozpur Division .JCCI President Arun Gupta points out that Jammu Railway Division will not only streamline the running of trains but will also open new avenues of employment for the local youth. Jammu Railway Division is the 69th Division of the Indian Railways. The Jammu Railway Division will not only boost passenger movement but also will significantly enhance trade and logistics in the region .The creation of a Divisional Headquarters in Jammu will bring administrative efficiency and strategic oversight ,which is essential given the expanding scope of railway operations. In brief granting of Railway Division to Jammu is really a boon for Jammu and Kashmir as it will lead to socio-economic and cultural development in near future. So we should thank Modi government for this historic milestone which has been given to us as a new year bonanza.

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

Development Initiatives for Holistic Development of Students

By: Vijay Garg

The National Education Policy 2020 has kept the main goal of ensuring all-round development of students through a holistic and multidisciplinary education system. It is mentioned in paragraphs 11.1 and 11.3 of the education policy, ‘India has an ancient tradition of learning in a holistic and multi-disciplinary manner. The objective of a holistic and multi-disciplinary education is to develop all the capabilities of man - intellectual, aesthetic, social, physical, emotional. and develop moral values in an integrated manner Will have to do. Efforts are being made to make higher educational institutions helpful in the holistic development of students through various innovations. In this sequence, the University Grants Commission (UGC) has issued detailed guidelines to ensure care of the physical and mental health of the students. Their objective is to promote physical health and sports activities of students, address all issues related to mental health of students including various academic pressures, behavioral issues, stress, career related concerns, depression etc.It aims to solve problems, inculcate posi-

tive thoughts and feelings in students and promote a positive and supportive structure for students. For this, the Commission has suggested higher educational institutions to set up Student Service Center (SSC) in their campus. The work of these service centers will be to provide physical and mental support to the students as per their needs and solve their related problems. For this, student service centers should consult their physical-mental health experts, psychiatrists and relatedEquipment will have to be kept so that proper assistance can be provided to the students. Besides, these service centers will also maintain constant contact and cooperation with the health centers of the university. The guidelines also state that student service centers will organize dialogue sessions from time to time on topics like counselling, career guidance, physical-mental health. ‘Student Service Centre’ acts as a single system for matters related to physical-mental health and development of students in higher educational institutions. This will do. If we consider, with the changing times, the nature of challenges and difficulties faced by the students in the field of education is also changing. It is a big choice for the students to

move ahead keeping pace with today's fast-paced times. The entry of technology in life has definitely opened new doors of possibilities, but along with the winds of development, some strong gusts of new problems are also coming from those doors. For example, smartphones and the Internet have undoubtedly greatly expanded the scope of knowledge for students, but it is extremely limited.Dependency is also becoming a problem for the physical and mental health and development of students. Spending more time on devices like phones, tabs etc. is dulling the physical-mental activities of students. It has a negative impact on students’ energetic activity, concentration, ability to understand the subject, which hinders their educational progress. Students are not able to understand these things, but keep harming themselves due to this. Along with this, students also need to know and understand the physical and mental changes taking place within themselves with increasing age. Most of the time, lack of awareness is seen. They experience changes within themselves, new feelings arise in their mind, but they do not understand properly why this is happening and how to adapt themselves to it. As a

result, many students are not comfortable with these changes, which has an adverse effect on their physical and mental health. Now, how can educational development take place without good health? Such students also lag behind in the race of educational development and suffer from stress due to pressure from family and friends.Suffer from depression. The above guidelines have been brought by UGC with the aim of protecting students from such situations. After the establishment of ‘Student Service Center’ in colleges, students will be able to express their problems there and their problems can be resolved at the right time. The all-round development of students can be ensured only by keeping their physical and mental health good. It is satisfactory that the National Education Policy has understood this fact and now UGC is taking steps accordingly.

(Vijay Garg Retired Principal Educational Columnist Street Kaur Chand MHR Malout Punjab)

MLA Rajiv Jasrotia calls on Dr Jitendra

Demands upgrading PHC Dinga Amb to trauma hospital to save accidental victims

Top News Report

NEW DELHI, Jan 8: MLA Jasrota, Rajiv Jasrotia today called on Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office, Dr Jitendra Singh in New Delhi to and presented report card of various development issues in constituency and also projected demands to make Jasrota constituency a model constituency.

MLA Rajiv Jasrotia demanded upgrading PHC Dinga Amb to trauma hospital and expediting constructions of roads under PMGSY and water supply schemes under JJM.



MLA also projected various infrastructural projects widening of road from Barwal via Logate to Kumbri , Barnoti to Ghatti ,Rajbagh to Mahabala, Chandwan to Thakur Pura . He also demanded developing of play grounds in various Panchyats in Jasrota constituency and also PMGSY rods in Block Keeriyaa Gandyal, Kathua ,Barnoti and Dinga Amb Blocks. He also highlighted various flood related projects under FMBAP programme on the bank of River Ujjh Sahar Khad and Tarnach Nallah costing approximately 300crores.

Coming back to Primary Health Centre functioning at village Dinga Amb alongside Dhar road under the Jurisdiction of Chief Medical Officer Kathua in Jasrota Constituency, Jasrotia said this PHC caters to the need of a large population of surrounding area and the travelling population as well.

Dhar road is very busy road as the Trucks coming from Srinagar to other parts of the country prefer this road and there is every apprehension of road accident due to huge rush traffic on the said road. There is no facility to the accidental cases and the people loss their lives during accidents till they reach to GMC Kathua or Jammu.

MLA maintained that its upgradation to Trauma Hospital will significantly improve Health care services to the travelers/ general public of the area. He also demanded making provision of advanced life-saving equipment's along with sufficient manpower i.e doctors and paramedical staff to enhance emergency services for better patient care.

MLA Jasrota brought into the notice of PMO Kathua Railway Line Project, Alternate Track demanding detail survey of this new line. He said present Railway Station is located on the outskirts of Kathua city which is not a first choice for daily commuters and for the long-distance passengers. He said in this regard already comprehensive recommendation stand submitted to the Ministry of Railways for the construction of an alternate Railway station in the heart of Kathua city.

A pre-feasibility survey had already been submitted by technical wing of the Railways and declared the viability of the project with "okayed Report", added MLA Jasrotia.MLA further said that project is a 17.80 Km line in the Sujampur-Budhi Section of the Pathankot-Jammu Tawi line and comprises of a full railway Station in the Kathua city behind Ramleela Ground near Sadhu ki Boliyan and a flag station at Villager Sherpur.

MLA Kathua further stated that on the other hand, Kathua being located in close proximity to Punjab is being developed as an industrial hub with avenues of employment for the youth but it has not received the attention that it deserves even though the cities like Jalandhar which is hardly at two hours distance have developed as huge industrial centers. Improvement in rail connectivity will prove to be a boost for the people of the area both industrially as well as socially.

He appealed PMO to forward this project with his recommendations to the Ministry of Rail-

ways for the inclusion of same in the Budget.

MLA Jasrotia said, constituencies in Kathua District remained neglected by the previous governments, thus the development deficit are still seen in Kandi area.

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi took over in 2014, the priority has been to bring the left out areas into the development mainstream so as to end the development deficit syndrome in these areas.

He said though District Kathua has made significant progress in various sectors over the last ten years, and there are exciting plans in place to further enhance its development but there is further need to boosting infrastructure and connectivity within the district, with a focus on improving road networks and transportation facilities which will not only facilitate easier access for residents but also attract more tourists to explore the scenic beauty of this region.

MLA Jasrotia demanded promoting sustainable agriculture practices and enhance irrigation facilities to increase agricultural productivity by providing better resources, training and financial support to farmers so that they can adopt modern farming techniques and improve their livelihoods.

MLA Jarota demanded initiatives to promote entrepreneurship in the district to create job opportunities for local youth and contribute towards economic growth.

Additionally, he demanded efforts to attract investment in sectors like tourism, manufac-

turing, education, healthcare, etc., which will further boost employment prospects. He demanded special emphasis on skill development programs that align with market demands.

MLA Jasrota demanded steps to preserve its rich cultural heritage, restoring historical sites like Jasrota Fort as well as develop museums showcasing traditional art forms unique to the region. All these future plans aim at transforming District Kathua into a thriving hub of economic activity while preserving its natural beauty and cultural heritage.

He said District Kathua is a hidden gem in the beautiful state of Jammu & Kashmir. With its rich historical background, mesmerizing landscapes, and promising economic development, this district has a lot to offer to both residents and tourists. From majestic forts like Jasrota Fort and Chauran Palace to serene natural wonders like Basohli Wildlife Sanctuary and Ranjit Sagar Dam, Kathua is a treasure trove for history enthusiasts and nature lovers alike.

MLA Jarota called for maximising awareness at the local level about the salient features of the schemes, namely PM Surya Ghar Muft Bijili Yojana, PM Vishwakarma Yojana and Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, with focus on providing health coverage to all senior citizens aged 70 years and above.

MLA apprised PMO of the projects taken up by RDD, Jal Shakti, PWD, PMGSY, Irrigation & FC, Agriculture, Horticulture, Health, Education etc and expressed satisfaction with the pace of works.

MLA also highlighted issues such as the demand of speeding up JJM works in Dinga Amb blocks, Barnoti, Kathua and Keeriyaa Gandyal, augmentation of flood safety infra in Barnoti, coverage of un electrified villages besides prioritizing critical roads from each blocks while finalising PMGSY and NABARD plans. He also highlighted the issue of worn out PDD infra including electric poles, wires and transformers which needs to be replaced by utilizing RDSS funds.

POJK 1947 SIF demands constitution of POJK 1947 People and Advisory Board under SWD



Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 8: The All J&K POJK 1947 Sharnarhi Intellectual Forum held a press conference to demand the constitution of a POJK 1947 People and Advisory Board under the Social Welfare Department (SWD). The forum stressed the urgent need for concrete measures to address the grievances of the displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (POJK) who have faced neglect for over seven decades.

The forum highlighted that, for the past 76 years, the POJK 1947 Sharnarhi community has been peacefully advocating for their legitimate rights through hunger strikes, rallies, and other democratic measures. In 1947, over ten lakh people were displaced due to Pakistan's aggression in Jammu and Kashmir. The displacement led to the loss of over 40,000 lives and the abandonment of significant moveable and immovable properties in POJK. Despite these sacrifices, successive governments have failed to recognize or compensate these losses.

In stark contrast, the forum pointed out that families displaced from Kashmir due to militancy in 1989 received due claims and compensation, both in cash and kind. Meanwhile, POJK displaced persons have only received Rs 5.50 lakh per family as ex-gratia relief, which the forum described as discriminatory and inadequate.

The forum emphasized the need to establish a J&K Advisory Board for the development of POJK displaced persons, modeled after the Pahari Speaking Advisory Board constituted in 1989. Additionally, the forum called for granting Pahari Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to POJK displaced persons, recognizing their unique cultural and historical identity.

The forum demanded the sanction of the pending ex-gratia grant of Rs 24.50 lakh per family to address the financial hardships faced by the displaced community. They also called for the regularization of unrecognized Sharnarhi Basties in line with the commitments made by the Union Territory Government.

A key demand was the

provision of admissions for children from the POJK displaced community in All India Professional Colleges. The forum highlighted that similar opportunities are already extended to Kashmiri Pandit families and stressed the importance of educational empowerment for the younger generation of the POJK community.

In their concluding remarks, the forum urged both the Union Territory Government and the Central Government to address these long-standing issues promptly. They stressed that the constitution of an advisory board and recognition of their legitimate demands are essential for ensuring justice and equality for the POJK displaced community.

The press conference was attended by prominent members of the forum, including Advocate Amrik Singh (President), Surjit Singh (General Secretary), S. Kuldeep Singh (Vice President), and others such as S. Paramjit Singh (Ex-Corporator), Charanjit Singh (Ex-Director, Citizens Cooperative Bank), Nasib Singh (Ex-Chief Manager, J&K Bank), Prof. K.D. Singh, Jagdish Kumar (Retired Principal), and H.S. Sudan (Retired Group Captain, IAF), among others.

The forum reiterated their commitment to peaceful advocacy and called for urgent action to rectify decades of neglect and discrimination faced by the POJK displaced community

Sixth day of NSS National Integration Camp filled with cultural exchange

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 8: The 6th day of the NSS National Integration Camp was filled with enthusiasm, learning and cultural exchange.

Participants from various states joined to engage in diverse activities that fostered unity and camaraderie. The day started refreshingly with a nutritious breakfast, energizing participants for the exciting day ahead at the GCW, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu. As the sun arose so did the spirits of the campers, eager to partake in the planned activities.

To encourage teamwork and a sense of friendly competition at GCW, Parade Ground Jammu, the group engaged in a lively spoon-lemon race.

Participants showcased their agility and competitive spirit, running with lemons balanced on spoons while cheering each other on. The laughter and joy echoed throughout the venue, reinforcing the bonds of friendship and unity among diverse participants.

Following the spirited games, the camp transitioned into an enriching session of academic discussions.



Speaker Arunima Sinha, senior faculty of The Art of Living, visited GCW, Parade to conduct an interactive session on "Mind Management".

She focused that mind management refers to the process of effectively directing one's thoughts, emotions and actions to achieve personal and professional goals.

It involves developing awareness of one's mental habits and patterns enabling individuals to cultivate positive thinking and reduce stress by mastering the art of Mind Management.

The second session was led by Ankur Sharma, Coach, Martial Arts. He demonstrated self-defence techniques that empower individuals to protect themselves in potentially dangerous situations.

Self-defence through martial arts equips individuals with the tools

not just to defend themselves, but to cultivate a sense of security and empowerment in their daily lives.

Another session was held on youth parliament where participants from various contingents represented themselves as debaters, policymakers and opinion makers. This activity inspires the participants to express their views in an organized way.

The grand finale of the Day -6 was a vibrant cultural evening where participants showcased their talents.

Various performances, including Beauty pageant where participants of different contingents showcased their beauty and culture. The day was a vivid reminder of the power of Integration through shared experiences and learning. As we move into the last days of NSS National Integration Camp, the spirit of unity and togetherness continues to flourish.

JKRCEA demands restoration of reservation in promotions following CAT DB order

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 8: The Jammu and Kashmir Reserved Categories Empowerment Alliance (JKRCEA) held a press conference, calling for the immediate restoration of reservation in promotions for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes (SCSTOBCs). The organization urged the government to implement the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT) Division Bench's recent order and convene the subcommittee tasked with resolving issues related to reservation.

During the conference, JKRCEA leaders criticized the central and Jammu & Kashmir Union Territory (JKUT) governments for failing to address the longstanding demands of SCSTOBC communities. They accused political parties of exploiting reservation as an electoral promise but abandoning the issue post-election. Prof. G.L. Thapa, the working president of JKRCEA, lamented the inaction since the J&K High Court struck down provisions for reservation in promotions in December 2015.

Although the Supreme Court granted a "blanket stay" on the High Court's order, JKRCEA noted that successive governments ignored this directive, leaving SCSTOBC employees without proper representation in promotions. Prof. Thapa accused the BJP of undermining reservation policies further by withdrawing hundreds of posts, revising direct recruitment rosters, and eliminating SCSTOBC backlog posts with a single directive.

Sadiq Azad, a prominent JKRCEA member, highlighted the recent CAT Division Bench ruling in OA 169/2023, dated December 17, 2024. The ruling directed the promotion of petitioners under the SC category roster point and invalidated Circular No. 10-JK(GAD) of 2021. Azad accused the J&K bureaucracy of misguiding political leaders and delaying the implementation of pro-reservation policies, even after the extension of the 77th Constitutional Amendment to J&K and the abrogation of Article 370.

JKRCEA presented the demands during the press conference including immediate implementation of the CAT



Division Bench order, submission of an urgency memo to the Supreme Court, and swift resolution of the case in favor of SCSTOBC employees, reverting to the original roster sequence (3, 15, 27, 39, 51) instead of the revised one (2, 22, 32, 42, 52) and implementation of the Mandal Commission Report: Full application of the report's recommendations and initiation of a caste-based census in JKUT.

The forum demanded clarity from the Jammu & Kashmir National Conference (JKNC) leadership regarding their stance on reservation policies. They also warned BJP SCSTOBC Morcha leaders to stop

misleading their communities for personal political gains.

The press conference was attended by prominent JKRCEA members, including Sham Basson, Er. R.C. Bhasin, Er. Joginder Pal, T.C. Bavouria, G.L. Rahi, and others. The leaders emphasized the need for urgent action to safeguard reservation rights in employment and education, calling on the government to honor its constitutional commitments to SCSTOBC communities.

JKRCEA concluded by warning that continued neglect of their demands could lead to intensified protests, as they remain steadfast in their pursuit of justice and equality.

At a young age, Preeti Panigrahi, of Girls Will Be Girls fame, has made a mark

At 22, she plays sweet sixteen in the much-acclaimed film Girls Will Be Girls. In real life, Preeti Panigrahi is wiser beyond her years. Though she might proclaim success is a difficult teacher, she has not allowed recognition to go to her head so far. Picking up the Special Jury Award for Acting at the Sundance Film Festival with her debut performance and being hailed as the find of the year are no mean accomplishments. Yet, more than being overwhelmed by laurels, what truly gladdens her heart is being a part of such a beautiful film has put her on the right course for the future.

Like her reel character, Mira, she has been good at academics, was the 'teachers' pet' kind of student, yet she always wanted to be an actor. "Acting is a wonderful vocation as you get to experience all kinds of emotions," she says. Interestingly, when she was preparing for her character in Girls Will Be Girls, her director Shuchi Talati told her to 'let go of the emotions and focus on the thought, the intention behind the act.' Not an easy task for sure! But she soon understood the rhythm of what the director desired and this internalised process



of acting is what lent subtlety to the film. Also, she faced no awkwardness while doing intimate scenes in the coming-of-age film.

One reason of course was the mostly all-woman crew. She gives a whole lot of credit to her male co-actor Kesav Binoy Kiron, who too made his debut with the film. She says, "There is a lot of choreography in intimate scenes. None of those scenes are meant to titillate audiences."

Wise beyond years

Indeed, when those audiences are your family and friends there could be some degree of self-consciousness. But, once

again, the wise young girl surfaces, "You have to give them the space to process it all." Only she was mighty pleased with her cousin's reaction— 'The moment I was able to detach myself from the fact that you are my sister, I was able to relate to your character.'

Now that the film, streaming on Amazon Prime Video, has resonated with audiences not only in India but also the world over, she observes, "It's the universality of the subject that has worked." She smiles, yes the same winsome smile of Mira of the film, and beams, "Teenage confusion is a universal subject.

So is hating people who are your well-wishers; more often than not, your parents."

Mom is the word

Though her mother is nowhere like her competitive screen mom, Anila, she admits to having issues with her during those rebellious teen years. She is not only all praise for her mother, 'the most evolved being in the family', but also her screen mom Kani Kusruti. She says, "Despite a stellar filmography, she comes with no baggage of success, treats you like an equal and is great fun on the sets."

While growing up watching Bollywood films, Preeti did have role models in actresses like Shabana Azmi. Today, she can't believe her luck as at the screening of her movie in India, she saw a galaxy of her favourite actresses, including Divya Dutta, Konkana Sen and Tanishtha Chatterjee. She says, "When I was watching Hindi films, most heroes were men and now this year when I am a part of this world, there are so many female heroes." An actress to watch out for, she knows how each role demands a different skill set. And she is ready to prepare!

Wamiqa Gabbi joins spy thriller G2



Actress Wamiqa Gabbi, who was recently seen alongside Varun Dhawan in Baby John, has joined the cast of the upcoming spy thriller G2 directed by debutant Vinay Kumar Sirigineedi. G2 is a sequel to the 2018 hit spy thriller Goo-

dachari, written by and starring Adivi. Wamiqa stars opposite Adivi in this next installment of the franchise, continuing the story of his character from Goodachari. Wamiqa is known for her roles in Prime Video series Jubilee,

Netflix film Khufiya and SonyLIV series Charlie Chopra & The Mystery of Solang Valley, all of which were released in 2023. The actress said that she was beyond excited to be part of the incredible journey of G2. "The first film set a remarkable benchmark, and stepping into this world is both thrilling and challenging. Working with such a talented cast and crew inspires me to push boundaries and bring fresh energy to my character. I can't wait for the audience to experience what we're crafting — it's going to be extraordinary." She just completed the European shooting schedule for G2 with Sesh. Emraan Hashmi, another significant addition to the cast, is expected to play a key role in the film. The ensemble also features Murali Sharma, Supriya Yarlagadda and Madhu Shalini. Adivi Sesh, known for films like Evaru and Major, has co-written G2, ensuring continuity with the franchise's tone and storyline.

Priyanka Gandhi was 'gracious' when extended invite to watch 'Emergency', says Kangana Ranaut

Actor Kangana Ranaut, who is gearing up for her upcoming movie 'Emergency', has shared that she extended an invitation to watch the film to politician Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

The film is based on the 21-month period from 1975 to 1977 when former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency across the country by citing internal and external threats to the country.

The actress, who portrays the role of Indira Gandhi in the film, spoke with IANS in the run up to the film's release on January 17.

She said, "I actually met Priyanka Gandhi in the parliament, and the first thing I told her was, 'You should watch the emergency'. She was very gracious. She said, 'Yeah, may be'. So let's see if they would want to watch the film. I think it's a very sensitive and sensible portrayal of one episode and personality, and I have taken great care to portray Mrs Gandhi with great dignity because I see, when I started to do a lot of research, there was so much focus and material about her personal life, whether it was her relationship with her husband or friends or controversial



equations."

Kangana added, "I thought to myself that there is so much more to every person. When it comes to women, especially, they're always reduced to their equation with men around them, and of course, sensational encounters. In fact, most of the controversial material was about all that, but I have portrayed her with so much dignity and sensibility. I think that everybody should see this film."

She said that Indira Gandhi was a very loved leader.

"Apart from some very crazy things that happened during the emergency, I think she was very loved and celebrated. Being a three-time Prime Minister is not a joke," Kangana said.

Sonu Sood feted with 390-foot cutout by 500 Sholapur students

Ahead of the release of his upcoming film "Fateh", 500 students from Sholapur paid a heartfelt tribute to Sonu Sood with an incredible 390-foot cutout poster of the Bollywood actor and humanitarian.

A record-breaking 390-foot cutout was created with custom Fateh-themed t-shirts, statues, and even decorated autos with the film's branding. The 390-foot cutout stands not only as a tribute to Sonu but also as a testament to the film's impact, even before its release.

"Fateh", directed and written by Sonu, is a high-octane action thriller set against the backdrop of cybercrime. The film promises to keep audiences on the edge of their seats with its gripping storyline.

A few days ago, Sonu visited the Samadhi of



Shri Sai Baba and he stated that he sought divine blessings for the success of his upcoming film.

In an interview with IANS, the actor shared how playing the role of an ordinary man with hidden strength and determination provided him with a fresh outlook on personal growth and self-confidence.

Sonu shared, "I think Fateh was my dream role, one that I always wanted to play: a common man who has a superhero inside him. I believe every individual, every common man, has a superhero within them."

"You just need to discover that. I'm glad that with Fateh, I was able to discover that side of myself. And I hope that when people watch it, they not only get entertained by the script but

also get inspired."

Asked what Fateh means to him, he said, "I think when you can be someone's hope, it's not about how rich, famous, or influential you are."

"We are all those things, but sometimes, when someone becomes a hope, a person leaves their native village in Punjab or Uttar Pradesh with the belief that when they reach out to an individual, their life will change. I think that is true Fateh—when you can change someone's life, that's what real Fateh is."

Produced by Umesh KR Bansal under Zee Studios and Sonali Sood of Shakti Sagar Productions, with Ajay Dharma as co-producer, Fateh, which also stars Jacqueline Fernandez, Naseeruddin Shah, and Vijay Raaz, is slated to release on January 10.

Raj Kundra on headlining three Punjabi films: Wanted to do something entertaining for my community

Businessman Raj Kundra, who made his acting debut with 'Undertrial' (UT69), has reportedly signed a three film deal with DB Digitainment and will be seen headlining Punjabi films.

He said that he wanted to do something truly entertaining for his Punjabi community.

The films, headlined by Raj Kundra, will have family genres, ranging from intense drama, action to light-hearted comedy.

On reaching out to Raj Kundra about the films, he said: "Yes, something exciting is brewing. I wanted to do something truly entertaining for my Punjabi community. I can't reveal much just yet, but I promise it's going to be worth the wait."

The details of Raj Kundra's films are still under wraps. News is the first

of the three projects will be announced on the auspicious occasion of Lohri on January 13.

Last month, Raj and his actress wife Shilpa Shetty celebrated Christmas with Punjabi spirit.

He shared a fun moment of himself performing Bhangra in the chilly temperatures, showcasing his vibrant spirit and love for tradition.

Raj took to his Instagram handle and posted a video featuring him, his wife Shilpa and their kids.

In the clip, the family was seen enjoying the Christmas festive time with Santa Claus.

Sharing this fun-filled video, the businessman wrote in the caption, "Born into a Punjabi family, Christmas has always been a beautiful blend of traditions—laughter, love,



and togetherness at its core. This year was no different, from Bhangra in -13°C to meeting Santa with the family. You can take us out from Punjab, but you'll never take the Punjabi out of us haha Merry Christmas ji #GratefulHeart

#PunjabiSoul #Family-First #ChristmasVibes."

Raj and Shilpa have been married since 2009. The couple welcomed their son Viaan in 2012. The two then had a daughter named Samiksha through surrogacy in 2020.

Preity Zinta: If it doesn't challenge you, it doesn't change you

Actress Preity Zinta has redefined fitness goals as she shared a video of her working out and said that one has to make themselves better, stronger and healthier.

Preity took to Instagram, where she shared a video of herself exercising in the gym. In the clip, the actress is seen doing incline crunch sit ups. She used the song "The Business" by Dutch DJ and record producer Tiesto.

The actress also shared a motivating line about not giving up and being consistent.

"It doesn't matter if you are on holiday or at work, you have to make yourself better, stronger and healthier cuz if it doesn't challenge you it doesn't change you So don't give up, be consistent & push yourself."

"There is no better love than self love. A very Happy & Healthy 2025 to all of you," she wrote as the caption.

Preity shared some



glimpses of her luxurious vacation in Uruguay with husband Gene Goodenough. She posted an array

of pictures and videos. The first had the couple posing at the beach. A clip had Preity show the picturesque locales of

Punta del Este, where the couple are vacationing.

She then shared some glimpses of flowers, some antiques in the hotel, and a video of the actress flaunting her hair and food. The last was a picture of the duo sitting in a restaurant while the actress took a selfie.

For the caption, the actress dropped some heart and evil eye emojis. She added Nick Jonas' song "This is Heaven" as the background score.

It was in 2016, when Preity got married to Gene. The two then welcomed twins, a boy named Jai and a girl named Gia via surrogacy in 2021.

On the professional front, Preity is gearing up to make her comeback to the Hindi film industry with Rajkumar Santoshi's upcoming directorial "Lahore 1947," where she will star alongside star Sunny Deol.

PM Modi’s attitude has transformed India: Jaishankar to Indian diaspora at Pravasi Bharatiya Divas

Says India has changed its attitude from ‘chalta hai’ (it’s okay) to ‘badal sakta hai’ (can transform), ‘hoga kaisee nahin’ (why cannot it happen)

NEW DELHI, Jan 8 (Agencies): External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Wednesday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s attitude has transformed India.

While addressing the Indian diaspora during an opening ceremony of Youth Pravasi Bharatiya Divas in Odisha’s Bhubaneswar, he said India has changed its attitude from ‘chalta hai’ (it’s okay) to ‘badal sakta hai’ (can transform) and ‘hoga kaisee nahin’ (why cannot it happen).

Jaishankar said while development in itself is a very complex task, it becomes much easier “when we are confident that nothing is beyond us.”



“I still recall sometime ago an observation by a famous Indian badminton player PV Sindhu on why PM Modi is a youth icon. She summed it up as his attitude which moved the nation from ‘chalta hai’ to ‘badal sakta hai’ to ‘hoga kaisee nahin’,” he said. Jaishankar added India showed its “resilience” during the Covid-19 pandemic period when predictions were made that it would go down. “The very country that was

predicted to go under ended up supplying vaccines and medicines to the entire world,” he said.

Jaishankar also highlighted India’s growing prowess in the space sector and digital technology.

He further highlighted the governments several public welfare schemes, including ‘Beti Bachao’ and ‘Swachh Bharat’.

Jaishankar also said efforts have been made to enable youth to achieve their full potential for the country’s development.

On the occasion, he urged the Indian diaspora to promote India as a tourist destination in their foreign lands.

Every citizen of this country akin to a soldier: IAF Chief



NEW DELHI, Jan 8 (Agencies): IAF Chief Air Marshal A P Singh on Wednesday said that every citizen of India is akin to a soldier and that while serving the country in uniform has a different charm, one can also serve the nation even without donning military colours.

In his address at the ongoing Republic Day National Cadet Corps (NCC) Camp at Delhi Cantonment, he underlined the ethos of the NCC, noting that this is the place where people from different backgrounds “become one,” embodying the essence of India.

He said that the young minds of India, trained at the NCC and the Republic Day camp, are being prepared for nation-building, as they are the future of India who will later take up various professions.

“I have heard many cadets express a desire to join the armed forces — the Army, Navy, and Air Force. It’s wonderful that you want to, as serving the nation in uniform has a distinct

good citizen by displaying discipline akin to a soldier, in public or private life.

For instance, he encouraged respecting traffic laws, whether or not a police officer is present to enforce them, or whether a penalty is in place.

Earlier on his arrival, the air chief marshal was welcomed by NCC cadets and a school band treated him to a performance.

He later reviewed the guard of honor presented by the cadets and attended a colourful cultural program at the venue.

“The cultural program was full of energy and enthusiasm,” the IAF chief remarked. “I think this is where we bring the entire nation together. People from various cultures, traditions, and religions come together here, and that is what defines India.” The values of leadership, self-discipline, unity, and patriotism you will learn here will hold you in good stead, whichever career you choose, the air chief marshal told the cadets.

A total of 2,361 NCC cadets from across the country are participating in the month-long Republic Day camp, which began on December 30 and will culminate with the Prime Minister’s Rally on January 27.

The annual event also includes 917 girl cadets, the largest contingent so far.

Lower GDP forecast: Mayawati urges Centre to focus on public welfare, shun ‘narrow politics’

NEW DELHI, Jan 8 (Agencies): Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Wednesday urged the Centre to prioritise national and public welfare over “narrow politics”, after the government revised downwards the GDP growth estimate for the current fiscal.

Her remarks came at a time when the Indian rupee has hit a record low of 85.83 against the US dollar, and the GDP growth rate is forecast to drop to 6.4 per cent for 2024-25, the lowest in four years.

“The GDP growth rate is expected to fall to 6.4

per cent. Most newspapers highlighted this as their top news today. The ones who are truly saddened by this are the country’s poor and hardworking population, who, despite their tough lives, are not ready to hear any harm coming to their nation,” Mayawati said in a post on X.

“The poor may not have a direct connection with the falling value of rupee in the global market, yet they are unhappy about it. The government must respect their emotions, and, setting aside its 24-hour narrow politics, focus on public and

national welfare to fulfil their hopes for ‘Achhe Din’,” the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister added.

On Wednesday morning, rupee depreciated to a record low of 85.83 against the US dollar. On Tuesday, the government estimated the country’s GDP growth rate for 2024-25 at 6.4 per cent, marking a four-year low, primarily attributed to underperformance in the manufacturing and services sectors.

It is the slowest growth since the Covid pandemic year of 2020-21,



when GDP recorded a negative growth of 5.8 per cent, significantly lower than the 8.2 per cent achieved in FY 2023-24.

Mayawati’s Bahujan Samaj Party, which suffered setbacks in Lok Sabha and state elections in Uttar Pradesh of late, is not aligned with either the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, or its rival INDIA bloc.

Ganga dredging in Prayagraj ‘environmental crime’, says SP chief Akhilesh

LUCKNOW, Jan 8 (Agencies): Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Wednesday termed the Ganga’s dredging in Prayagraj an “environmental crime” to grant contracts to a select group of people to earn money through corruption.

The Kannauj MP shared on X a news clip of dredging in the Ganga for the Maha Kumbh.

“History has been a witness that rivers create their own paths. This natural flow is a self-made path for the continuity of rivers. Accepting this geographical truth, tampering with the flow of rivers is an environmental crime,” he said in the



post accompanying the clip.

“The purpose of installing dredgers in the Ganga during the Prayagraj Maha Kumbh is only to give contracts to their own people and earn money from them through corruption,” he added, without taking any names.

Where the rivers will meet should be left to nature, doing arbitrary

things and forcibly changing the flow is both inappropriate and undesirable, he also said.

“Doing so will have a bad effect on the biology of the aquatic life and natural ecological balance of the Ganga,” he added.

The Maha Kumbh will begin on January 13 and conclude on February 26.

Divers recover body from inundated coal mine in Assam, 8 still trapped

GUWAHATI, Jan 8 (Agencies): The body of one of the nine workers trapped inside a coal mine in Assam’s Dima Hasao district was recovered by Army divers on Wednesday on the third day of the rescue operations, officials said.

The chances of the survival of the eight others appear grim, though a team of Navy, Army, NDRF and SDRF personnel intensified their efforts to rescue the trapped miners, they said.

The labourers were on Monday trapped inside the Assam Coal Quarry situated in the 3 Kilo area of Umrangso, after a sudden gush of water flooded the site.

The rescue teams are taking turns to enter the mine, as the operations are underway round-the-clock, the officials said.

The divers located the body of the worker inside the mine early in the morning and its identity was yet to be ascertained, they said.

A diver claimed that the body



was spotted about 85 feet below the surface, and that the visibility was poor inside with water all around.

“21 Para divers have just recovered a lifeless body from the bottom of the well. Our thoughts and prayers are with the grieving family,” Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma

Sarma said the rescue operations were continuing in full swing, with divers of the army and NDRF having already entered the well.

The navy personnel are at the site, making final preparations to dive in after them, he said.

The CM had on Tuesday said the mine “appears to be illegal”, and that the police have arrested one person in connection with the incident.

Sarma also said he had spoken to Coal Minister G Kishan Reddy, who assured him that a team from Coal India will join the rescue operations from Wednesday.

Eyewitness accounts and initial assessments suggest the flooding occurred all of a sudden, probably due to the opening up of an underground water channel.

According to employees of the quarry, there were around 15 workers inside the mine, though the authorities did not confirm the number.

Karnataka records biggest Naxal surrender as six wanted militants lay down arms

BENGALURU, Jan 8 (Agencies): Karnataka recorded the largest Naxal surrender in its history on Wednesday, as six of the most-wanted Naxals, including individuals from Kerala and Tamil Nadu, laid down arms in front of the Chikmagalur district administration.

Among the six individuals surrendering, four hail from Karnataka; Mundagaaru Latha, Sundari, Jayanna, and Vanajakshi. The other two, Jisha from Kerala and K Vasanth alias Ramesh from Tamil Nadu, have also been on the run for years. Together, they face a staggering number of criminal cases, including 85 against Latha, 71 against Sundari, and 50 against Jayanna.

Latha, known as one of the most prominent figures in the Naxal movement, has cases registered against her in multiple states. Sun-



dari and Jayanna, too, are accused of numerous cases tied to Naxal activities. Vasanth, the lone surrender from Tamil Nadu, faces eight cases, while Jisha from Kerala has 17. All six also face charges under the National Investigation Agency (NIA), which will interrogate them following the surrender.

The surrender took place under Chikka-

magalur SP Vikram Amte, with oversight by Western Zone IGP Amit Singh. A special investigation team led by Koppal DYSP Balaji Singh coordinated the process, highlighting the state’s proactive measures in encouraging Naxals to return to the mainstream.

These individuals will be presented before a special court in Bengaluru this evening, where their cases will undergo judicial scrutiny. The Chikmagalur police department and the district administration have worked tirelessly to ensure the surrender is a stepping stone toward peace in the region.

Chikmagalur has historically been a focal point for Naxal surrenders. In previous years, most-wanted Naxals such as Hagalaghanji Venkatesh, Mallika, and Sirimane Nagaraj had also given up arms in this district.

Three school children killed after potato-laden truck overturns on auto carrying students



RANCHI, Jan 8 (Agencies): At least three children were killed after a potato-laden truck overturned onto an auto carrying school students in Jharkhand’s Ramgarh. Several others were

also seriously injured in the incident.

The incident took place early Wednesday morning at Gola in Ramgarh.

According to initial reports, the auto driver was also killed in the accident. All the children were aged between 6 and 8 years, studying at Goodwill Mission School.

Notably, due to the effect of cold winds blowing continuously from the north-western direction of the country towards Jharkhand, the state government had declared a holiday for students from Nursery to Standard 8 until January 13.

Despite this, classes were being conducted in the school.

‘All hell will break out’: Trump’s deadline for Hamas to release hostages

Says it will not be good for Hamas and there should have never been the October 7 attack on Israel

FLORIDA, Jan 8 (Agencies): US President-elect Donald Trump warned that “all hell will break out in the Middle East” if hostages held by Hamas in Gaza are not released before his inauguration on January 20, agency reported.

While addressing a press conference at his Mar-a-Lago estate in Florida, Trump said, “It will not be good for Hamas and it will not be good, frankly, for anyone. All hell will break out. I don’t have to say anymore, but that’s what it is,” adding that “there should have never been” the October 7, 2023, attack by Hamas on Israel.

Steve Witkoff, who has been chosen by Trump to serve as the special envoy to the Middle East, expressed an optimistic view about the state of negotiations to reach a ceasefire between Israel and Hamas that would secure the release of the hostages, saying negotiators are “making a lot of progress,” agency reported.

He further said, “It’s the president, his reputation, the things that he has said that are driving this negotiation, and so hopefully it’ll all work out and we’ll save some lives.” Earlier, it was reported that Biden administration officials were taking the lead in the talks, while their incoming Trump counterparts were being updated regarding the developments.

A senior Biden administration office offered a much more cautious tone after Trump and Witkoff’s statement. Speaking to agency, the official stated that the negotiations remain difficult. The official, who refused to speak about the status of



the negotiations, insisted that despite Witkoff appearing to suggest that the deal was possible before January 20, the talks are challenging.

According to the official, the Biden administration has been working in “close coordination” with the incoming Trump national security team. The Biden administration has been trying to help broker a ceasefire in Gaza for over a year. However, they have not been successful in their efforts. Notably, dozens of hostages were released in the first ceasefire, which was agreed weeks after the October 7 attack. However, efforts to halt the fighting and secure the release of more hostages have failed.

During the press conference, Trump also refused to rule out the use of military force to take control of the Panama Canal and Greenland, and “economic force” to acquire Canada, agency reported.

When asked whether he would rule out using “military or economic coercion” to achieve his goal of gaining those territories, he responded, “No, I can’t assure you on either of those two, but I can say this, we need

them for economic security.”

Trump said Denmark should give up its control of Greenland or it would face high tariffs. He suggested people of Greenland could vote for independence or to become part of the United States. He said, “I’m talking about protecting the free world.”

Since his election, Trump has repeatedly expressed his interest in gaining control of the Panama Canal and Greenland. Trump said later that he would only use “economic force” and not military force against Canada.

When asked whether he would also use the military to acquire Canada, Trump responded, “No, economic force.” He continued, “You get rid of that artificially drawn line and you take a look at what that looks like – and it would also be much better for national security.”

In recent weeks, Trump in his social media posts has said that Canada should become the 51st state of the US. He even used Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s announcement of his plan to step down as PM and Liberal Party leader to reiterate his stance that Canada becomes the 51st state of the

US.

Trump criticised former US President Jimmy Carter’s decision to hand control of the Panama Canal back to Panama during his presidency, CNN reported. Carter, who passed away at the age of 100 on December 29, negotiated treaties that provided for the handover of the Panama Canal to Panama.

He said, “The Panama Canal is a disgrace.” Trump said, “What took place at the Panama Canal, Jimmy Carter gave it to them for USD 1 and they were supposed to treat us well.”

The US President-elect said that he would be renaming the Gulf of Mexico as the Gulf of America. He said, “We’re going to be changing the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America, which has a beautiful ring. That covers a lot of territory, the Gulf of America – what a beautiful name. And it’s appropriate.”

He slammed the Biden administration’s handling of the transition ahead of his inauguration ceremony on January 20. Trump said the Biden administration is “trying everything they can to make it more difficult” and wants to “block the reforms of the American people and that they voted for.”

Trump’s remarks come a day after US Congress certified his election victory with no objections from any lawmakers as the tally of states was announced on the House floor. Donald Trump won 312 electoral votes while Harris got 226 votes, a total that was confirmed during the certification on Monday, marking the final step in the election process before Trump returns back to the White House on January 20.

Rescue efforts under way after earthquake in Tibet kills more than 120



BEIJING, Jan 8 (Agencies): More than 400 people trapped by a strong earthquake in the foothills of the Himalayas have been rescued, Chinese officials said, while over 30,000 residents have been relocated, as the search for survivors entered a second day on Wednesday.

The epicentre of Tuesday’s magnitude 6.8 quake, one of the region’s most powerful tremors in recent years, was located in Tingri in China’s Tibet region, about 80 km (50 miles) north of Mount Everest, the world’s highest mountain. It also shook buildings in neighbouring Nepal, Bhutan and India.

Twenty-four hours after the temblor struck, survivors trapped under rubble will have endured a night in sub-zero temperatures and be at risk of succumbing to hypothermia and dehydration.

An initial survey showed 3,609 homes had been destroyed in the Shigatse region of Tibet, which is home

to 800,000 people, Chinese state media reported late on Tuesday, citing local officials. More than 500 people and 106 ambulances had been dispatched to help the injured.

At least 126 people were known to have been killed and 188 injured on the Tibetan side, China’s state broadcaster CCTV reported. No deaths have been reported in Nepal or elsewhere.

Temperatures in the high-altitude region dropped to as low as minus 18 degrees Celsius (0 degrees Fahrenheit) overnight, adding to the misery of those left homeless.

Tents, food rations, electrical generators and other supplies had reached the site by late on Tuesday, and all sections of road damaged by the temblor had been reopened, CCTV added.

Southwestern parts of China, Nepal and northern India are often hit by earthquakes caused by the collision of the Indian and Eurasian tectonic plates, which are pushing up an ancient sea that is now the Qinghai-

Tibetan plateau.

The entire plateau is seismically active, as well as its eastern and northern rims, which overlap with the Chinese provinces and regions of Sichuan, Gansu and Qinghai.

Beijing, which administers Tibet as an autonomous region within China, rejects criticism from rights groups and exiles who accuse it of trampling on the religious and cultural rights of the Tibetan people.

More than 500 aftershocks with magnitudes of up to 4.4 had followed the quake as of 8 am (0000 GMT) on Wednesday, the China Earthquake Networks Centre said.

Over the past five years, there have been 29 earthquakes with magnitudes of 3 or above within 200 km of the epicentre of Tuesday’s temblor, according to the Sichuan province’s earthquake bureau.

In 2008, an 8.0 magnitude earthquake hit Sichuan’s Chengdu, claiming the lives of at least 70,000 people, the deadliest quake to hit China since the 1976 Tangshan quake that killed at least 242,000 people.

Tuesday’s quake was the worst since a 6.2 magnitude earthquake in 2023 that killed at least 149 people in a remote northwestern region of the country.

Israel kills at least five Palestinians including two infants in latest attack on Gaza

GAZA, Jan 8 (Agencies): Israeli airstrikes on Wednesday have killed at least five people in the Gaza Strip, including two infants and a woman.

One strike hit a home in the central city of Deir al-Balah, killing two men and a woman, according to the Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, which received the casualties.

The hospital said it also received a 4-month-old boy who was killed in a strike on his family house in the nearby built-up Bureij refugee camp.

An Associated Press journalist saw the four bodies in the hospital morgue.

In Gaza City, an airstrike hit a home in the Sheikh Radwan neighborhood, killing a 3-week-old baby,



according to the Health Ministry’s emergency service. The airstrike came hours after Israel’s attacks on southern Gaza killed at least 17 Palestinians, nearly all of them women or children.

Five kids were killed as they sheltered together in the same tent, said Ahmed al-Farra, director of the children’s ward at nearby Nasser Hospital in Khan Younis. Their bodies were among the

eight children and five women brought to the hospital after strikes on tents, homes and a vehicle. Two bodies were unidentifiable.

Israel’s genocidal war on Gaza has so far killed at least 45,805 Palestinians and injured 109,064, according to Gaza’s Health Ministry. This includes more than 17,000 children, over 191 journalists and more than 1000 medical professionals.

Thai police issue arrest warrant for man suspected of gunning down ex-lawmaker

BANGKOK, Jan 8 (Agencies): Thai police on Wednesday said an arrest warrant has been issued for a man suspected of gunning down a former opposition politician from Cambodia in a popular Bangkok tourist area.

Lim Kimya, an ex-lawmaker from the dissolved Cambodia National Rescue Party, was shot dead near a temple close to Khaosan Road on Tuesday evening. He had reportedly just arrived at the scene with his wife by bus from Cambodia, said the New York-based Human Rights Watch.

Siam Boonsom, chief of Bangkok police, told reporters on Wednesday the initial investigation led them to believe the gunman was hired to carry out the shooting and that Lim Kimya was possibly identified to the gunman by

another person, whom police are also pursuing. Siam declined to provide further details, citing an ongoing investigation.

Thai media have reported the suspected shooter might be a former Thai marine. Siam declined to confirm this detail but said the suspect had a criminal record related to financial matters.

Security camera footage of the incident circulated in Thai media showed the suspected gunman arriving at the scene on a motorbike. Three gunshots were heard before the man walked away from the victim as he collapsed to the ground. The suspect, who did not cover his face, then rode away on the motorbike.

The Cambodia National Rescue Party said in a statement it was “deeply shocked and appalled by the brutal and inhu-

mane assassination” and urged the Thai authorities to conduct a thorough investigation to bring the perpetrators to justice.

The party had been expected to present a strong challenge to the ruling Cambodian People’s Party of ex-Prime Minister Hun Sen in the 2018 general election. But as part of a sweeping crackdown on opposition before the poll, the high court dissolved the party, and the ruling party subsequently won every seat in the National Assembly.

Recent posts on Lim Kimya’s Facebook page were critical of the government, including how it had spent state money unnecessarily on events that did not benefit the Cambodian people.

Under Hun Sen, who held power for almost four decades, Cambodia was widely criticized

for human rights abuses that included the suppression of freedom of speech and association. He was succeeded in August 2023 by his American-educated son, Hun Manet, but there have been few signs of political liberalization.

Phil Robertson, director of the Asia Human Rights and Labour Advocates, said the shooting “has all the hallmarks of a political assassination, and looks to be a significant escalation in the use of transnational repression in Bangkok” to intimidate opposition of the ruling government.

Cambodia’s government has long been accused of using the judicial system to persecute critics and political opponents. The government insists it promotes the rule of law under an electoral democracy, but political parties seen as

mounting strong challenges to the ruling party have been dissolved by the courts or had their leaders jailed or harassed.

Lim Kimya’s shooting came on the same day that Hun Sen, who is now the head of Cambodia’s Senate, called for the government to pass a law that would label certain dissident actions as terrorism.

Hun Sen, sitting alongside his son, Hun Manet, to mark the 46th anniversary of the ousting of the brutal Khmer Rouge regime that ruled in Cambodia in the late 1970s — and which left some 1.7 million Cambodians dead from starvation, illness and mass executions — called for a new law to define people who want to overthrow Hun Manet’s government as “terrorists.”

Sikh man among two Indian Americans elected to Virginia state legislatures

NEW YORK, Jan 8 (Agencies): Two Indian Americans were elected in special elections to Virginia’s legislatures, ensuring the Democratic Party keeps its slender majority despite the national Trump wave in last year’s election.

Kannan Srinivasan was elected to the State Senate and J.J. Singh to the State House of Delegates on Wednesday.

In what seems like a round of musical chairs, Singh takes the seat held in the House by Srinivasan, who in turn succeeds Suhass Subramanyam, who resigned the State Senate seat and was elected to Congress in November.

The races featured another Indian American, Republican Ram Venkatachalam, who lost to Singh.

Srinivasan will join another Indian American, the Hyderabad-born Ghazala Hashmi, in the State Senate.

He grew up in Tamil Nadu and was a chartered accountant in India before emigrating to the US, where he built a 30-year career in business and finance.

Srinivasan was elected to the Virginia House in 2023.

J.J. Singh, who was born in Virginia, will probably be the first legislator in the US to wear a turban, although other Sikhs have been elected.

Singh worked in the White House Office of Management and Budget under former President Barack Obama. He had earlier served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Bolivia and as a senior US Senate advisor.

The elections were crucial to the Democrats, who had only a one-seat majority in both chambers in a state where the governor is a Republican.

Vice President Kamala Harris defeated President-elect Donald Trump in the state, but there are concerns among the Democrats that his national victory could seep into the races.

The election was a shocking disappointment for Kamala Harris, who stepped in to carry the Democratic Party torch after President Joe Biden dropped out as questions arose over his mental and physical capabilities.

The Democrats put more resources into the race than the Republicans to ensure their candidate’s victory.

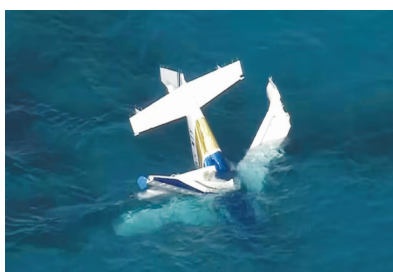
Three dead after seaplane crashes off an Australian Island

SYDNEY, Jan 8 (Agencies): A small seaplane ferrying European tourists plunged into the ocean off Western Australia killing three people on board, authorities said Wednesday.

The plane crashed Tuesday evening as it left Rottnest Island, a tourist drawcard famous for its friendly marsupials called quokkas.

As search teams fished the wreckage from the sea on Wednesday, state Premier Roger Cook confirmed three people had died and four others survived.

Among the victims were a 65-year-old woman from Swit-



zerland, a 60-year-old man from Denmark and the 34-year-old local pilot.

A 63-year-old Swiss man was rescued alongside a 58-year-old Danish woman and an Australian couple in their 60s.

“Three lives were lost when a seaplane crashed moments after

takeoff,” Cook told reporters.

“The tragedy unfolded in front of many tourists, including families with children who were on the island enjoying the summer holiday.”

There were reports the plane had clipped a rock jutting out of the ocean as it was taking off.

“Those early reports are not confirmed. At this early stage, what caused the crash remains unknown,” Cook said.

Lying about 30 kilometres (18 miles) west of state capital Perth, Rottnest Island is one of Western Australia’s premier tourist destinations.

Awareness on importance of ‘Golden Hour’ after road accident must: Dr Sukhpal Singh

Top News Report

AMRITSAR, Jan 8: To create awareness on ‘Rising trends of road accident & trauma services in North India’ a team of doctors from LIVASA Hospital, Amritsar addressed the media person here today. Present on the occasion were: Dr Sukhpal Singh, consultant orthopedics & joint replacement, Dr Amiteshwar Singh consultant plastic surgery, Dr Amanjot Singh consultant neurosurgery, Dr Manish Gupta consultant critical care and Dr Prabhpreet Singh consultant emergency medicine from LIVASA Hospital, Amritsar.

Speaking on the occasion Dr Sukhpal Singh said that it is very unfortunate to note that in the last 12 years there has been a drop of 5% in road accidents globally, whereas it has increased by 15.3% in India. Road accidents contribute to 83 % of all traffic related deaths in India. People should know the importance of the ‘Golden Hour’ concept, which means



the first 60 minutes after any accident are most important. If the right patient reaches the right place at the right time, a lot of lives can be saved. He also shared that roads in Punjab are very fatal in terms of road accidents and there were 6122 road accidents & 4688 deaths in road accidents in Punjab in 2022.

Dr Sukhpal also shared that 70% of lives in road accidents are lost due to over speeding.

Sharing his view on this occasion, Dr Amiteshwar Singh said that more 460 deaths a day are forcing India to take trauma accidents seriously. 460 deaths every day is equivalent to a jumbo

jet crash every day. India accounts for just 1% of the global vehicular population and has the highest number of accident related deaths across the Globe. He also said that most of the accidents apart from head injury, motorists also suffer thoracic and GI injuries as well, which are equally fatal, if not treated in a fully equipped trauma center.

Dr Amiteshwar shared that at LIVASA Hospital Amritsar, our trauma team consists of orthopedic surgeon, thoracic surgeon, GI surgeon, plastic surgeon, neurosurgeon, anesthetist and ER physician and hospital has got 05 modular OTs, in-house

CT and tesla MRI scan to deals with any type of trauma injuries.

Dr Amanjot Singh Boparai said over speeding and not wearing seat belts are major cases of head injuries in trauma cases in India.

In addition to these drunken driving, jumping red lights, distraction to drivers, non-adherence to driving lanes and overtaking from the wrong side are other reasons for road accidents in India.

Dr Amanjot also shared that two-wheelers are one of the most unsafe modes of transport. According to an UN Motorcycle Helmet Study motorcyclists are 26 times more likely to die in a road crash than

drivers of passenger cars. Wearing an appropriate helmet improves their chances of survival by 42% and reduces the risk of Brain Injury by 74 %, he informed.

Dr Manish Gupta said, “India is amongst the world leaders in road traffic deaths. In India, over 78% of vehicles on the road are two-wheelers and they account for about 29 % of road accidents. Brain is one of the most sensitive organs of our body, which comes under impact in any road accident. Wearing a good helmet and tying it properly can prevent loss of lives in 90 per cent of accident cases.”

With 5 hospitals, 750 beds, 280 ICU beds and 20 OTS, LIVASA Hospital is the biggest trauma service provider in the entire Punjab. With our 6 ACLS ambulances based out of different drainage areas, we cater to 16 districts of Punjab and 08 districts of Himachal and the entire Jammu region for trauma services, said Dr Prabhpreet Singh.

J&K Cooperative Union employees highlight critical issues

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 8: A meeting of former and current employees of the J&K Cooperative Union (Cooperative Training Centre, Jammu) was held in Jammu to discuss the significant challenges faced by the institution's workforce.

The gathering brought attention to the dire financial and administrative issues that have persisted for years, leaving employees in distress.

Since 2016, the Cooperative Union and its training centers have been under the control of the Cooperative Department, supervised by the Additional Registrar of Cooperative Societies, Jammu and Kashmir.

The department also exercises financial authority over the institution. However, despite this oversight, critical issues have remained unresolved, causing immense hardships for both former and current employees.

Ex-employees of the Cooperative Union have not received their pending dues, including Contributory Provident Fund (CPF), gratuity, and ten months of earned leave. These payments have been delayed for over six years, leaving many retirees in financial turmoil.

Meanwhile, current employees have not received their salaries for an extended period, compounding their financial difficulties and making it challenging for them to sustain their livelihoods.

Adding to these woes, the Cooperative Union has been without a head for the past two to three years. This leadership vacuum has significantly hindered the institution's ability to function effectively and fulfill its mission of promoting the cooperative movement.

The Cooperative Union plays a crucial role in organizing training and educational programs through its training centers, aimed at fostering growth and

development in the cooperative sector.

The employees at the meeting collectively appealed to the higher authorities in the Cooperative Department to address their grievances urgently.

They called for the immediate release of funds to settle the pending dues of ex-employees and ensure regular salary payments for current employees. Additionally, they emphasized the need to constitute a governing board to provide effective leadership and make the institution functional again.

The participants stressed that resolving these issues is essential not only for the welfare of the employees but also for the continued growth and development of the cooperative sector in Jammu and Kashmir as without immediate intervention, the situation risks undermining the institution's ability to fulfill its objectives and support the broader cooperative movement in the region.

PDP Leader Rafique welcomes completion of Jammu-Kashmir Railway Project

Calls for Vande Bharat train services to be extended to North Kashmir as well

Top News Report

SRINAGAR, Jan 8: Senior People's Democratic Party leader and District President Baramulla Rafique Rather welcomed the successful completion of the Jammu Kashmir railway project, describing it as a landmark

achievement that will transform the region's connectivity and bring immense benefits to the people.

Highlighting the transformative potential of this railway project, Rather said that the railway link will revolutionize travel by providing an affordable, efficient,

and reliable alternative to road and air transport, particularly during the harsh winters when roadways are often closed, and flight costs soar.

This rail connection will enhance trade, tourism and overall economic growth, creating new opportunities for the

region,” he added.

However, Rather expressed his concern over the limited connectivity of the Vande Bharati train services, operational only between Katra to Banihal thus leaving out the vital region of north kashmir including Baramulla.



Rafique Rather urged upon the government and Railway Authorities to extend the service of Vande Bharat to Baramulla also so that the benefits of the service reach every corner of the Jammu and Kashmir.

Rafique Rather said, this achievement is not

just about connecting places but about uniting people and opening doors of development and prosperity for the people of every region of Jammu and Kashmir thus leaving North Kashmir out of the benefits will serve limited purpose only.

He urged the railway authorities to take immediate action and extend Vande Bharat train services to Baramulla, ensuring that the benefits of this milestone project are felt across every corner of Jammu and Kashmir including North Kashmir.

FROM PAGE 3

PM Modi to inaugurate Z-Morh tunnel in Kashmir on January 13

with the adjacent Zoji-La Tunnel, this geostrategically important tunnel on the Srinagar-Leh Highway will provide year-round weather-proof connectivity to Baltal (Amarnath cave), Kargil and other places in the Ladakh region.

It will also enhance military logistics and boost tourism and the economy. In addition to providing all-weather connectivity to Sonamarg, the tunnel will help the employment of local youth and boost tourism and allied activities in the area.

It is one of the 31 road tunnels, 20 in Jammu and Kashmir and 11 in Ladakh.

The construction of the tunnel was started in 2018.

The tunnel workers came under terror attack on October 20, 2024, when two terrorists entered the workers' camp at Gagangir and fired indiscriminately. Seven civilians, including six non-local workers of the infrastructure company building the Z-Morh tunnel, were killed. A local doctor was also killed in the attack.

Modified scheme to provide cashless treatment for road accident victims Nationwide: Gadkari

have occurred in road safety. 30,000 people have died because of not wearing helmets. The second serious thing is that 66% of accidents have occurred in people between the ages of 18 to 34,” Gadkari added.

Gadkari further highlighted the deaths of 10,000 children in road accidents caused by inadequate arrangements at entry and exit points near educational institutions, such as schools and colleges.

“10,000 children have died due to a lack of proper arrangement at the exit-entry point in front of our schools and colleges. Rules have also been made for the autorickshaws and minibuses for schools as there have been significant number of deaths due to this. After identifying all the black spots, everyone decided together

that we would try to reduce it,” he said.

The announcement followed a meeting chaired by Gadkari with Transport Ministers from all states and union territories at Bharat Mandapam in Delhi on Tuesday.

The meeting aimed to facilitate collaborative efforts between the union and state governments and to discuss transportation-related policies.

Kashmir train service likely to be inaugurated on January 26: MP Mian Altaf

Mian Altaf also highlighted the completion of the Z-Morh tunnel, which will ensure year-round access to Sonamarg, a popular tourist destination in the region. “The Z-Morh tunnel has been completed and must be thrown open at the earliest. It will greatly benefit the region by keeping Sonamarg accessible even during the harsh winter months,” he added.

LG Flags Off Jammu Kashmir Contingent for National Youth Festival in Delhi

leadership skills and offering young individuals the opportunity to demonstrate their creativity and cultural diversity.

The National Youth Festival serves as an invaluable stage for youth across India to connect, share their artistic expressions, and engage in intellectual and cultural exchanges.

Expressing his support for the participants, the LG urged the youth to use this platform to not only represent Jammu and Kashmir but also to display their potential as leaders of tomorrow.

The National Youth Festival is expected to bring together thousands of young individuals from across the country to celebrate the spirit of youth and creativity.

Srinagar Police bust major drug racket: 8 Kg's heroin seized, 2 key traffickers arrested

beneath the driver's seat.

Moreover, during personal search, 2 kilograms of the narcotic substance were recovered from the suspects, with each concealing 1 kilogram of the narcotic substance in polythene bags.

The arrested individuals have been identified as:

1. Anas Ajaz Awan, son of Ajaz Ahmad Awan, resident of Dildar Tangdar, Kupwara
2. Zahid Ahmad Sheikh, son of Nazir Ahmad Sheikh, resident of Channipora, Tangdar, Kupwara

The narcotics and the vehicle used in the commission of crime have been seized as evidence.

Case vide FIR No. 03/2025 under sections 8/21 and 29 of the NDPS Act has been registered in Police Station Parimpora, and further investigation is going on.

Preliminary investigation has revealed that the recovered narcotics were smuggled from Pakistan as part of cross-border drug trafficking network.

J&K Police is actively pursuing both backward and forward linkages to dismantle this syndicate and identify all individuals involved in this illicit trade.

J&K Police remains resolute in its mission to eradicate drug trafficking and ensure the safety of the community.

We reaffirm our zero-tolerance policy against narcotics and pledge to bring all those involved in such criminal activities to justice with the full force of the law.

We urge the general public to support our efforts in creating a drug-free society. Citizens are encouraged to share any information related to drug trafficking or suspicious activities with the nearest police station or by dialing 112.

Together, we can safeguard our society from the menace of drugs.

Railways unveils Vande Bharat, Specially designed for winters in J&K, for Katra-Srinagar Route

operational challenges and passengers' amenities in extreme weather conditions of J-K.

“It has advance heating systems which prevent freezing of water tank and bio-

toilet tanks, provide warm air for vacuum system as well as laboratories and ensures air-brake system functions optimally for smooth operations even in sub-zero temperatures,” said Dileep Kumar, Executive Director (Information & Publicity) Railway Board.

He added, “It has embedded heating elements in the windshield so that the driver's front lookout glass gets automatically defrosted ensuring clear visibility in hard winter conditions.”

Board officials said that apart from climate-related features, it has all other amenities that the existing Vande Bharat trains have — fully air-conditioned coaches, automatic plug doors, mobile charging sockets etc.

By connecting the Kashmir Valley more effectively to the national railway network, the train is a symbol of India's dedication to bridging geographical and economic gaps, a press statement of the Railways said.

Aga Ruhullah's protest outside CM's residence a 'cheap publicity stunt': Sakina Itoo

criticized Ruhullah's tactics while responding to the protest in an interview on a local channel, saying, “It's the wrong way. It is not the right way to go and stand outside the CM's house for a protest.”

“Does Omar Abdullah have a magic wand that he will wave around and your job will be done? For cheap publicity, you get yourself clicked by the media and then claim that you are trying to pressurize the government,” she said, adding, “What pressure will you put on the government? The government is not under anyone's pressure; we will do the work that is in our hands without any pressure.”

This comment came amidst growing tensions within the National Conference, as the party faces increasing divisions over political strategies and leadership.

“The government is doing whatever is in their hands and whatever is possible. We will do every endeavor which will be for the larger good of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. We will leave no stone unturned to help our people. The chief minister Omar Abdullah has already formed a cabinet sub-committee, and it is working. The com-

mittee will submit its report soon, and it will be best for all,” Minister Sakina Itoo said.

Sakina Itoo's remarks point out the widening gap between Ruhullah and other NC leaders, signaling deeper fractures within the party as it grapples with ideological differences and public posturing.

Recent developments within the National Conference (NC) have worsened party divisions. Aga Ruhullah, who has led protests demanding political change, continues to clash with the party leadership.

Ruhullah's actions have sparked a war of words within the National Conference, particularly with CM Omar Abdullah, who recently urged Ruhullah to focus on statehood protests in Delhi instead of local issues. Ruhullah responded firmly, stating that he remains committed to the restoration of Article 370 over statehood, which he views as a hollow promise.

Night temperature plummets in Kashmir, Gulmarg, at -9.8°C

generally remain dry till January 15, except for a chance of light rain over the plains of Jammu and snow at isolated to scattered places during January 11 and 12 in Jammu and Kashmir.

The ski resort of Gulmarg slipped down to a low of -9.0°C on Wednesday against the -6.6°C recorded the previous night. This was -20°C below normal for the tourist resort of North Kashmir's Baramulla district for the day.

Pahalgam recorded a low of -8.2°C against the -7.8°C on Tuesday. This was 2.0°C below normal for the tourist spot of south Kashmir's Anantnag district during the period.

The minimum temperature recorded during the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday also plunged to a low of -10.4°C at the picturesque Sonamarg in the central Kashmir Ganderbal district.

Srinagar, the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir, witnessed a low of -1.0°C against the previous night at 0.9°C, and this was 0.9°C above the average for the place during the period.

The day temperature rose as the bright sun appeared Tuesday in Srinagar and other parts of the Kashmir Valley, with the capital city recording a maximum of 8.6°C, which was 2.0°C above normal for the day, the MeT office said.

The frontier Kashmir district of Kupwara had a low of -2.1°C, the picnic spot of Kokernag in south Kashmir -1.9°C, and Qazigund -2.4°C recorded on Wednesday, the MeT office said.

Stop flying to Delhi, focus on Governance within J&K: BJP to Omar

Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 8: Girdhari Lal Raina questioned rationale behind Omar Abdullah's recurrent rushing to Delhi instead of focussing on improvements they promised in governance in Jammu Kashmir.

Girdhari Lal Raina and Gourav Gupta, BJP Spokespersons along with Dr. Pardeep Mahotra, BJP Media Secretary were addressing a press conference at party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

Raina said that the Chief Minister is seeking "liberal funding" for J&K on one side and condemning tourists visiting UT as a cultural invasion. How do you justify your demand for

enhancing financial support to the UT for minimizing liabilities while at the same time creating new liabilities by spending unproductive and unnecessary expenditures like the purchase of vehicles for Ministers? NC and successive governments in Jammu Kashmir for decades have pushed the state to complete dependence on central funding instead of creating its own resources and expanding revenue collection.

NC and successive governments in Jammu Kashmir for decades have pushed the state to complete dependence on central funding instead of creating its own resources and expanding revenue collection.

BJP government has ensured long term financial reforms in J&K to consolidate financial management, create new resources and plug leakages. Budget size expanded from around

Rupees 38068 Crores in 2013-14 to over Rupees 1, 18000 crores in 2023-24. Capital expenditure was enhanced to around Rupees 36904 crores from mere 9074 crores in 2013-14.

Raina pointed out the double standards of NC government which uses ornamental jargon like "collaborative efforts with the Central Government" to enhance financial stability and promote sustainable development in Jammu and Kashmir. And in the same breath use divisive language against the Parliament terming its sovereign right to legislate as "betrayal of the people of Jammu and Kashmir" and denounce it as a "mockery of

democracy".

Raina asked people to remain cautious and seek accountability from the government for their poll promises.

Gaurav Gupta extended gratitude and congratulations to PM Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the historic launch of the BharatPol Portal. This transformative initiative marks a significant leap forward in India's fight against transnational crimes, including cybercrimes, online radicalization, drug trafficking, and human trafficking.

Previously, whenever a fugitive committed a crime and escaped, our police had to report the matter to the CBI,

which then worked with Interpol to. This process could delay swift action.

With the launch of BharatPol, local police and investigative officers can directly upload crime and fugitive-related information onto the BharatPol portal, which is connected to Interpol ensuring that law enforcement agencies can act swiftly and efficiently.

This initiative is not just about technological advancement; it is a reflection of the progressive vision of PM Modi and HM Shah. Their leadership continues to drive India towards becoming a global leader in security and law enforcement, said Gaurav Gupta.

Tehsil Administration Handwara seizes two shops

Top News Report

HANDWARA, Jan 8: In a bid to enforce market discipline and protect consumer interests, the Tehsil Administration Handwara, in collaboration with Handwara Police, launched an extensive market inspection drive today.

The initiative aimed to curb overpricing, ensure the quality of essential goods, and uphold market regulations.

The inspection was spearheaded by Tehsildar Handwara, Zeeshan Ahmad Khan, along with SHO Handwara, Sofi Vilayat, Naib Tehsildar Manzoor Ahmad, and officials from the Municipal Committee.

The team meticulously inspected various establishments to examine pricing practices, quality standards, and adherence to regulatory norms.

Two shops were sealed during the operation for selling unhygienic food items, underscoring the administration's zero-tolerance policy toward violations affecting public health.

Tehsildar Zeeshan Ahmad Khan emphasized the significance of such drives in safeguarding consumer rights and promoting market transparency. "Our focus remains on ensuring traders comply with the rules and that the public receives quality goods at fair prices," he said.

The inspection team also identified other irregularities and issued warnings to violators, urging traders to prioritize accountability and consumer welfare. Alongside enforcement, the initiative sought to educate traders about their responsibilities in maintaining a fair marketplace.

The Tehsil Administration has vowed to conduct similar drives regularly to uphold market integrity and protect public interests. This proactive approach reflects the administration's dedication to fostering a transparent, disciplined, and consumer-friendly market environment in Handwara.

Work with principle of "Nation First, Party Second, Self-Last": Sat Sharma to new Mandal Presidents



Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 8: In continuation with the election process under the party's ongoing 'Sangathan Parv', Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Jammu & Kashmir, today completed the election process of 190 new Mandal Presidents.

Sat Sharma, President, J&K BJP, congratulated the whole team of Returning Officers and assistant Returning Officers for the completion of maximum Mandal Presidents elections in a cordial atmosphere. He also asked them to complete the remaining in the elections in the stipulated time. He emphasized that every BJP worker reflects an institution in himself

and himself and this level of extended election exercise within the party to select the new office bearers can only be seen in a dedicated party like BJP. He congratulated all the new Mandal Presidents and directed them to work with the principle of "Nation First, Party Second, Self Last".

Ashok Koul, General Secretary (organization), J&K BJP, said that this Mandal President election witnessed the emergence of many new, young and energetic faces consisting a remarkable number of activists representing women, SCs, and OBCs, STs and other communities, giving an impression of colourful umbrella. He expressed

confidence that these new Mandal Presidents will take the party ideology and mission forward and work to their maximum in the service of society.

Rakesh Mahajan, Returning Officer for J&K BJP, while sharing details about the election, said that out of a total 209 recognized Mandals, 198 Mandals were found eligible for the election process, out of which election process for 190 new Mandal Presidents were completed today. He also shared that the 'Mandal Pratinidhi' were also chosen, who along with Mandal Presidents, will participate in the election process of district Presidents in the coming days.

Dr Narinder, Randhawa holds public Darbar

Top News Report

JAMMU Jan 8: Dr Narinder Singh, MLARS Pura-Jammu South & BJP National Secretary, and Choudhary Vikram Randhawa, MLA Bahu held a public darbar at party headquarters, Trikuta Nagar, Jammu.

Number of people in the form of deputations represented their personal development issues before the senior leaders of BJP.

A deputation from Gangyal Garden requested for deep drain cleaning and construction/upgrading of an existing drainage system. Another deputation from Gangyal requested for construction of a central drain. A deputation from Nanak Nagar requested for construction of a damaged lane and drain. A deputation of JKRTC raised the demand of VRS/GHS. A deputation from Trikuta Nagar

requested for strengthening of retaining wall adjacent a nallah. A person requested for renewal of a Pharmacy registration certificate. A deputation raised issue of delayed payment from JPDCL. A deputation of Thekedars (GEM contractors) raised issue of non-payment of bills, illegal debits for 8 months by APCO Infratech. A deputation requested for opening of 100 Punjabi Schools at different Gurudwara Sahibs in J&K. A deputation requested for maintenance of JMC park at Greater Kailash. A deputation from Bhalwal raised concern of water connection at Rabta School.

Dr. Narinder Singh, while listening to the grievances of the public, said that the BJP leaders took up every issue of the visiting deputations with the concerned department officials for

early disposal. While many of their issues were resolved on the spot, for others, written and telephonic communications were made with the concerned.

Dr. Narinder Singh said that the Prime Minister, Narendra Modi led Union Government has taken every possible measure to reach out to the needy persons of society, formulating special schemes and policies for their welfare. He said that the BJP has initiated regular public darbars to further help the people in sorting out their issues.

Vikram Randhawa said that BJP leaders sincerely try to provide the solution to every issue presented by the visiting persons and deputations. He said that there is a great rush of people in daily public darbars, which shows that the general masses had developed trust in the party and its leaders.

BJP stands as a symbol of democracy: Kavinder



Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 8: Senior BJP leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Kavinder, Gupta has extended his heartfelt congratulations to the newly elected Mandal Presidents across Jammu and Kashmir. A total of 209 Mandals participated in the elections conducted democratically, reinforcing the Bharatiya Janata Party's unwavering commitment to internal democracy and organizational excellence.

Felicitating newly appointed Mandal Presidents at Party Headquarters in Jammu, Kavinder Gupta emphasized that the BJP stands as a symbol of democracy, not only in governance but also within its organizational structure. "The party provides an opportunity for new individuals to step into leadership roles after regular intervals. This ensures fresh perspectives, dynamic leadership, and a continuous renewal of our mission to serve the

people," he stated. On the occasion, MLA Arvind Gupta and other senior leaders of the Party were also present.

The senior BJP leader highlighted that the elections were conducted transparently, ensuring that capable individuals were chosen to lead the Mandals. He praised the efforts of party workers and election committees for ensuring the smooth conduct of this crucial organizational process.

Expressing confidence in the newly elected Mandal Presidents, Kavinder urged them to work diligently to strengthen the party at the grassroots level. "Your role is pivotal in taking the party's ideology and mission forward. You must work tirelessly to ensure that the principles of the BJP resonate with every household. Our mission is to serve society and contribute meaningfully to the progress of Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

Kavinder Gupta stressed the importance of connecting with the

common people and addressing their issues proactively. He reminded the Mandal Presidents of the BJP's vision under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which focuses on inclusive development, empowerment of marginalized sections, and fostering unity.

He encouraged the newly elected Mandal Presidents to remain steadfast in their resolve to uphold the party's principles and ensure that the BJP continues to be the harbinger of change and development in the region.

This new Sangathan, he asserted, will play a key role in mobilizing public support and strengthening the BJP's organizational foundation across Jammu and Kashmir. He expressed hope that the newly elected members would contribute their maximum effort in the service of society and leave no stone unturned in making the party's presence stronger at every level.

Prof. Sandeep Singh former JUTA President, PDP Adl. Spokesperson , Sohit Sharma joins Congress



Top News Report

JAMMU, Jan 8: JKPCC President Shri Tariq Hameed Karra today welcomed two prominent personalities into the congress party namely Dr. Sandeep Singh (Sandy) Assistant Professor in the Department of Life Long Learning, Faculty of Social Science, former President Jammu University Teachers Association and Sohit Sharma Additional Spokesperson of PDP and said that this indicates change in the thought process of people especially in the awakened class in Jammu that Congress is the only secular, democratic and unifying force which can do

justice to all sections of people.

Prof. Sandeep Singh is well known socio-political activist and worked intensively on cross-border peace dialogue both as activists and researcher. Mr. Sohit Sharma has remained associated with PDP for long time and worked as additional spokesperson of the party.

Welcoming them in to the party at PCC HQ Jammu today Shri Karra told media persons there is change in the thought process amongst the people of Jammu after the outcome of recent elections that it is only the congress party which can effectively address the issues of people of all sections of Jammu region in

view of its secular approach and progressive outlook. He said that people realized that they sometimes get emotionally black mailed during elections process by the communal and emotional narratives of the BJP but it is the congress party which always delivered justice and fulfilled the promises with the people.

He said that in the coming days more and more likeminded people and forces will join the congress party since congress is strong and steady on its principles of secularism and socialism and believes in strengthening democracy and constitution. Taking to media persons Prof

Sandeep Singh said that he believes that if natural for Indian people to be part of congress as it reflects the ethos of indianess and of the constitution, while expressing his concern for the distortion of parliamentary democracy in Jammu and Kashmir. He said that the present leadership of PCC led by Mr. Tariq Hameed Karra encouraged him to actively join congress party for the betterment of the people.

Mr Sohit Sharma while explaining the reasons for joining congress said that he believes that congress is the right platform to raise the issues of people of Jammu region and can do justice and the congress party will emerge stronger in Jammu region in the coming days under the present leadership

AICC Secretary Shah Nawaz Choudhary, Chief Spokesperson Shri Ravinder Sharma, Ved Mahajan (I/C HQ PCC), Adv. Shah Mohd Choudhary, S. Gurmeet Singh, Narinder Sharma, Suresh Dogra, Sahil Sharma, Jatin Raina, Dr. Pradeep Bhagat, Bilal Rashid, Aijaz Choudhary, Ricky Dalotra Mudassar Choudhary were the prominent who welcomed them in the party.

Nikshay Poshan Kits presented to TB Patients in Samba

Top News Report

SAMBA, Jan 8: District Administration Samba today gave away Nikshay Poshan Kits to 50 TB patients under the ambitious "100 Days of TB Elimination" campaign. The initiative, funded by the Indian Red Cross Society, was organized under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Sharma, and the supervision of Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Samba, Dr. Vidhi Bhatiyal.

Addressing the event, the DC underscored that TB is a fully curable disease if patients strictly follow their medication regimen and maintain a balanced

diet. They also urged the public to discard societal taboos surrounding the disease, emphasizing the need for a supportive environment for TB patients.

The "100 Days of TB Elimination" campaign, launched in December 2024 by the Government of India, aims to accelerate progress toward making India TB-free by 2025, well ahead of the global target of 2030.

The District Administration Samba extends its heartfelt gratitude to the Indian Red Cross Society for their generous contribution to this noble cause, further strengthening the fight against TB.

Gavaskar says selectors must give next crop a chance as Rohit and Kohli’s future uncertain

SYDNEY, Jan 8 (Agencies): Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma’s Test future is now in the hands of selectors, said former India captain Sunil Gavaskar while advocating an honest deep-dive into the team’s downward spiral in the last six months. Gavaskar also said that it was the responsibility of the Ajit Agarkar-led national selection committee to give a fair chance to those waiting in the wings. “How long they continue is really up to the selectors. Now that India have failed to qualify for the World Test Championship (WTC) final, it would be pertinent to reflect on the reasons that why it happened,” he said. This is the first time since the WTC’s inception that India could not make the finals following a 1-3 loss to Australia in the Border-Gavaskar series that concluded on Sunday. The defeat also meant that the coveted BGT was surrendered to Australia for the first time in a decade. The primary reason for the debacle was the batting unit’s failure to fire with Rohit and Kohli proving to be the weakest link. Kohli scored 190 runs in nine innings, including an unbeaten century, while Rohit’s tally was a dismal 31 from five completed knocks.



Gavaskar didn’t mince words while pointing out the repeated failures of the team’s batters, who failed to cross the 200 mark six out of nine times during the series. “It is clear that in the last six months, the batting failed and that was the main reason that we lost matches that we should have won,” he said. “So, if changes are required for the new cycle of the WTC, which starts in mid-June in England, then hopefully the selectors will take into account who would still be there for the final in 2027 and choose accordingly,” he added. The 75-year-old did not take names but said there are some good performers coming up in the domestic circuit and the onus is now on the selectors to

give them a fair chance. “Unless they are given a chance how will we know if those doing well in the Ranji Trophy will do well at the international level? Here’s where good selections come in,” he said. Gavaskar also complimented the selection committee for unearthing a talent like Nitish Kumar Reddy, who was one of India’s three centurions in the just-concluded tour, others being Yashasvi Jaiswal and Kohli. “Compliments to Ajit Agarkar and his team for seeing the potential in Nitish Kumar Reddy and picking him for the Test squad too,” he said of the player who also enjoys a strong backing of head coach Gautam

Gambhir. On the bowling front, Gavaskar said India has enough talent that needs to be given the requisite opportunities to ensure that a generational star like Jasprit Bumrah is not overburdened. Once again, he refrained from taking names of the potential candidates who would shape the bowling attack going forward. “India has got loads of promising pacers who are waiting for an opportunity. Yes, Bumrah should not be overburdened and if others step up then we can have an attack that can win matches in any conditions,” he said. The culture of putting stars at a pedestal has been an oft-stated problem in Indian cricket. But Gavaskar said it is not very difficult to stay grounded even with that if one is capable of taking an honest look at performances. “We see our faces in the mirror every day and since we do that to us, we don’t notice the changes that have come over the years. Only when we see photos or videos of earlier days do we notice the changes,” he said. “It is then that we look to make the changes needed to look at our best. To do that, however, we need to take a long honest look at ourselves again,” he said.

India to host top javelin event

CHANDIGARH, Jan 8 (Agencies): India is all set to host a star-studded javelin throw competition this year, the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) confirmed today, also sharing the country’s plans to host big-ticket events in the future. AFI’s outgoing president Adile Sumariwalla said today that India will host a global invitational javelin throw competition, most likely in September, which will feature two-time Olympics medallist Neeraj Chopra. “Chopra will be one of the main contenders and also a member of the organising committee for this event. The top-10 javelin throwers from across the world will be invited. This is being done as there is so much interest in javelin throw, with August 7 being observed as the National Javelin Day,” said Sumariwalla. Sumariwalla confirmed that India has expressed interest in hosting the 2027 World Relays and the 2029 World Championships, adding that the country has already submitted its expres-

sion of interest to host the 2028 World Junior Championships. While talking about the Indian athletes’ performance in the 2024 Paris Olympics, Sumariwalla confirmed that changes are being made for the next Olympics cycle. “We consider the Olympics cycle as our ultimate platform to set our aim. We have held various meetings and already decisions have been made regarding change in relay teams, bringing in a Jamaican female coach, and many others. There were high expectations from our athletes in the Paris Olympics and I must admit there were some lacunas... and the process of fixing those have already started,” he said. Sumariwalla also said that Chopra will not train with his coach Jan Zelezny throughout the year and seek his guidance only when required. Chopra hired three-time Olympics champion and world record holder Zelezny as his coach in November. Bahadur elected AFI prez

The AFI unanimously picked Asian Games gold-winning former shot putter Bahadur Singh Sagoo as the new president during its two-day Annual General Meeting here. Sagoo emerged as the lone candidate after incumbent senior vice-president Anju Bobby George pulled out of the race citing personal reasons. The 51-year-old, who won gold in the 2002 Asian Games and also took part in the 2000 and 2004 Olympics, will be serving a four-year term (2025-29). “I am thankful to all the members for electing me as president. I will take forward the existing programmes of the AFI. Along with the team, I will try to take the Indian athletics even further,” Sagoo said. Sumariwalla, who had been holding the top position since 2012, said that he would continue his work with the AFI as spokesperson, while also helping in liaison with the India government, the Indian Olympic Association, the International Olympic Committee and World Athletics.

“Rohit is not making enough sacrifices...”: Sanjay Manjrekar on Indian skipper’s Test future

NEW DELHI, Jan 8 (Agencies): Former Indian cricketer Sanjay Manjrekar said that the Indian skipper will have to work hard on his defence and counter-attacking game ahead of the England Test tour later this year, noting that he is not making enough “sacrifices” for “one final burst” in his career like legends Sachin Tendulkar and Rahul Dravid did. Manjrekar was speaking on ESPNcricinfo in a video as Rohit battled a poor run of form during the 2024/25 Test season against Bangladesh and New Zealand at home and against Australia away from home during the Border-Gavaskar Trophy. His dip in form is worsened tenfold by the fact that India has failed to make it to the ICC World Test Championship final under his captaincy following a 0-3 loss to New Zealand at home, India’s first home Test series defeat at home in 12 years and their 1-3 loss to Australia, dropping the BGT after a span of 10 years. Speaking on ESPNcricinfo, Manjrekar



ar said, “He has opted out on form (during the Sydney Test) and it is not like things are going to get easier. The next challenge is going to be England. It will be that same line outside the off-stump. That is a headache for the chairman of selectors. He has got to keep it simple and forget the effect those decisions will have. He will have to improve his defence and his counterattack game is not working.” Sanjay noted that his defence was getting breached heavily on Indian pitches. “So that is a serious cause for concern. KL Rahul-Jaiswal is a better opening stand looking at Rohit Sharma’s form,” he added.

“I don’t think Rohit Sharma is making enough sacrifices to have one final burst - the kind of sacrifices Rahul Dravid and Sachin Tendulkar made at the end of their careers with regard to fitness and the preparation,” the 59-year-old concluded. The ongoing 2024-25 season of Tests has been miserable for ‘Ro-Ko’ (Rohit and Virat Kohli), who are India’s most prolific modern-day stars. While Rohit scored just 164 runs in eight matches and 15 innings at an average of 10.93 with best score of 52, Virat scored a sham-bolic 382 runs in 10 matches and 19 innings at an average of 22.87, with just a century and fifty each.

Fakhar Zaman confident of Pakistan comeback ahead of 2025 Champions Trophy

DUBAI, Jan 8 (Agencies): Fakhar Zaman is sure about representing Pakistan again and is gearing up for the 2025 ICC Champions Trophy, scheduled to begin on February 19 in Pakistan and Dubai. “A 100%, I will play for Pakistan (again),” Fakhar, told the Vipers Voices podcast, as quoted by ESPNcricinfo. “Actually, many people do not know about that, but after the T20 World Cup I got sick and because of the medical condition I was not fit, so I was not a part of the team,” he said. “But now I [have] recovered 100%, and you will see me in the next white-ball series which Pakistan play,” he added. Once a vital player in Pakistan’s white-ball setup, Fakhar has been out of the international scene since the 2024 T20 World Cup in the USA and West Indies, where Pakistan faced an early exit in the group stage. His last ODI appearance was during the 2023 ODI World Cup. Despite this, the left-handed opener remains optimistic



about earning a spot in the Champions Trophy squad on home soil. The Champions Trophy holds special significance for Fakhar, as he rose to fame during the 2017 edition. His match-winning 114 in the final against India at The Oval cemented his place in the Pakistan team. “My plan has been around the Champions Trophy,” he said, as quoted by ESPNcricinfo. “I did not play in the Australia tour or in the South Africa tour, so my whole plan was just to play in the Champions Trophy, to make myself available and to be fully fit for the tournament,” he added. “That was in the back of my mind, and I am thankful, and I am lucky to be fit right now. I started from the Champions Trophy 2017 and

that went really well for me and now I am very excited for the next edition also. I talked to the selectors, the head coach, and everyone wanted me to play in the Champions Trophy,” Fakhar noted. Fakhar has heaped praise on Pakistan’s 22-year-old opener Saim Ayub, who has been in outstanding form across formats. Ayub’s ODI career has started on a remarkable note, with three centuries and a half-century in just nine innings, including tons in Australia and South Africa. However, an ankle fracture sustained during the second Test against South Africa in Cape Town has cast doubts over Ayub’s participation in the Champions Trophy. “I hope and I believe that he will recover quickly, and I was

thinking yesterday to call Saim just to talk to him about this injury,” Fakhar said, as quoted by ESPNcricinfo. “Believe me, he is such a great player that if he continues to play for the next four to five years, he will be at the top and he will be amongst the top three players in the world,” he added. While Fakhar is eager to reclaim his position as an opener, the competition for the top-order slots remains fierce. Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan, and Saim Ayub, if fit, are likely to occupy the key positions. “In Pakistan, we have three of the best players in the world in Babar Azam, Mohammad Rizwan and Saim Ayub, so sometimes I feel lucky to be in the team even if I am not able to make my place in the team as an opener,” Fakhar noted. “If the team has faith in me and they want me to bat at number four or five, that totally makes sense, because for me the team is always first and I play wherever the team wants me to play, but I always prefer to

open,” he added. Ahead of his potential international return, Fakhar is preparing for his first International League T20 (ILT20) season, where he will play for the 2023 runners-up Desert Vipers. The tournament kicks off on January 11, with the Dubai Capitals facing MI Emirates in the opening match in Dubai. “There are many Pakistani players who have played for the Desert Vipers including Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Azam Khan and Mohammad Amir and they talk really highly about this team, the environment, the management, the way they play the cricket and the way their mindset is,” Fakhar said, as quoted by ESPNcricinfo. “So when I got the offer, without any discussion with anyone, I said ‘yes, I would love to play for this team,’” he added. Fakhar’s return to form and fitness will be critical as Pakistan look to assemble a strong squad for the prestigious Champions Trophy on home soil.

Over Rs 10 crores to be spent on prize money in men’s, women’s Hockey India League

NEW DELHI, Jan 8 (Agencies): The Hockey India League (HIL) 2024-25 is set to distribute over Rs 10 crores in prize money, making this year’s edition the most lucrative in the history of the league. according to a statement from the league. With an exciting mix of top-tier men’s and women’s hockey, this season promises not only fierce competition but also substantial rewards for both teams and individual players. In the Men’s HIL, the winning team will take home a prize of Rs 3 crore, while the runners-up will be awarded Rs 2 crore. The team that

finishes third will receive Rs 1 crore, adding extra motivation for every team to battle for the top spots. In the Women’s HIL, the stakes are equally high. The team that claims the title will win Rs 1.5 crore, while the runners-up will be awarded Rs 1 crore. The third-placed team will receive Rs 50 lakh, marking a new era for women’s hockey, as per a press release from Hockey India. In addition to the team rewards, Hero MotoCorp, the tournament’s title sponsor, has announced individual performance-based prizes.

The ‘Player of the Match’ in both men’s and women’s games will receive Rs 50,000 each. At the end of the tournament, Hero MotoCorp will also present Rs 20 lakh each to the ‘Player of the Tournament’ in the Men’s and Women’s HIL. Moreover, the best goalkeeper, upcoming player, and top scorer in the Men’s HIL will receive Rs 10 lakh each, while in the Women’s HIL, the best goalkeeper, upcoming player, and top scorer will be awarded Rs 5 lakh each. This year’s Hockey India League consists of an impressive roster of eight men’s teams and



four women’s teams, both leagues offering fast-paced, thrilling games through their newly revamped formats. The men’s league kicked off on December 28 at the Birsu Munda International Hockey Stadium in Rourkela, with the grand finale scheduled for February 2025. Meanwhile, the inaugural edition of the women’s league will begin on January 12, 2025, at Ranchi’s Marang Gomke Jaipal Singh Munda Astro Turf Stadium, with the final set for January, 26, 2025. The women’s league is poised to deliver exhilarating competition from start to finish. To expand the reach of the league, select matches from both the men’s and women’s tournaments will be held at alternate venues, bringing the excitement of the Hero HIL to diverse regions across the country, and ensuring that hockey fans nationwide can enjoy the electrifying action. HIL Chairman Dr. Dilip Tirkey expressed his enthusiasm, saying, “This edition of Hero HIL marks a significant milestone in Indian hockey. The increased prize money and the inclusion of a women’s league will add to the growing pop-

ularity of hockey in the country. We are confident this will not only encourage players but also inspire the next generation of hockey talent and take the sport to new heights.” Bhola Nath Singh, a member of the HIL Governing Committee, added, “The Hockey India League 2024-25 is a step forward in realising our vision of making India a global hockey powerhouse. The investment in prize money and individual awards reflects our commitment to creating an environment where players can thrive and the sport can continue to grow.”

